



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC**  
**AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

## ***Shaping Public Service Mindsets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Asia-Pacific Region***

### **Report of Survey Results Mapping Regional Civil Service Curricula for the SDGs**

Prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, Project Office on Governance



## Executive Summary

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division of Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), is convening a global network of public administration schools, civil service colleges and similar training institutions as part of a Global Initiative for Public Administration Schools on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Baseline survey research has been conducted among Asia-Pacific countries from April-May 2018 to map where the region's public administration schools and civil service colleges stand on training public administration for [2030 Agenda](#). Similar research is ongoing in Africa and Latin America. For Asia-Pacific, this process is led by DPIDG's Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), based in the Republic of Korea.

As a first step, a survey was conducted among regional public administration schools and civil service colleges to collect baseline data on the current status of training public administration officials on the 2030 Agenda in Asia-Pacific. The ten-question survey can be found [here](#), while the full template of the survey can be found in the Annex.

Sixteen countries representing the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region responded to the survey and shared their current practices, future plans, and priorities on training civil servants on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda:

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Bhutan     | 9. Myanmar            |
| 2. India      | 10. Mongolia          |
| 3. Bangladesh | 11. China             |
| 4. Pakistan   | 12. Republic of Korea |
| 5. Samoa      | 13. Singapore         |
| 6. Brunei     | 14. Vanuatu           |
| 7. Thailand   | 15. Sri Lanka         |
| 8. Viet Nam   | 16. Japan             |

This report draws on country responses to present a snapshot of current trends and practices, as well as regional preferences for SDG training and civil service curricula. The results show that the majority of countries surveyed report that public service has limited to some awareness of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, which calls for greater regional awareness-raising and educational programs.

A key trend that emerged from the survey is that the current preference is to integrate the SDGs into existing training programs adapting them into standardized courses. However, the results did show that countries are increasingly developing standalone training and curricula for the SDGs or interested in customizing the SDGs into a national program. In fact, ten countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam) responded that they have integrated the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into existing training program.

Four countries (Bangladesh, China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka) reported they already offer a standalone training program or curriculum on the SDGs and two Small Island Developing States would like to develop a curriculum, especially to decentralize training and involve rural areas or islands where populations are concentrated. Currently, though the survey results show that having a standalone curriculum is not necessarily linked to increased knowledge in the SDGs or 2030 Agenda among all public service as these are often targeted to only selected officials.

The survey also addressed potential priority training themes or topics that countries would see as important to equip institutions and civil service for the 2030 Agenda. The priority topic suggested for further training was "Changing public service mindsets" along with SDG 16 on accountability and institutional strengthening. In addition, national institutions were surveyed on needs for support to better equip public service to achieve the SDGs with the key request for support focused on sharing knowledge resources, encompassing literature on the SDGs, especially case studies, and other teaching materials that schools could use in their programs.

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## I. Introduction

Many countries are fast advancing to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by United Nations member states in September 2015 (UN, 2018). With 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and less than twelve years remaining to achieve these universal and wide-ranging goals, governments have begun adapting strategies and plans, organizing and mobilizing institutions and non-state actors, and developing systems for review and oversight.

Public administration systems and their civil servants have a key role in ensuring national ownership and delivery of the SDGs by 2030. Public administration, from national to local levels, is at the center of delivering public services, which are key for realizing the SDGs. It is the bedrock for ensuring the rule of law, justice and security. More generally, it is at the heart of efforts to make institutions effective, accountable and inclusive, as elaborated in SDG 16. Key principles of the 2030 Agenda, such as integrated approaches or the need to leave no one behind, have deep implications for the way public institutions work. It is therefore important to mobilize and equip public servants to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Public servants need to be aware of the SDGs and the key principles of the 2030 Agenda – which have implications for the skills and knowledge they need to advance the work of achieving the SDGs. This forms the background of the initiative UN DESA, through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), is putting in place with other partners to engage with institutes and schools of public administration to mobilize and equip public servants for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs.

