United Nations Public Service Awards

Submission Rules for Nominations

The **United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA)** recognizes excellence in public service at the global level. It was launched in 2003 in order to promote and support innovations in public service delivery worldwide. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[1], the UNPSA continues to promote creativity and innovations in public services in support of the 2030 Agenda.

The UNPSA process is managed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of the UNPSA is to promote and reward innovation and excellence in public services in support of the realization of the SDGs and the principle to leave no one behind, which is at the core of the 2030 Agenda. It takes into account the various levels of development of countries while reflecting the universal nature of the SDGs.

Through a global competition that promotes the **role**, **professionalism** and **visibility of public service**, the UNPSA aims to:

> **Highlight** innovations in governance;
> **Reward** excellence in the public sector;
> **Motivate** public servants to further promote innovation;
> **Enhance** professionalism in the public service;
> **Raise** the image of public service; and
> **Collect** and **disseminate** successful practices for possible replication.

THE MANDATE

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1 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all countries members of the United Nations in September 2015. It has 17 Sustainable Development Goals at its core https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld (See Annex III)

The UNPSA was created pursuant to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution of 2002, which endorsed a recommendation of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme on Public Administration and Finance (ECOSOC resolution, E/RES/2001/45). ECOSOC called for "the proclamation of a United Nations Public Service Day to celebrate the value and the virtue of service to the community at the local, national and global levels, with prizes to be awarded by the Secretary-General for contributions made to the cause of enhancing the role, prestige and visibility of public service".

The importance of the Awards was subsequently reiterated in 2015 by the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/69/327, which requested "the Secretary-General to continue to provide assistance, in particular to developing countries, at their request, in their efforts to strengthen public institutions and public services for sustainable development … including through the United Nations Public Service Day, the United Nations Public Service Awards and the United Nations Public Administration Network…". In 2016, ECOSOC further requested the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards (ECOSOC resolution, E/Res/2016/26).

THE AWARDS

The Awards are usually given out on 23 June, day designated by the General Assembly as the United Nations Public Service Day to "celebrate the value and virtue of public service to the community" (A/RES/57/277). The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/277, encourages Member States to organize special events on that Day to highlight the contribution of public service in the development process.

The UNPSA Ceremony is part of a United Nations Public Service Forum, which takes place in different regions of the world. For further information about the past events, please visit DPIDG website at https://publicadministration.un.org

The winners are decided according to the UN regional groups[2] as follows:

> Africa
> Asia and the Pacific
> Eastern Europe
> Latin America and the Caribbean
> Western Europe and other Groups

CATEGORIES

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[2] The UNPSA Regional Groups are listed in Annex I

The 2019 UNPSA will be given to those public institutions that have distinguished themselves in one of the following categories:

1. **Delivering inclusive and equitable services to leave no one behind**
2. **Ensuring integrated approaches in the public-sector institutions**
3. **Developing effective and accountable public institutions**
4. **Promoting digital transformation in public sector institutions**
5. **Promoting gender responsive public services to achieve the SDGs**

The criteria of the categories are listed in Annex II.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Award is open to all public-sector institutions at the national, state and local levels from all UN member states. In the case of innovative partnerships (including civil society, private sector, academia etc.), the nominee must be a public-sector institution;

Both self-nominations and nominations by third parties are accepted. Nominations should be made by an organization;

The initiative must be innovative and relevant to one of the UN Public Service Awards categories[3];

The initiative must have been implemented for a minimum of two years, with demonstrated and documented impact;

The application must be duly filled out;

The submission must include all the required supporting documents;

The initiative must not have already received a UNPS Award;

To avoid conflict of interest, the initiative must not be implemented by the United Nations System.

SELECTION CRITERIA

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[3] Once the nomination is submitted, the category cannot be changed even if it was found later that it was submitted to the wrong category. Nominators are therefore requested to pay special attention to the criteria of the various categories when choosing a category under which a nomination should be submitted.

Alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The initiative should aim to improve people's lives and respond to their needs and rights. It should enhance the contribution of public service to the realization of the SDGs.

