



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG)

Expert Group Meeting on budgeting and planning in support of effective institutions for the Sustainable Development Goals

World Public Sector Report 2019

Concept note

12 December 2018

## **Context**

The primary objective of the workshop is to inform the preparation of the chapter on planning and budgeting of the World Public Sector Report 2019.

The objective of the chapter is to show how budget processes can support national institutions to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through their relations to the institutional principles highlighted in SDG 16, including effectiveness, accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, access to information, inclusive decision-making and non-discrimination. These principles are the common lens which all the chapters of the World Public Sector Report will use.

Like the rest of the report, the chapter will be global in scope. During its preparation, authors are going to be looking for: (i) reviews or meta-reviews of the effectiveness of different types of practices and institutional approaches within the fields of planning and budgeting with respect to enhancing accountability, transparency, effectiveness, etc., and ultimately improving outcomes for citizens; and (ii) country case studies that can illustrate these arguments (positive as well as negative) in the context of the implementation of the SDGs.

## **Conceptual framework for the meeting**

The expert group meeting (EGM) will examine whether the more integrated policy approaches that the Agenda is putting forward are being realized regarding the planning and budget processes. The structure

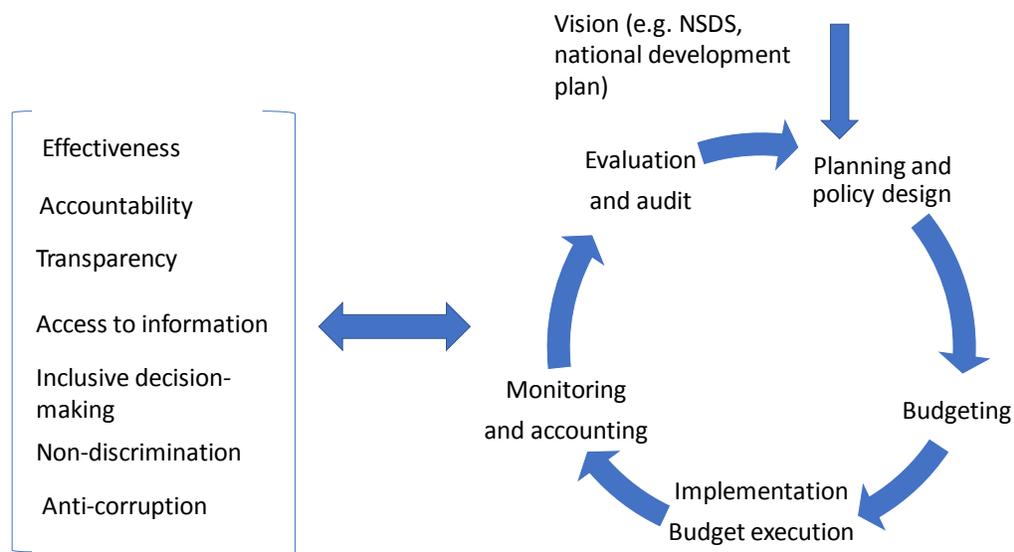
of the meeting will be organized around the institutional principles highlighted in SDG 16, and examine the linkages between those and the various stages of the policy/budget cycle (see Figure 1 below). In particular, attention will be given to the extent to which such linkages exist, in both directions, and what practices and tools are used in different contexts to address issues emerging from them. For example, the meeting will examine how the budget process can be structured in such a way as to enhance transparency, as well as how transparency policies can contribute to more integrated planning, budgeting and implementation processes for the SDGs.

**Objective of the meeting**

Given this, the objective of the EGM is to convene individual experts working on these issues worldwide to take stock of recent developments in practice and knowledge. The goal is not to present case studies (even though illustrations are welcome), or to defend specific approaches, but to debate the main trends, orientations and problems, in a way that can easily be synthesized and presented in the World Public Sector Report.