The main objectives of the Global Initiative for Schools of Public Administration are:

- To inspire public sector leaders and public servants to mainstream the principles of the 2030 Agenda and to include the SDGs in their public sector performance strategies, plans and programs
- To inspire institutes responsible for training public servants to include in their training on both the principles and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda
- To contribute to the development of the competences required by public sector leaders and public servants for the achievement of SDGs through the development of revised and/or new curricula

Public Service is shaped by public administration schools and similar institutions that can drive mindset shift and ensure the civil service system adopts key values and competencies necessary to achieve the 17 SDGs and 169 targets.

National government competencies often differ from local levels – where competency gaps are all too common. Today, across the globe, civil servants do not all have knowledge of the SDGs three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Behaviors are determined by awareness, where people take cues from society around them to replicate existing social norms. When social norms in an institution are not yet informed by current knowledge, evidence or new skills, then behaviors cannot change and competencies remain stagnant, falling short of demands of SDG implementation.

The SDGs require a cross-section of competencies, as these set the standards for civil service performance and progress measurement (see Box 1). Civil service competency frameworks will need to be updated to include holistic systems-thinking skills and behaviors, partnerships and collaboration across government and non-state actors and more. This is a central part of the objectives of the Global Initiative for Schools of Public Administration on the SDGs.

### **Box 1. Strengthening Competencies - Public Service Performance Frameworks for the SDGs**

As such, to achieve the 2030 Agenda in less than 12 years, civil service systems will need performance frameworks that are aligned and integrate the SDGs including its core principles as such as “Leave no one Behind” and “Putting the Furthest Behind First” to truly enable public service to achieve the SDGs.

Competency frameworks help provide basic agreed performance standards, which are equally needed to drive civil service change for the SDGs by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Globally, countries are launching new competency frameworks that emphasize much of the behaviors required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, such as holistic systems-thinking, citizen engagement, partnerships and more.

Last year, the United Kingdom for example completed a reform process and launched a new competency framework focused on ten competencies. The framework includes competencies such as “seeing the big picture” promoting holistic thinking behaviors, collaborating and partnerships, and more defining Competencies as “the skills, knowledge and behaviors that lead to successful performance” in government.<sup>2</sup>

In the Asia-Pacific region, countries have implemented reform processes to foment competencies that can increase public sector performance alongside a framework of agreed core values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and ultimately behaviors. These new competencies are equally essential to enable public sector performance for SDG achievement.

Countries such as the Republic of Korea implemented these reforms as early as 2002 to ensure a “future-oriented perspective” among civil service and increase government performance as the nation developed.<sup>2</sup> Singapore recently launched an updated Civil Service Competency Framework including new values and skills such as “Whole-of-Government” thinking to emphasize holistic and collaborative performance standards. Sri Lanka has also recently undergone a reform of its Common Competency Framework launching a new model for an “effective, efficient and ethical public service culture”.<sup>4</sup> The new Sri Lankan competency framework also includes a systems-thinking competency and a citizen-focus competency, as well as competencies such as teamwork to emphasize collaboration across government.

1. [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=5F280B19C6125F4380256B6600448FDB&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/5F280B19C6125F4380256B6600448FDB/\\$file/dp112.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=5F280B19C6125F4380256B6600448FDB&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/5F280B19C6125F4380256B6600448FDB/$file/dp112.pdf)

2. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/436073/cscf\\_fulla4potrait\\_2013-2017\\_v2d.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436073/cscf_fulla4potrait_2013-2017_v2d.pdf)

3. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/paper-managing-competencies-in-government-state-of-the-art-practices-and-issues.pdf>

4. <http://nhrdc.gov.lk/web/competancy.pdf>

As the text box above notes, some countries have already begun reforming competency frameworks to strengthen government performance in key competencies essential for sustainable development. Research notes that for government to drive national to local transitions to sustainable development pathways, government performance must be aligned with core values and expected behaviors centered around Systems-Thinking, Normative, Anticipatory and other competencies (Weik et al., 2011). Competency management and competency frameworks in civil service can also align vertical and horizontal integration in government and facilitate central steering of public sector performance, especially in decentralized government (Sri Lanka, 2017). The survey results reported herein serve as a first step in monitoring current training and curricula in the Asia-Pacific region to later explore common competency frameworks and development of responsive training programmes for the SDGs. Curricula and training recommendations made to the region can then ensure they are in line with national competency goals and gaps as public service performance moves towards achievement of the SDGs.

