



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. In 2016, the UNPSA was reviewed in order to be aligned with the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)¹.

The UNPSA is organized and managed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), 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

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 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).

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 AWARDS

The Awards are usually handed 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. In 2018, the Forum will take place in the Kingdom of Morocco. For further information about this the 2018 United Nations Public Service Forum and past events, please visit [DPADM website](#).

In order to ensure a level playing field for nominations from different countries, the winners are decided according to the UN regional groups² as follows:

- Africa
- Asia and the Pacific
- Eastern Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Western Europe and Other Groups

CATEGORIES

The 2018 UNPSA will be given to those public institutions that have distinguished themselves in one of the following categories:

- 1. Reaching the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and partnerships;**
- 2. Making institutions inclusive and ensuring participation in decision-making;**
- 3. 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 categories³;
- 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.
- The initiative must not be directly implemented, by the United Nations System

² The UNPSA Regional Groups are listed in Annex I

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.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- ❑ **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/DPADM [website](#). Before accessing the online nomination form you are required to reply to some screening questions in order 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: UNPSA2018@un.org or phone +1 (917) 367 3004.

The deadline for submitting nominations is **7 February 2018**. A few extra days after the deadline will be granted for uploading the supporting documents. The deadline for uploading the supporting documents is **12 February 2018**.

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 made in other languages (besides the six UN official languages) will not be accepted.

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.

NOTE: 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.

What supporting documents are needed?

(1) A minimum of two and a maximum of three supporting documents: Supporting documents are any kind of material (implementation plans, evaluation and audit reports, results of client/citizen surveys, books, links to videos, newspaper articles, etc.) the institution may wish to submit to validate and highlight its nomination.

(2) Two letters of reference: In addition to the above, two letters of reference are requested. A letter of reference is a letter written by a third party (i.e., not by the institution being nominated nor by the nominator). It should point out 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.

The initiative must demonstrate and document its impact, including through formal evaluation findings. Institutions are required to upload the above relevant documents through the online system. Initiatives with no additional documentation will not be reviewed.

NOTE: Once the online nomination form is submitted, you will receive an email with all the information on how to upload the supporting documents. Please make sure you upload your supporting documents by 12 February 2018 Midnight Eastern Time (EST) Zone.

Multiple initiatives can be submitted from each country. However, only one initiative per country can be awarded in a given year.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process consists of several evaluation rounds, including by the UNPSA Evaluation Team and by a sub-committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)⁴ which proposes initiatives to be selected by the UN Secretary-General. Each initiative is evaluated taking into consideration the context of a given country or region. The evaluation team screens and pre-selects the online nominations vis-a-vis the selection criteria (see Annex II). Short-listed initiatives undergo a process of verification and validation, which is implemented to ascertain congruence between the nomination documents and what happens on the ground.

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 certain concerns e.g. mismanagement, the case will be disqualified.

WHO RECEIVES THE AWARD?

Awards can only be conferred to public sector institutions that have ownership of the nominated initiatives. An implementing agency is not qualified to receive an award even if it was involved in implementing the initiative on a consultancy basis.

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.

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

REVOCAION OF AWARD

An award can be revoked by a recommendation of the CEPA sub-committee for consideration by the

⁴ CEPA is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Secretary-General at any point, if it has been established that an institution has failed to observe the UNPSA rules. This decision is final.

Annex I. UNPSA Regional Groups

Africa

Algeria	Ethiopia	Niger
Angola	Gabon	Nigeria
Benin	Gambia	Rwanda
Botswana	Ghana	São Tomé and Príncipe
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Senegal
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Seychelles
Cabo Verde	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Cameroon	Lesotho	Somalia
Central African Republic	Liberia	South Africa
Chad	Libya	South Sudan
Comoros	Madagascar	Sudan
Congo	Malawi	Swaziland
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Togo
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mauritania	Tunisia
Djibouti	Mauritius	Uganda
Egypt	Morocco	United Republic of Tanzania
Equatorial Guinea	Mozambique	Zambia
Eritrea	Namibia	Zimbabwe

Asia and the Pacific

Afghanistan	Kyrgyzstan	Samoa
Bahrain	Lao People's Republic	Saudi Arabia
Bangladesh	Lebanon	Singapore
Bhutan	Malaysia	Solomon Islands
Brunei Darussalam	Maldives	Sri Lanka
Cambodia	Marshall Islands	Syrian Arab Republic
China	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Tajikistan
Cyprus	Mongolia	Thailand
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Myanmar	Timor-Leste
Fiji	Nauru	Tonga
India	Nepal	Turkey*
Indonesia	Oman	Turkmenistan
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Pakistan	Tuvalu
Iraq	Palau	United Arab Emirates
Japan	Papua New Guinea	Uzbekistan
Jordan	Philippines	Vanuatu
Kazakhstan	Qatar	Vietnam
Kiribati	Republic of Korea	Yemen
Kuwait		

Eastern Europe

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

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

Andorra Australia Austria Belgium Canada Denmark Finland France Germany Greece	Iceland Ireland Israel Italy Liechtenstein Luxembourg Malta Monaco Netherlands New Zealand	Norway Portugal San Marino Spain Sweden Switzerland Turkey* United Kingdom United States of America
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*_Turkey, participates fully in both WEOG and Asian Group, but for electoral purposes is considered a member of WEOG only.

