



# **FUTUREGOV: BUILDING PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

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# FutureGovinitiative

**Past the midpoint of the 2015–2030 period, it is clear that progress towards achieving the SDGs is not occurring at the desired pace and many indicators are not on track for the respective targets to be met by 2030. In the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, are “tremendously off track”<sup>1</sup>.**

**Across nearly all 17 SDGs, progress has either stalled or reversed. The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and other conflicts, the climate crisis, together with cascading effects, have shifted attention away from the 2030 Agenda at a time when efforts need to be accelerated not truncated.**



**To unlock accelerated delivery of the SDGs, Member States must adopt a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to public sector development –improving the way they design, finance, deliver and evaluate people-centred public services.**

**The FutureGovinitiative is designed to support Member States through their public sector 'transformation journeys' by building public sector skillsets for resilient institutions, shifting mindsets towards systems thinking and foresight, and facilitating social and policy innovation for results.**

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# FUTUREGOV SKILLS: AGILE GOVERNMENT SKILLS

## ✓ Culture-wide Transformation

Empowerment of public servants, rehauling the structure of government and increasing collaboration not just government entities but along verticals and across countries and inclusiveness.



## ✓ Redefinition of Partnerships

Governments cannot work in isolation but need to collaborate with various stakeholders for co-identification and co-ownership of problems and solutions. There is also a need to work across stakeholders for co-creation and co-implementation of solutions.



## ✓ Upskilling for Agile Government Transformation

There is need to focus on training on around public value and skills in creativity, innovativeness, data literacy, data visualization, management of data networking, big data analytics, problem-solving, strategic foresight, system thinking, behavioural insights (for policy practitioners) knowledge sharing among others.



## ✓ Ability to Manage and Harness Tech

With the 4IR, AI, IOT, robotics, there is need to for an agile governance to harness these tech opportunities to deliver bespoke solutions that meet the specific needs of the people/including addressing the digital divide.



# Why Innovation in the Public Sector?

Public servants operate in highly dynamic and complex work environments; characterized by ever-changing citizen expectations, shrinking public resources, rapid technological changes which requires them to be innovative and creative when dealing with complex policy problems.

Innovation needs to be at the heart of the public sector's efforts to improve performance, develop new capabilities, new models, and new approaches in the delivery of public services.

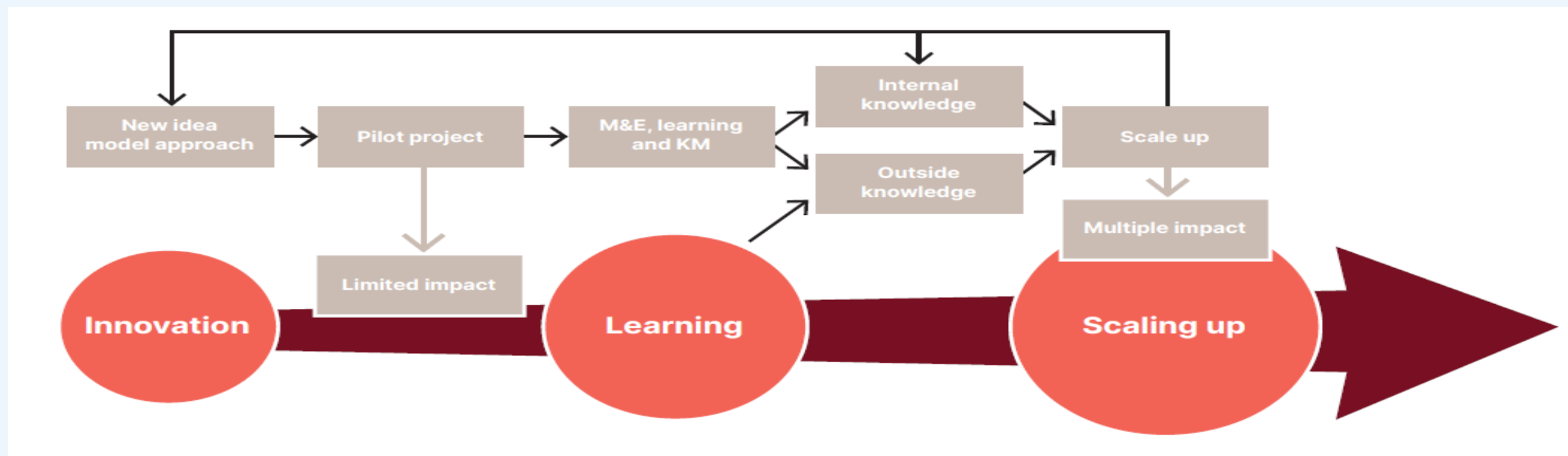
E.g., governments around the world are using digital technologies to innovatively transform the way they operate, share information, make decisions, and deliver services, as well as to engage in participatory policy making.