## II. Current State of Public Administration Curricula and Knowledge Base on SDGs

The survey first mapped current training programs that civil service colleges, public administration schools and similar government institutions offer today. Sixteen countries responded to this question, highlighting various trends.

What training programs does your institution offer for civil servants?

The first key trend is that training is generally tailored to different needs and different levels of seniority. For example, **Myanmar's** Central Institute of Civil Service offers specific management courses for executive-level, senior-level, and mid-level officials, as well as basic courses for junior-level officers, supervisors, and clerical staff. Many institutions cited that they are structured this way, and trainings are certifications to proceed to higher management levels. For future engagement on training for the 2030 Agenda, this structuring is beneficial in that it facilitates targeting government leadership with specific knowledge and skills. Research on reforming civil service mindsets in South Asia shows that increased performance and mindset change is possible at scale through senior leadership program trainings (Jacobs, 2009). Therefore, future training for the SDGs could aim to target senior leadership specifically.

Another key trend was the focus on specific themes in training throughout the region, for example nearly all countries reported a focus on leadership as a competency and training focus. **Bhutan, Singapore and Vietnam** also cited management skills as important themes addressed in their training courses. Another trend is the emphasis on basic skills in training, as **Samoa** demonstrates in courses focused on time management, data collection, report writing, and team building.

Among the countries that responded, India and Thailand provide additional training options beyond what is generally offered across this region with clear links to Sustainable Development Goals.

In **India**, the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration also conducts short-term trainings, workshops and seminars through five thematic centers, namely the National Gender Centre, Centre for Disaster Management, Centre for Rural Studies, Centre for Public Systems Management and a National Centre for Leadership Development and Competency Assessment.

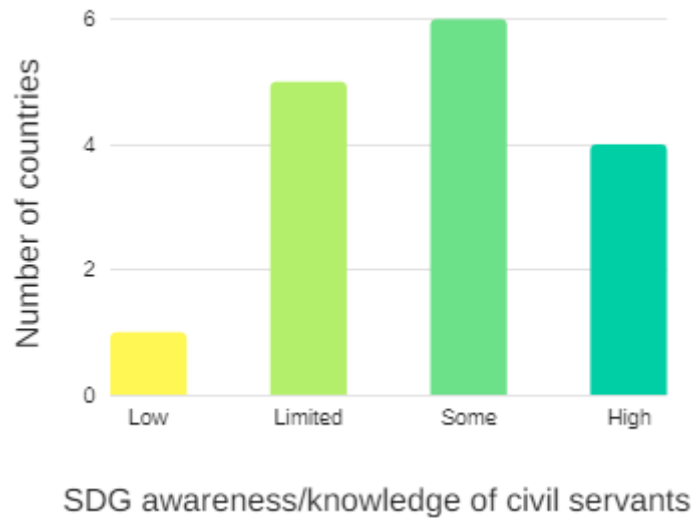
In **Thailand**, the Graduate School of Public Administration (GSPA) also provides an international training program on professional project planning and management for government officials from Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Laos and South Sudan. Thailand seemed to have the greatest number of cooperation programs with countries in the region and beyond as well. Notably, the GSPA also worked in partnership with The Leadership Academy for Development (LAD) at Stanford University and Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies to offer a course titled "The Role of Public Policy in Private Sector Development" in Bangkok in 2016.

The survey also focused on mapping current awareness and knowledge on the Sustainable Development Goals among civil servants across the respondent countries. This question is particularly important, as it allows for better tailoring of future engagement and more strategic targeting of certain countries where less awareness was reported.

How would you rate the awareness and knowledge among your civil servants on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The following chart summarizes the results on reported awareness and knowledge on the SDGs among the 16 country respondents. As the chart shows the majority of countries have limited to some awareness, which calls for greater awareness-raising and educational programs across the region.