Significance. The initiative must impact positively a group of the population and address a significant issue of public concern within the context of a given country or region.

Innovation. The initiative must present an innovative idea, a distinctively new approach, or a unique policy implemented in order to realize the SDGs or solve a problem of public concern, in the context of a given country or region.

Transferability. The initiative appears to be adaptable to other contexts (e.g. cities, countries or regions). There should ideally be evidence that it has inspired similar innovations in other public-sector institutions within a given country, region or at the global level.

Sustainability. The initiative should be able to be sustained and have positive impact on the future generations.

Impact. The initiative has had a formal evaluation, showing some evidence of impact on improving people's lives.

Stakeholders. The initiative must demonstrate that it has engaged stakeholders.

HOW TO APPLY

Who can nominate? Public sector institutions (e.g., ministries, Government departments, authorities and agencies; local governments, etc.), schools of public administration; UN agencies (only for initiatives which they have not supported); universities; non-governmental organizations and private sector.

Who can be nominated? All public institutions at the national, regional/provincial/state, local/municipal/city level from all UN member states are eligible for nomination. In the case of public-private partnerships, the lead nominee must be a public-sector institution.

How can nominations be made? A Nomination can only be submitted through the Online Nomination Form of the UNDESA/DPIDG website. Before accessing the online nomination form you are required to complete screening questions to ensure that eligibility criteria are met. In case you require technical assistance in the process of online submission, please contact the United Nations by email at: UNPSA@un.org or phone +1 (917) 367 3004. **The deadline for submitting nominations is 30 November 2018**.

The Online Nomination Form must be fully completed: all fields must contain the requested information. In the event that any field used to describe the initiative ("summary", "timeframe", "narrative", etc.) is left blank, or if the answer does not directly correspond to the question asked, the initiative will not be evaluated. Each field should not exceed the character limit indicated for each respective question, as per the nomination form. Any character beyond the limit will not be assessed by evaluators.

The nominations can be made only in one of the six UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish). However, it would be preferable, if possible, that nominations be submitted in one of the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat, which are English and French. Nominations in a language other than one of the six UN official languages will not be accepted.

What supporting documents are needed?
(1) A maximum of three supporting documents which include one evaluation report related to the initiative must be submitted. An internal or external evaluation/audit report of the initiative is required. The institution may submit other supporting documents of any kind (implementation plans, results of client/citizen surveys, books, links to videos, newspaper articles, etc.) to demonstrate and highlight the initiative's impact and outcome. Initiatives with no supporting documentation will not be reviewed.

(2) Two letters of reference: In addition to the above, two letters of reference, written by a third party (i.e., not by the institution being nominated nor by the nominator) are required. It should highlight the achievements resulting from the implementation of the initiative submitted, and underlines the reason why this initiative and/or institution is worthy of being awarded.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process consists of several rounds of evaluation. In the first round, the UNPSA Evaluation Team in UNDESA pre-screens online nominations vis-a-vis the selection criteria (see Annex II). Each initiative is evaluated taking into consideration the context of a given country or region. In the second round, a working group of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)[4] reviews the pre-screened nominations and recommends a short-list of the most innovative and impactful initiatives to the UN Secretary-General. Short-listed initiatives then undergo a process of validation to ensure congruence between the nomination documents and substantiated findings. Final selection of the winners from among the validated short-listed initiatives is made by the UN Secretary-General.

The evaluation process is strictly based on the activities and impact made by the specific initiative being awarded and not on other initiatives undertaken by the nominated institution. If the preliminary validation for a specific case reveals misconduct, the case is disqualified.

WHO RECEIVES THE AWARD?

Awards can only be conferred to public sector institutions that have ownership of the nominated

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[4] CEPA is a subsidiary advisory body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council comprising 24 experts acting in a personal capacity who meet annually at UN Headquarters in New York. The Committee is responsible for supporting the work of ECOSOC concerning the promotion and development of public administration and governance among Member States notably in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in support of the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals.

initiatives. Implementing agencies working on a consultancy basis are not eligible for UNPSA.