Output: Ideally, the output/ outcome of the EGM should be a collection (organized by institutional principle or clusters of principles) of “state of knowledge” briefs that would flesh out the views of the participants on: (i) the main (recent) current of thoughts and initiatives going on in relation to the principle in question in terms of planning and budgeting; (ii) known results/ evaluations of various institutional approaches; and (iii) challenges, limitations and possible developments in the near future.

**Figure 1: Framework for the meeting**



**Participants**

The number of participants will be limited (around 15 external participants) in order to have a workshop-type discussion. Participants will be drawn from the following pool: government representatives, from countries participating in the GIFT initiative; academic experts on these issues; International Budget Partnership; supreme audit institutions with good examples regarding budget

oversight and/or regarding evaluating SDG budgeting (e.g. US GAO); CEPA experts; UNDP; UNICEF; World Bank; and others.

Condition for participation: (i) write a short paper based on specifications from DPIDG and share it before the meeting; (ii) agree to participate in the post-meeting review of the “state of knowledge” briefs that will be produced for each principle.

**Date and venue**

New York, UN Headquarters, 4-5 February 2019.

**Structure/ format**

Apart from the opening and closing and a session to introduce the report, the main part of the meeting will be devoted to discussions on the linkages between the planning and budget process and clusters of institutional principles from SDG 16. For each session, DPIDG will prepare a synthesis of the contributions received, the main points of which will be introduced at the beginning of the session and discussed. During the sessions, examples will be collected, as well as references to effectiveness, impacts, challenges, promising tools and practices, and possible future developments in the field under consideration. A recapitulation session at the end of the second day will validate the main insights from the meeting, which could be reflected in the chapter of the World Public Sector Report. This would include a discussion on the relationships that exist between the various principles in relation to budgeting and planning (for example, the connections between budget transparency initiatives and accountability).

**Tentative agenda**

<b>Day 1</b>
Opening
<p>Session 1: Context: World Public Sector Report 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the concept for the report</li> <li>• The chapter on budget within the report</li> <li>• Expectations from the meeting</li> </ul>
<p>Session 2: Planning and budget processes in support of the SDGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning planning and budget processes with the SDGs</li> <li>• Planning for the SDGs – Inputs for the budget process</li> <li>• Budgeting for SDGs: (i) upstream / budget formulation and financial planning; (ii) downstream /budget execution and oversight</li> </ul>
<p>Session 3: Budgets, transparency and access to information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the various stages of the budget and planning processes be structured in a way that enhances transparency?</li> <li>• How do transparency policies and oversight in various areas contribute to more effective planning, budgeting and implementation processes?</li> <li>• What are recent examples at the national and subnational levels?</li> <li>• What are emerging issues in this field?</li> </ul>
<p>Session 4: Budgets, inclusive decision-making and non-discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can budget and planning processes be structured to promote non-discrimination and inclusiveness?</li> <li>• What are promising examples at the systemic and sector levels?</li> <li>• How can budget and planning processes be made inclusive and participatory? What are the trends?</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does inclusiveness in decision-making w.r.t. planning and budget impact planning and budget outcomes?</li> <li>• What are emerging issues in this field?</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2</b>
<p>Session 5: Budgets and anti-corruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do corruption risks affect the different stages of the planning and budget process, and how can the associated issues be addressed?</li> <li>• How can planning and budget processes be structured to minimize corruption?</li> <li>• What are good examples of practices and tools addressing these issues at the systemic and sector levels?</li> <li>• What are emerging issues in this field?</li> </ul>
<p>Session 6: Budgets and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have initiatives to promote accountability in the public sector (international, national) focused on different stages of the budget and planning processes?</li> <li>• How can the various stages of the budget and planning processes be designed so as to enhance accountability?</li> <li>• What are good examples at the sector level?</li> <li>• What are emerging issues in this field?</li> </ul>
<p>Session 7: Revisiting the links between planning, budgeting and the institutional principles of SDG 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going back to the discussions of the first day and seeing what has changed in our understanding based on the sessions and inputs</li> <li>• Validation of main messages for the chapter, by cluster of principles</li> <li>• Relationships, synergies, challenges among initiatives focusing on different principles</li> </ul>
Wrap-up and closing