**Figure 1. An Overview of SDG Awareness among Surveyed Countries in Asia-Pacific**



China, Japan, Thailand, and Vanuatu responded that there was “high” awareness among civil servants. **Thailand** specifically highlighted that civil servants “recognize the importance of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Sustainable Development and their roles in achieving SDGs.” The Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy promoting sustainable development values and knowledge implemented in 1974 by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (MFA, 2017). It charts a path towards the Sustainable Development Goals for the country while creating greater ownership as a “home-grown” sustainable development pathway and way of life for all citizens with government as the role model. China has similarly launched similar national philosophies but these were not noted in the Chinese Academy of Governance’s reply as the specific causal link to promote increased knowledge of the SDGs.

Brunei, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam reported there was “**some**” knowledge, concentrated among certain groups of civil servants such as more senior leadership or civil service in capital regions. **Sri Lanka** further explained this response, reporting that even though the country as a whole understands and strongly believes in the need to work together to achieve the SDGs, each organization tends to work in isolation with awareness focused on its specific parts and not the whole 2030 Agenda.

Multiple countries across the region reported that civil servants had “**limited**” knowledge in general of the SDGs including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea. **Bangladesh** provided further details, stating that although civil servants had limited knowledge of the SDGs, there was high awareness of the 2030 Agenda as a whole but not of the specific 17 goals.

Samoa responded that there was “low” awareness among civil servants. For **Samoa**, this response is based on meetings and consultations between the Public Administration Sector Coordination Unit (PASCU) and other sector coordination representatives who reaffirmed the need to raise awareness of the SDGs among civil servants. As there were only two Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as respondents (Vanuatu and Samoa) one cannot draw a conclusion for SIDS countries specifically. However, it is clear that the geographic remoteness and special situation of SIDS requires tailoring training according to their needs.

In the South Asia region there was equally diversity of knowledge, but no countries reported high awareness showing that this sub-region requires special attention as well. Countries in North East and East Asia regions reported the higher knowledge with South East Asian nations reported mixed results as

well. This diversity of knowledge highlights the universality of the SDGs and the need for national ownership as countries build public service knowledge and awareness.

### III. Comparing Implementation Models - Standalone Curricula for the 2030 Agenda and Integration into Existing Training Curricula

Does your institution already offer a standalone training program or curriculum on the SDGs for civil servants?

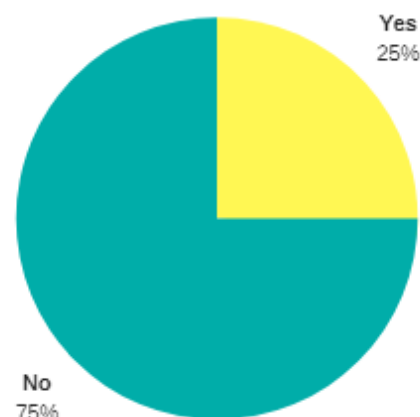
A key trend that emerged from the survey is that countries are increasingly developing standalone training and curricula for the SDGs customized to national contexts. Four countries (**Bangladesh, China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka**) offer a standalone training program or curriculum on the SDGs. Currently, though the survey shows that having a standalone curriculum is not necessarily linked to increased knowledge in the SDGs or 2030 Agenda. A next step will be to obtain further information to document and compare these curricula.

The remaining twelve countries (Bhutan, Brunei, India, Japan, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam) do not yet offer such programs or curricula or have taken a different approach integrating SDG concepts across existing training.

The figure to the right summarizes the country responses showing that while a quarter of countries surveyed have developed standalone training on the SDGs the majority have not for varying reasons. For example, countries cited that they have instead integrated the SDGs across existing training programs rather than developing an isolated curriculum. **Thailand** noted that “SDGs are integral part of research projects and curriculum” in the MPA program and PhD program in Governance and Development. Equally, for **Mongolia** and the **Republic of Korea**, the SDGs are included within existing subjects and courses. In **Vanuatu**, they wrote that even though they do not yet offer standalone programs, every job description of newly appointed public servants aligns their responsibilities with the SDGs.

As some countries may not choose to develop standalone curricula, but rather integrate the SDGs into existing training, the survey also sought to compare this approach.

**Figure 2. Proportion of Surveyed Countries that Offer Standalone Trainings for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs**



Does your institution integrate the 2030 Agenda and SDGs into existing training programs?