In the Decade of Action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, public sector innovation holds the potential to break through some of the most complex challenges facing the world today.

Innovation in the public sector provides opportunities to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development and the SDGs by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and reaching those left behind. Innovation has the potential to address several development challenges and redress issues of inequality and exclusion.

For these innovations to be successfully developed and implemented, they require well trained professionals who are equipped with skills such as policy analysis, problem solving and civic engagement. As a rule, though, public servants should avoid 'magical thinking' that just because an idea has been piloted with positive results, they will pick it up and run with it. Instead, it is essential that a systematic approach is pursued to ensure scaling actually happens, with an iterative process of innovation, learning and scaling employed where appropriate (Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Innovation, learning and scaling interact to achieve sustainable impact at scale**

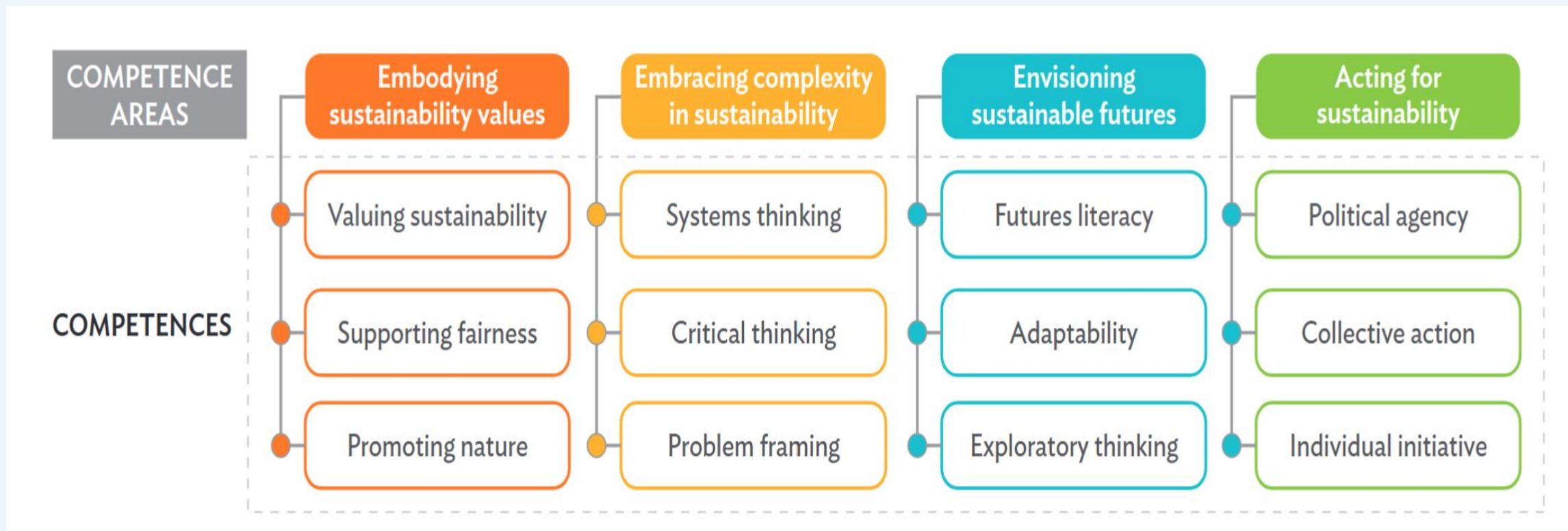


# Public Sector Capabilities for Problem Oriented Governance and SDG Acceleration



	Dimensions	Components	Indicators
	<i>Core capabilities enabling problem-oriented governance</i>	<i>Constituent resources, processes, dispositions, and arrangements</i>	<i>Examples of observable organizational features and measures of competency</i>
Reflective-improvement Capability	<p>Ability to develop and communicate theories of change around nominated problems.</p> <p>Ability to learn and adapt, motivate performance improvement, and produce accountability.</p>	<p>Dynamic approach to making theories of change progressively more coherent, complete, granular, and integrated, based on available evidence.