The award goes to the initiative and the institution that is responsible for implementing it, not to the individual that initiated or implemented it, nor to the country as such. An individual cannot be awarded.

In the case of public-private partnerships, the recognition goes to the public-sector institution.

Multiple initiatives can be submitted from each country.

DISQUALIFICATION OF NOMINATIONS

Institutions will be disqualified from any further evaluation for the following reasons:

1. Failure to observe the submission rules for the nomination
2. Any conflict of interest and non-adherence to the process by those concerned
3. Presenting misleading and false information and supporting documents
4. Inability to provide sufficient documentation to review the initiative
5. Unethical behaviour, including undue pressure on any person involved in the evaluation and selection process

REVOCATION OF AWARD

An award can be revoked at any point, if it has been established that an institution has failed to observe the UNPSA rules.

Annex I. UNPSA Regional Groups

Africa

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cabo Verde
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea

Eswatini
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia

Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
São Tomé and Príncipe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Asia and the Pacific

Afghanistan
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
China
Cyprus
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Fiji
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kiribati
Kuwait

Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Republic
Lebanon
Malaysia
Maldives
Marshall Islands
Micronesia (Federated States of)
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nauru
Nepal
Oman
Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Qatar
Republic of Korea

Samoa
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Tonga
Turkey*
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Yemen

Eastern Europe

Albania	Estonia	Romania
Armenia	Georgia	Russian Federation
Azerbaijan	Hungary	Serbia
Belarus	Latvia	Slovakia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lithuania	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Montenegro	The former Yugoslav
Croatia	Poland	Republic of Macedonia
Czech Republic	Republic of Moldova	Ukraine

Latin America and the Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominica	Nicaragua
Argentina	Dominican Republic	Panama
Bahamas	Ecuador	Paraguay
Barbados	El Salvador	Peru
Belize	Grenada	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Bolivia (Plurinational	Guatemala	Saint Lucia
State	Guyana	Saint Vincent and the
of)	Haiti	Grenadines
Brazil	Honduras	Suriname
Chile	Jamaica	Trinidad and Tobago
Colombia	Mexico	Uruguay
Costa Rica		Venezuela (Bolivarian
Cuba		Republic of)

Western Europe and Other Groups

Andorra	Iceland	Norway
Australia	Ireland	Portugal
Austria	Israel	San Marino
Belgium	Italy	Spain
Canada	Liechtenstein	Sweden
Denmark	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Finland	Malta	Turkey*
France	Monaco	United Kingdom
Germany	Netherlands	United States of America
Greece	New Zealand	

*Turkey, participates fully in both WEOG and Asian Group, but for electoral purposes is considered a member of WEOG only.

When reviewing each case, a set of questions is used to ascertain whether the initiative meets some or all of the category's criteria. For more information about each category's criteria, please see below.

1. **Delivering inclusive and equitable services to leave no one behind**

Introduces an innovative idea, policy, practice or structure
Introduces an idea, policy, practice, or structure that is distinctively new, innovative and unique in the context of a given country or region, for reaching the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged to ensure that they make progress towards the SDGs

Enhances efficiency and increase effectiveness
Streamlines processes, reduces red tape, and improves coordination and other measures to increase effectiveness and efficiency. An increase in effectiveness and efficiency must be supported through an evaluation mechanism giving quantifiable indicators

Provides access and equity to quality services
Increases the accessibility of quality and affordable public services to all, especially to the poorest and most vulnerable people, by addressing the obstacles and challenges (such as geography, income or other social or economic factors, security issues, care burden, mobility, discrimination related to sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity and other factors depending on the country or regional context) that hinder their access to public services

Develops and supports partnership in service delivery
Develops partnerships between public service and various stakeholders in public sector institutions, civil society, academia in design and implementation of public services

Ensures transparency in public service delivery
Introduces mechanisms to ensure that information about public services, rights, entitlements, obligations, policies, and decisions about public services can be easily obtained, especially by the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged

Ensures accountability in the delivery of public services
Introduces mechanisms through which people including the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged can hold the government accountable in the delivery of public services. Introduces and operates innovative mechanisms to provide feedback on the relevance, quality and cost of public services; report any wrongdoing; initiate investigations; file complaints or request compensation where relevant
Introduces and operates innovative mechanisms that ensure public officials are informed about the special needs of the poorest and most vulnerable; trained and equipped to meet the needs; and then held accountable when those needs are not met or when the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable people are not protected

2. Ensuring integrated approaches in the public-sector institutions

Introduces and operates institutional frameworks that integrate and harmonize policies, strategies and programmes for implementation of the 2030 Agenda
Uses innovative mechanisms to develop and/or implement institutional frameworks that facilitate and support collaboration, synergies, integration and harmony of government policies in support of national and local strategies. Develops infrastructure, people and processes that lead to participation, collaboration and maximizing synergies between different government sectors and institutions. Aligns government's holistic vision of sustainable development with inter-agency strategies, objectives, roles and responsibilities in a coherent way. Introduces and operates mechanisms that support and facilitate horizontal and vertical integration, among different levels and different sectoral departments of government in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public services

Foster leadership, human resource capacities and a collaborative organizational culture
Demonstrates clear vision, political will and understanding of available tools to improve government functions and human resources capacities to work across organizational boundaries. Designs and effectively implements strategies to change mind sets of public servants, prioritize integration and discourage working in silos. Provides an institutional framework and mechanisms that ensure a balance between cross-sectoral collaboration and sectoral accountability. Promotes an organizational culture that encourages collaboration to achieve shared goals

Supports and facilitates social inclusiveness and collaboration among government agencies and citizens
Promotes social inclusiveness by reaching out to the vulnerable and marginalized populations including (i) the poor; (ii) women; (iii) the persons with disabilities; (iv) the illiterate; (v) youth; (vi) the older persons; (viii) migrants; and (viii) the indigenous peoples. Increases communication and interaction among government agencies and citizens with the objective of improving information flow, responsiveness, transparency and accountability. Includes channels for active participation of citizens for monitoring and evaluation

Enhances organizational performance, interoperability, and open standard
Enhances organizational performance by integrating vital government services across different agencies by using open standards, open data and encourages use of shared systems. Minimizes duplication of efforts and countereffects of conflicting programmes. Reduces costs through knowledge sharing, effective deployment of resources through integration of operations, utilization of innovative channels and tools. Allows different systems to exchange information, to combine it with other information resources and to subsequently process it in a meaningful manner both horizontally and vertically with due respect for data integrity and data privacy

3. Developing effective and accountable public institutions

Introduces an innovative idea, policy, practice or structure
Introduces an idea, policy, practice, or structure that is distinctively new, innovative and unique in the context of a given country or region that ensures and enhances responsiveness and

accountability of public institutions to the people
Promotes participation and inclusiveness
Uses new mechanisms, tools, and approaches to engage people and civil society organizations in decision making on policies and programmes. Facilitates people to channel their demands and views and express their needs to the relevant institutions and public servants. Uses a variety of approaches, methods and instruments that are synchronised with the needs and abilities of various groups of people to ensure responsiveness and accountability
Increases transparency and people's access to information
Implements new mechanisms or approaches to ensure access to public sector information; Provides information in an easy and accessible manner. Puts in place mechanisms and approaches for regular monitoring and evaluation of results involving the people as beneficiaries
Improves accountability
Promotes accountability for results. Empowers people with tools and access to demand accountability, share their needs; observe, monitor and analyze government decision-making, policies and service delivery; provide feedback on government services; report any wrongdoing; initiate investigations; file complaints or claims to be compensated where necessary, including through organizations representing them
Foster leadership, human resource capacities and a collaborative organizational culture
Demonstrate clear vision, political will and understanding of the Information and Communication Technologies tools to improve government functions and human resources capacities to work across organizational boundaries through continuous learning, training and other capacity-building activities. Promotes an organizational culture that encourages collaboration to achieve shared goals and outcomes to increase public value. Understands capacity development strategies that change mindsets of public servants to value equity, inclusiveness, and collaboration