In fact, ten countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam) responded that they **have integrated** the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into existing training programs.

**Bangladesh** particularly stands out in both developing standalone curricula and integrating the SDGs into a variety of different training programs. This is through high-level leadership and commitment to the 2030 Agenda from the rector of the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center, who participated in UN DESA symposium in December 2017, which focused on engaging public administration schools for the SDGs. In a short time span, the country developed an SDG module taught in all core courses. Their program also includes targeted courses for newly recruited civil servants (a 28-hour module on achieving the SDGs, including a detailed review of each of the 17 goals), mid-level civil servants (a 19-hour module including topics such as “SDGs as a Catalyst in Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh”) and senior-level civil



servants (a 17-hour module including topics such as “Aligning the SDGs with Bangladesh’s 7th Five Year Plan”).

**Thailand** also stood out in its integration of the SDGs in curricula, which is contextualized in terms of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. It also offers Masters on Public Administration courses and PhD-level programs with an emphasis on SDG 16, SDG 17, and SDG 11. For example, one course is titled: “Accountability, Equality, Innovation, Sustainable Cities (Smart Cities) and Partnerships.”

**Vietnam** also provides training on public ethics with an emphasis on accountability, as well as state management of natural resources, linking its existing training to SDGs 12 and 16. **Sri Lanka** reported that the Sri Lanka Institute for Development Administration focuses its 2018 programming on all SDGs, with a focus on the themes of the environment, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice, clean energy and energy conservation, climate action, economic growth, innovation, and poverty reduction.

Six countries (Bhutan, Brunei, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, Samoa and Vanuatu) noted they **have not currently integrated** the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into existing training programs. In its response, **Mongolia** noted that it conducted two short-term training courses in 2017 related to the SDGs in partnership with the World Bank and Turkey, respectively, but these were new programs not yet formalized into continuing or core training. The **Republic of Korea** is planning to integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into existing training programs as part of educational content in the future, but it seems this has not yet been formalized.

In sum, as the figure on the right shows, the current trend among regional institutions surveyed is to integrate and contextualize the 2030 Agenda and SDGs into existing training programs.

#### IV. Future Plans and Priorities for Civil Service Training on the SDGs

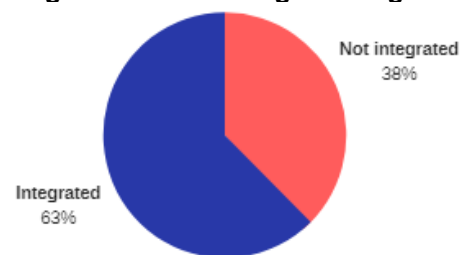
Regional countries were also surveyed on their plans to integrate the SDGs into civil service training. The general trend noted was that countries are willing or planning to integrate SDG training but into selected existing programs. Four countries noted plans to develop a standalone program or curriculum on the SDGs for civil servants (see table below).

##### ***Plans to Integrate the SDGs into Existing Civil Service Training Programs***

Thirteen countries responded that they are planning to or would like to integrate the SDGs into **existing training programs**. However, among the thirteen countries that prefer integrating the SDGs into existing programs, eight countries are planning to integrate the SDGs into only some of the existing training programs on related topics and for specific officials. These countries are Bhutan, Brunei, China, India, Japan, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore. Five countries—Bangladesh, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Vanuatu—will integrate the SDGs into **all existing training programs** for civil servants.

Seven countries (Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Sri Lanka) responded that they have already integrated the SDGs into existing training programs. Among

**Figure 3. Proportion of Surveyed Countries that Integrated the 2030 Agenda into Existing Trainings**



**What are some of the ways your institution is planning to or would like to integrate the SDGs into its training for civil service?**

these, the **Republic of Korea** cited a standalone program that integrates the SDGs, with a focus on the relationship between the SDGs at the global, regional, and state levels of development.

If you would like to integrate the SDGs into existing training programs, please describe any existing plans, projects or ideas in this regard.

**Bhutan** plans to integrate the SDGs into its post-graduate diploma programs for new civil servants, as well as training programs for planning officers. Four countries (Brunei, Myanmar, Samoa, and Vanuatu) responded that they would like to integrate the SDGs, but such plans are still in the early planning stages.