</p> <p>Feedback mechanisms in place to enable performance leadership.</p>	<p>Explicit formulation of strategic goals and theory of change, meetings to discuss and agree on changes and adaptations. Organizational alignment (business process, human resource management, information systems, resource allocation, etc.) informed by strategic goal orientation.</p>
Collaborative Capability	<p>Ability to forge new cross-silo and state-society relationships.</p> <p>Ability to strengthen and leverage existing relationships.</p>	<p><i>Breadth of collaboration:</i> increasing alignment between range of participating actors and scope of problem.</p> <p><i>Depth of collaboration:</i> increasing alignment among actors regarding goals, means, and working processes.</p>	<p>Work processes and routines, pooled resources and backbone support, sharing of information, collaborative's level of autonomy, incentive, and accountability structures around the shared goal, level of depersonalization.</p>
Data-analytic Capability	<p>Ability to collect, process, and analyze different types of information and knowledge.</p> <p>Ability to analyze available data to generate actionable evidence.</p>	<p>Availability of sufficient volume and variety of timely, analyzable data.</p> <p>Personnel, technology, and working processes that turn data into evidence.</p>	<p>Data analysts, integration of data analysts into departments, existence of physical and electronic assets used to collect, store, access, analyze, interpret, and publish data. Regular data use and interpretation in meetings on all levels.</p>

# Public Service of the Future: Sustainability Competence Framework



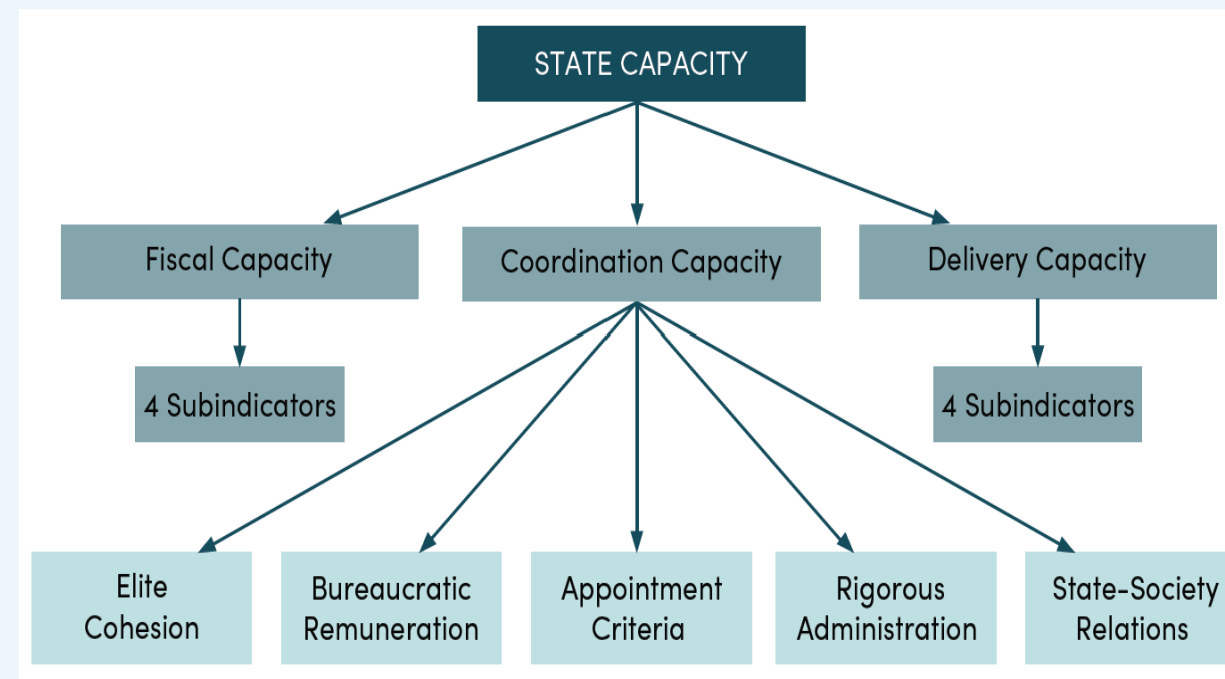
# Factors Contributing to Public Sector Capacity/State Capacity



The Berggruen governance index presents the various components of state capacity —technical, organizational, and political—to mobilize resources, implement policies and provide public goods and services (Figure 2).

