



WORKSHOP 3

Leading Change: New Mindsets and
Approaches for Resilient, Forward-Looking
Governance

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

The 2025 United Nations Public Service Forum will take place in Samarkand, the Republic of Uzbekistan from 23-25 June 2025 under the theme 'Five Years to 2030: Accelerating Public Service Delivery for a Sustainable Future'.

The Forum will be comprised of a series of workshops where various elements related to the overall theme will be explored in more detail. This workshop will explore how governments can strengthen anticipatory governance by promoting shifts in public service mindsets—how officials think, act, and collaborate across institutions. It will introduce systems thinking and strategic foresight as practical tools to help build more integrated, resilient, and forward-looking public institutions.

Objective

The workshop aims to support public sector officials—particularly those in roles related to public sector strategy and implementation—to foster shifts in mindsets, strengthen adaptive behaviours, and apply institutional approaches that enable more coherent and forward-looking governance. By applying systems thinking and strategic foresight, participants will explore how to enhance alignment across planning, budgeting, and institutional reform processes, and connect short-term actions with long-term national development goals. The workshop balances strategic perspective with practical application, offering both policy-level insights for senior leaders and actionable tools for technical staff working across government systems. In line with the Pact for the Future, the workshop contributes to strengthening public institutions' capacities to anticipate and respond to future challenges while advancing the 2030 Agenda.

Focus

Governments today face a convergence of complex challenges that demand more adaptive, inclusive, and forward-looking public institutions. Many countries face growing fiscal stress, including rising debt burdens and shrinking fiscal space, which constrain the ability to invest in long-term development priorities. Climate change continues to pose systemic risks that cut across sectors and geographies. Demographic shifts—such as aging populations, youth bulges, and urban migration—are transforming both service delivery needs and administrative capacities. Meanwhile, rapid technological advances are reshaping how governments plan, communicate, and deliver services.

These dynamics underscore the need to rethink how institutions function and how public officials engage with complexity. This workshop focuses on how shifting mindsets—how public officials think, act, and interact—can serve as a foundation for advancing public sector innovation and transformation, and how these shifts can be supported through practical tools, institutional strategies, and systems-based approaches. The emphasis is on the idea that changes in how institutions approach challenges, make decisions, and collaborate across boundaries are not only about individual awareness, but about fostering institutional cultures and capabilities that support more collaborative, anticipatory, and systemic approaches to governance.

Through a focus on anticipatory governance, the workshop introduces two practical, action-oriented approaches: systems thinking and strategic foresight. Systems thinking will help participants understand and address the underlying causes of institutional fragmentation and

improve coordination across sectors and functions. Strategic foresight will support the ability to anticipate future risks and opportunities, align long-term visions with current strategies, and make policies more forward-looking and resilient.

To demonstrate the application of these approaches in real-world and policy-relevant contexts, the workshop will use concrete entry points—such as Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs), national budgets, climate finance, and social protection systems. These areas are not the focus in terms of technical content but serve as illustrative examples of common institutional challenges—such as the misalignment between plans and budgets, fragmented decision-making, and short-term planning. Participants will use these examples to explore how shifts in thinking, behaviour, and institutional culture, combined with systems-based tools, can be applied to strengthen institutional coherence, improve coordination, and enhance long-term impact.

The workshop will combine short presentations, peer learning, and hands-on exercises to help participants reflect on their own institutional contexts and identify areas for improvement. Participants will engage in scenario-based foresight exercises, systems mapping, and action planning activities tailored to address the specific governance and institutional challenges they encounter in their work environments. By the end of the workshop, participants will have identified key priorities and outlined initial steps for applying new ways of thinking, acting, and collaborating, along with relevant tools in their institutional settings. This will help lay the foundation for longer-term transformation and reform.

The workshop will directly support the broader objective of enhancing the public sector's capacity to deliver the SDGs through more inclusive, accountable, and forward-looking governance. It provides a platform for participants to learn, apply, and institutionalize approaches that strengthen capabilities, foster innovation, and ensure that no one is left behind.

Structure

The workshop is structured into four interactive sessions that are delivered over two days. Each session is designed to combine strategic insights with hands-on learning and peer exchange, ensuring participants can immediately begin applying new approaches within their own contexts.

Session 1: Rethinking Mindsets – Laying the Groundwork for Anticipatory Governance

This session introduces anticipatory governance and explores why shifting mindsets is essential for public institutions to navigate complexity and deliver long-term value. Through interactive discussions and self-reflection, participants will examine how traditional thinking can limit innovation and coherence, and consider what it means to adopt more adaptive, inclusive, and systemic perspectives.

Session 2: Systems Thinking for Integrated Governance

This session introduces systems thinking as a practical tool to visualize connections among actors, processes, and policies across government. Through interactive mapping exercises, participants will identify leverage points for change and explore how systems approaches can address fragmentation in planning, budgeting, and cross-sector collaboration.

Session 3: Applying Strategic Foresight and Systems Thinking in Practice

Participants will learn and apply key foresight tools to anticipate emerging trends, develop plausible scenarios, and link long-term visions with current planning and policy. This session demonstrates how combining foresight and systems thinking can support more resilient and future-oriented decision-making.

Session 4: Embedding Anticipatory Governance – From Insight to Organizational Change

This session focuses on translating insights and innovative mindsets into practical action. Participants will identify concrete entry points and outline initial steps for applying systems thinking and foresight within their organizational settings. Emphasis will be placed on realistic next steps that align with existing planning, budgeting, and reform processes.

Organisational Details

- This workshop is organised by the **Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG)**.
- Participants are expected to come from central and local government officials, policymakers, public government experts, public sector institutions, practitioners, civil society, academics, and media.
- The workshop will be conducted in English and Uzbek.

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