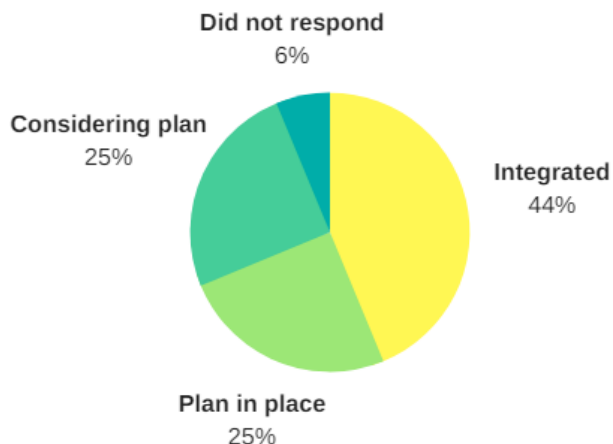
**Myanmar** responded that if such plans were undertaken, an extensive consultation process with various stakeholders (i.e. line ministries, international agencies such as UNDP, and civil society organizations) would take place regarding lesson plans, as well as a “training needs analysis” and the creation of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the program.

**Vanuatu** reported that, with funding assistance from the UN, it would be ideal to integrate SDG training with the induction of new public servants in order to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Additionally, **Brunei** and **India** also expressed an interest in including examples of international best practices in their programs, with Brunei also indicating its desire to receive “technical assistance from the United Nations (UN),” especially regarding “SDG guidelines and capacity building programs related to the areas of SDG indicators.”

#### **Plans to Develop Standalone Curricula for Civil Service Training on SDGs**

Four countries (Bangladesh, China, Mongolia, and Vietnam) plan to develop a standalone, new training programs on or linked to the SDGs. Of the countries surveyed, only two have formal plans for a specific standalone curriculum and training program for the SDGs that will target a large portion of civil service. **Thailand** will develop a standalone training program for **all** entry-level, mid-career and/or senior officials. **Vietnam** plans to create a new program for **entry-level local officials**, as well as a **standalone program** to train management-level officials at the local and central level. **Mongolia** also cited potential plans to create a new training program, though on a selected basis for some officials or some parts of the public administration system. The following table details country plans according to the reported data.

**Figure 4. Status of Plans to Integrate the SDGs into Existing Trainings among Surveyed Countries**



**Table 1. Details of Plans to Develop Standalone SDGs Trainings Provided by Surveyed Countries**

Country	Plan details
Bangladesh	Course guidelines for training of trainers (TOT) Course on SDGs already developed, with course content focused on “emerging and comprehensive knowledge and information on SDGs, associated key challenges and pathways to sustainable development” that will be blended with TOT modules
China	e-Government training program for public administration officials on the SDGs
Mongolia	SDGs training program for key designated officials

Vietnam	After developing objectives and plan, will conduct baseline study of SDG implementation in Vietnam and identify target group training needs in order to develop competency framework and curriculum. Pilot teaching and evaluation will follow.
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Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Vanuatu and Samoa reported possible opportunities to develop standalone SDG training programs in the future. **Vanuatu** provided further details, reporting that they will seek funding through the United Nations to help develop the content of SDG-related trainings. They also highlighted the need to decentralize future trainings in order to include rural areas, where the majority of the island's inhabitants live.

Five countries (Bangladesh, India, Japan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka) **do not plan to develop** standalone programs for the SDGs, stating that their existing, integrated programs are sufficient. Of the remaining countries, **Bhutan** and **Pakistan** did not leave a response to this question and **Brunei** and **Singapore** wrote that it was “not applicable.” The **Republic of Korea** wrote that it would need a “letter from UN or other related department therein to get some ground for the development of such programs.”

In summary, this shows that there is a good degree of interest in developing standalone modules or curricula for the SDGs to be a training program for all or selected officials in countries. Perhaps a next step could be to develop a regional curriculum that could then be contextualized at national level.