This can require a degree of political unification to arrive at a coherent institutional framework because the weakness of shared common interests in divided societies and polities discourages investment in state capacity (Bardhan 2016)

**Figure 2: Factors contributing to state capacity**



**UNDESA and UNDP have been continuously advocating that a renewed State is needed to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is also need of a proactive State that exercises leadership and acts quickly, knowledgeably and effectively when unexpected phenomena appear on the path to development and carries out course corrections in accordance with the demands of society and the market.**

**Public sector transformation is one of the 11 High Impact Interventions (HII) - a true recognition by member states of the centrality of the public sector and the importance not only to strengthen it but also to embrace a transformation process that goes beyond digitalization.**

**To support this endeavor, UNDESA and UNDP (working with the World Bank and other partners) are developing the FutureGov Facility that will serve as a clearing house. It will be a hybrid digital platform for member, UN and other partners to share strategies, policies, tools and methodology but also (and depending on resources) to facilitate knowledge management, learning and in-country technical assistance. The Facility will for instance act as a matching platform between countries that wants to 'learn' and/or share national/sub-national expertise and tools related to public sector transformation.**

**The work is unfolding. Currently conducting a mapping of different interventions, tools and programmes related to public sector and will soon consolidated into an integrated offer that will be part of the FutureGov Facility.**

## **FutureGov for SDG Acceleration**

There is a need to improve governance, shore up institutions and partnerships, and envisage longer time horizons in public policy.

The vision for society set forth in the 2030 Agenda calls for the design of forward-looking public policies that bring together all social actors to build desirable scenarios for the future, as well as the road maps and processes for dialogue and participation required to achieve them.

The scale of the challenges facing the countries of Africa is such that it necessitates dialogue and decisions that are not limited to the short-term, and in this sense, the SDGs can be of great help in articulating and shaping a shared vision of the future

The transition from government policies to State policies implies a transformation or reprioritization of goals, in which the temporal dimension and strategy become the pillars of public policy. The transition involves moving from consideration of the immediate situation to foresight analysis, from economic growth to sustainable development, from crisis management to development planning, from a focused approach to a strategic vision, from dealing with the present to managing structural change

The vision for fair, peaceful, equitable and inclusive societies set forth in the 2030 Agenda calls for the design of public policies for more than the immediate term, which are capable of bringing together all social actors to build desirable scenarios for the future, as well as the dialogue and and participation processes required to achieve them.

The public sector should become increasingly entrepreneurial for the good of society. In her book [Mission Economy](#), Professor Mariana Mazzucato argues that the state needs to transform itself into an innovating organization and develop the capacity to mobilize different parts of society around a common goal in a purpose-oriented economy.



# FUTUREGOV CAN DRIVE PROGRESS ACROSS GOALS

FutureGov acts as an enabler across all Sustainable Development Goals. With strengthened public sector capabilities at national and sub-national levels in institutional skilling, systems thinking, and public sector innovation, countries will be empowered to further accelerate progress towards the SDGs

SDG PROGRESS

Supporting the achievement of SDG 16 Peace, Justice and strong Institutions(especially SDG 16.6 to develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels) can drive societal well-being - see [FUTUREGOV](#)



**Eradicate extreme poverty**



**Reduce income inequalities**



**Good health and well-being**



**Sustainable cities and communities**



**Quality education**



**Partnership for goals**



**Gender equality**



**Zero hunger**

## What we can do now

- Invest in building public sector capacities for better decision making and SDG implementation.
- Elevating public services competences for achieving the SDGs: unpack key policy combinations of competences – for example on sustainability competences, system thinking, strategic foresight among others.
- Elevating policy discourse on public sector capacities: national, regional, North-South and South- South dialogues,

## How do we take it forward

- Document best practices in adaptive and transformative leadership culture within the public sector so that countries can learn from each other: Some countries such as the United Arab Emirates among others are implementing some best practices principles of agile governments which other countries can learn from and adapt to their contexts.
- Invest in attracting and developing the leadership talent required to increase innovation in the public sector. This might include programs for developing transformational project managers and greater interchange between public, private, and civil society sectors to expand the capacity of the public sector to innovate.
- Create research and development units within public sector organizations to develop a strong research ecosystem.



As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent shocks, efforts will have to be redoubled if the SDGs are to be achieved by 2030. This will take not only greater investment and financing, but also a change in the way public policy is made.

Specifically, there is a need to improve governance, shore up institutions and partnerships, and look at public policy over a longer time horizon. The vision for fair, peaceful, equitable and inclusive societies set forth in the 2030 Agenda calls for the design of public policies for more than the immediate term, which are capable of bringing together all social actors to build desirable scenarios for the future, as well as the dialogue and participation processes required to achieve them.