4. **Promoting digital transformation in public sector institutions**

Introduces an innovative idea, policy, practice, structure or tool
Introduces an idea, policy, practice, or structure or tool that is distinctively new, innovative and unique in the context of a given country or region that promotes digital transformation.
Uses frontier technologies to transform public administration
Involves transformation within a large framework rather than incremental improvements. Applies the culture, practices, business models and technologies of the internet era to people's raised expectations. Applies innovative methods, tools and techniques, in the context of a given country or region, to transform public sector organizations through the application of effective knowledge management systems and/or strategic application of ICT in service provision and in digital government with a special focus on new technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, deep-machine learning, blockchain, big data, cloud computing, and Internet of Things.
Promotes cross-sectoral digital cooperation and understanding

Promotes cooperation that come with the scale and rapidity of changes brought about by digital technologies, ideally cutting uniquely across international boundaries. Promotes digital cooperation across organizations, institutions, sectors and/or across borders that is critical to realizing the full social and economic potential of digital economy as well as mitigating the risks the digital technology could pose.

Ensures equal access to public services and citizen engagement
Enables all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, to have equal access to digital technologies and online services, to support them in improving their life for themselves and their families and raise their voices in conversations with public institutions and about what the future holds.

Improves public sector workforce skills and productivity
Enhances public sector workforce skills to respond and use tools of digital transformation at the task level, process level, function level and organization level by providing technical and organizational resources that encourage continuous learning through, for example, the establishment of communities of practices (connecting people with know-how across government and leveraging the expertise of people within and outside the organization), as well as training and capacity development activities in the area of digital transformation. Promotes productivity by using digital tools and understanding and trust in these tools.

Improves effectiveness, efficiency, openness, and accountability
Delivers products and services that are simpler, cheaper, responsive, open, and at the same time increases the operational efficiency. Uses digital technologies to increase network connectivity, service delivery and communication flow between employees, citizens, business community, with the objective of improving effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and trustworthiness in digital government.

5. **Promoting gender responsive public services to achieve the SDGs**

Introduces an innovative idea, policy, practice or structure
Introduces a distinctively new approach to promoting the participation of citizens, with specific focus on women and girls, in policymaking; this may be through the application of a new knowledge management technique, unique policy, or implementation design in the context of a given country or region

Provides access to high-quality, affordable services for women
Provides increased access to sustainable, high quality and affordable public services for women and girls; includes innovations in service delivery mechanisms that cater to the specific needs of women and girls, including the poorest and most vulnerable, in particular responding to the specific discrimination they face, their care burden, mobility and access issues and security risks

Promotes transparency and accountability in service delivery to women
Provides mechanisms that help women to easily obtain information and feedback about government actions, and their own rights and entitlements, to initiate investigations, to convey needs or

concerns, or to seek and be compensated where necessary. Ensures officials are sanctioned when women's and girls' rights and needs are ignored or when their rights for service delivery are not protected

Promotes participation of women in decision-making and delivery of public services to women
Creates mechanisms to increase the ability of women to contribute to government decision-making and processes, including participatory budgeting and planning processes, and mechanisms allowing people to give feedback on issues related to public services
Promotes responsiveness to the needs of women and girls
Enhances responsiveness of government to the demands and needs of women and girls, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable; Implements new processes and institutional mechanisms to channel the demands and views of men and women and enable governments – policy makers and public officials – to better interact with the public, for instance, to better express their needs, participate in and influence policy-making; comment on policy implementation; provide feedback on government services (on and off-line services); and file complaints
Promotes gender parity in public service
Introduces incentives and changes in employment policies, including recruitment, promotion, training, compensation and career management policies, to increase the number of women in the public sector at all levels, including those in the front lines and at decision making levels
Transforms administration
Involves transformation of the way a public institution works, rather than incremental improvements, to promote women's and girls' rights and respond to their needs. These may include innovative ways to deliver public services, including through e-government; a change in organizational culture, administrative reforms, or the overhaul of governmental procedures for gender responsive and accountable service delivery

Annex III. Sustainable Development Goals