## V. Priority Topics and Expressed Needs for Future SDG Training

The survey also addressed potential priority training themes or topics that countries would see as important to equip institutions and civil service for the 2030 Agenda. Among the priority topics suggested, the following were cited the most. This shows that changing public service mindsets is the topic with greatest expressed need, along with SDG 16 on accountability and institutional strengthening.

**To equip your national civil service to achieve the SDGs, what are some of your institution's priority topics for training on the SDGs?**

Countries also cited other priority themes linked to specific SDGs and targets. **India** additionally cited the need to improve public service delivery and to use technology for enhanced effectiveness in its response. **Vietnam** and **Vanuatu** were the only countries to cite “gender equality as an enabler for the SDGs” as a priority. **Samoa** also responded that “navigating the public administration for the SDGs” was a priority, while **Brunei** focused on policy review and delivery in addition to its other response. Similarly, **Sri Lanka** requested a focus on the identification of responsibilities of each institution in order to plan and implement actions accordingly, as well as regular monitoring at various levels. **China** stated that its training programs will focus on environmental protection, poverty alleviation, and public service innovation as priority areas.

**Table 3. Priority Training Topics Identified by Surveyed Countries**

Priority topic	Number of countries	Names of countries
Changing public service mindsets	8	India, Japan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu, Vietnam
Accountability and institutional strengthening	7	Brunei, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam
Core functions to plan and implement the SDGs	5	Bhutan, India, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Vanuatu
Localizing the SDGs	5	Bhutan, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

To better assist surveyed institutions, they were also surveyed on needs for support to better equip public service to achieve the SDGs. Major themes regarding requests for support include the following:

- Knowledge resources (encompassing literature on the SDGs, especially case studies, and other teaching materials that schools could use in their programs)
- Knowledge sharing of best practices in training civil servants on the SDGs, with **Brunei**, **Pakistan**, and **Vietnam** citing the usefulness of study visits to other countries in this regard
- Training on curricula development for the SDGs
- Assistance with “training of trainers” (TOT) on the SDGs

In addition to these shared priorities, in a commitment to quality assurance and measurement of results, **Bangladesh** also cited the need to develop international training standards that can be followed when training public servants on the SDGs. **Vanuatu** highlighted the need for funding to carry out its training of civil servants on the SDGs. Out of the respondents, only **Japan** reported that no support was needed.

## VI. Mapping National Institutions for Civil Service Training for National Collaboration

The final topic in the survey aimed to learn more about other institutions in countries offering training for civil service officials. The objective of this question was to learn more about civil service training in the target countries, as each country has differing governance systems, with some more decentralized than others.

Equally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or academia, such as private universities, often target public service officials, offering more than short training and graduate studies. These institutions can all become part of national public service training initiatives for the SDGs. Thus this question aimed to inspire respondents to consider potential partners for SDG training.

**Q10. According to your knowledge, what are some other institutions engaged in training civil servants on the SDGs?**

In response to this question, several countries identified other institutions that could serve as key partners in increasing awareness and knowledge of the SDGs among civil servants. **Thailand** listed several universities that offer specialized programs directly linked to the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, such as Mahidol University (good health and well-being), Kasetsart University (food security, natural resource conservation and climate action), Chulalongkorn University (sustainable cities) and Thammasat University and Thailand Institute of Justice (YIJ) (justice and rule of law).

Similarly, **China** also cited Tsinghua University and Peking University as potential partners. **Singapore** did the same, reporting that Singapore Management University’s Master of Tri-Sector Collaboration could provide such a partnership, as well as the Singapore Global Compact Network for NGOs.

**Pakistan** focused on other government-affiliated institutes and think tanks in its response. The country listed the Civil Services Academy, National Defense University, Management and Professional Development Departments of provincial governments, and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) as other organizations that also provide training on the SDGs.

**Myanmar** provided the broadest list in its response, describing governmental institutes, private institutes (related to media and/or research), NGOs, international NGOs, local government training institutions, and donors as potential partners.

## VII. Conclusion

This report draws on country responses to present a snapshot of current trends and practices, as well as regional preferences for SDG training and civil service curricula. The results show that the majority of countries surveyed report that public service has limited to some awareness of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, which calls for greater regional awareness-raising and educational programs.

A key trend that emerged from the survey is that the current preference is to integrate the SDGs into existing training program adapting them into standardized courses. However, the results did show that countries are increasingly developing standalone training and curricula for the SDGs or interested in customizing the SDGs into a national program. In fact, ten countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam) responded that they have integrated the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into existing training program.

Four countries (Bangladesh, China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka) reported they already offer a standalone training program or curriculum on the SDGs and two Small Island Developing States would like to develop a curriculum, especially to decentralize training and involve rural areas or islands where populations are concentrated. Currently, though the survey results show that having a standalone curriculum is not necessarily linked to increased knowledge in the SDGs or 2030 Agenda among all public service as these are often targeted to only selected officials.

The survey also addressed potential priority training themes or topics that countries would see as important to equip institutions and civil service for the 2030 Agenda. The priority topic suggested for further training was “Changing public service mindsets” along with SDG 16 on accountability and institutional strengthening.

In addition, national institutions were surveyed on needs for support to better equip public service to achieve the SDGs with the key request for support focused on sharing knowledge resources, encompassing literature on the SDGs, especially case studies, and other teaching materials that schools could use in their programs.

In conclusion, the results show that substantial progress has been made in the region by public administration schools and civil service colleges in contextualizing and adapting the SDGs to national training programs. However, key gaps remain in terms of collaboration among public administration schools in the region for training the SDGs, to share knowledge resources and good practices, while developing a regionally-owned curriculum or modules for the SDGs to be integrated into national training. This in summary highlights the need for a regionally coordinated network on equipping public service with knowledge and skills to implement the SDG and 2030 Agenda. The network could then focus on the key requests from member state institutions, including sharing of national cases, the development of competency framework guidance, and a regional curriculum models as initial steps for continued engagement.

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## VIII. Annex – Survey Questions and Template

### Survey of Public Administration Training in Asia-Pacific - Inclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Civil Servant Curricula

Survey for Public Administration Training Institutes and Civil Service Academies

1. What training programs does your institution offer for civil servants?  
(Please share a general list and/or weblink where these could be found online)

2. How would you rate the awareness and knowledge among your civil servants on the Sustainable Development Goals?

Low awareness - there is almost no awareness and knowledge on the SDGs among civil service

Limited - there is limited awareness and knowledge on the SDGs among civil service

Some - there is awareness and knowledge but only among some groups in civil service

High - there is a high degree of awareness and knowledge of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

☐☐☐☐

Other (please specify)

3. Does your institution already offer a standalone training programme or curriculum on the Sustainable Development Goals for civil servants?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Other (please specify)

4. Does your institution integrate the 2030 Agenda and SDGs into existing training programmes - e.g. with a focus on SDGs topics such as Poverty, Gender, Environment, Accountability, etc.? *(If yes, please list examples of these training programmes)*

5. What are some of the ways your institution is planning to or would like to integrate the SDGs into its training for civil service?

- ☐ Through the development of a **standalone programme** for **all** entry-level, mid-career and/or senior officials
- ☐ Through the development of **new training programmes** for **only some officials** in specific parts or units of the public administration system
- ☐ Through integration of the SDGs into **all existing** training programmes for civil service
- ☐ Other (please specify)

6. If you would like to develop standalone new training programmes for public administration officials on the SDGs, please describe some of your plans or ideas in this regard.



7. If you would like to integrate the SDGs into existing training programmes, please describe any existing plans, projects or ideas in this regard.

8. To equip your national civil service to achieve the SDGs, what are some of your institution's priority topics for training on the SDGs? *(For example, Localizing the SDGs, Gender Equality as an Enabler for the SDGs, Changing Public Service Mindsets and the SDGs, Accountability and Institutional Strengthening and the SDGs, Core Functions to Plan and Implement the SDGs (i.e. planning, budgeting, financing, coordination, implementation outsourcing, monitoring, etc.)*

9. In your view, what support does your institution need to better equip public service to achieve the SDGs? (Please also state your country and/or institution name to see how we can follow up on these needs)

10. According to your knowledge, what are some other institutions engaged in training civil servants on the SDGs? *(e.g. universities, local government training institutes, other institutes, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc.)*