Annex II. UNPSA Categories and their Evaluation Criteria

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.

Category 1. Reaching the poorest and most vulnerable⁵ through inclusive services and partnerships

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 poorest and most vulnerable and ensuring that they make progress towards the SDGs

Provides access to quality services for the poorest and most vulnerable

Increases the access of the poorest and most vulnerable people to quality and affordable public services. This can be done notably by addressing the obstacles that hinder their access to public services 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. This can also include introducing new approaches to delivering services or claiming rights and obtaining benefits, so that the poorest and most vulnerable can access those more easily.

Promotes partnerships for the poorest and most vulnerable

Promote partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, skills, technologies and financial resources to support the poorest and most vulnerable

Encourage and promote effective partnerships between public, private and civil society organizations to deliver public services or respond to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Those can be based on experience and strategies that can empower the poorest and most vulnerable to reach the SDGs in various areas

Promotes transparency in public service delivery

Creates mechanisms to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable (and those who represent or assist them) can easily obtain information about public services -notably services related to the SDGs- , related decisions and approaches, as well as about their own rights and entitlements.

Promotes accountability on delivery of public service to the poorest and most vulnerable

Creates mechanisms that can help the poorest and most vulnerable (and those representing or assisting them) to hold the government accountable on the delivery of public services.

This may include mechanisms allowing them 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 mechanisms that ensure that public officials are informed about the special needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, trained and equipped to meet them and held accountable when these needs are ignored or when the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable people are not protected.

⁵ Those furthest behind usually include persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous people, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, older persons, refugees, internally displaced persons, those who live in extreme poverty or destitute conditions as well as other people depending on the country or regional context.

Category 2. Making institutions inclusive and ensuring participation in decision-making

Introduces an innovative idea/policy/practice/structure:

- Introduces an idea, policy, practice or structure that is distinctively new, innovative and unique in the context of a given country or region Enhance the formal and informal participation of all individuals and groups in public decision-making processes or policies, approaches and measures related to public services and other aspects impacting on their lives. Institutionalize and/or strengthen participatory decision-making and consultation processes at the national and local level
- Strengthen the capacity of national or local governments and public institutions responsible for overseeing or delivering public services to engage people in preparing and implementing decisions, especially the poor and vulnerable people
- Promote a professional, merit based and well equipped civil service to ensure continuous and consistent institutional performance for an effective public services delivery

Fights discrimination and promotes equality

- Promulgates new or strengthens existing legislation, policy, regulation or measure to fight discrimination, exclusion and exploitation, and to extend access to public services and developmental opportunities, assets and resources for all, including women and girls, and the poorest and most vulnerable.

Promotes robust legal framework

- Promotes the application of the existing legal and regulatory framework relevant to anti-discrimination and inclusion, or develop additional laws and regulations that foster changes in norms, attitudes and behaviour that combat discrimination, including through promoting diversity, dialogue, interaction and collaboration.

Promotes participatory decision-making:

- Implements new processes and institutional mechanisms to channel the demands and views of people and enables governments – policy makers and public officials – to better interact with the public, particularly individual people, and allows people, 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.
- Clearly supports inclusion, participation and engagement of all people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, including through focusing on specific groups of the population and especially those in vulnerable situations, so that after the effective implementation of the initiative, all or some of these groups can participate more fully in society and in decision-making.
- Institutes, nationally and/or locally, multi-stakeholder engagement processes.

Promotes responsiveness

- Enhances responsiveness of government to the demands and needs of citizens and ensures the inclusion of the views of concerned sections of the community in public affairs. Promotes Participation through New Institutional Mechanisms

Category 3. Promoting gender responsive public services to achieve the SDGs

This category will be managed in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

<p>Introduces an Innovative Idea/Policy/Practice/or Structure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Introduces a distinctively new approach to promoting the participation of citizens, especially poor women, 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.</p>
<p>Provides access to high-quality, affordable services for women</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Provides increased access to sustainable, high quality and affordable public services for women; Includes innovations in service delivery mechanisms that cater to the specific needs of women, including the poorest and most vulnerable, in particular responding to the specific discrimination faced by women, their care burden, mobility and access issues and security risks faced by women.</p>
<p>Promotes transparency accountability in service delivery to women</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 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 that officials are sanctioned when women's rights and needs are ignored or when women's rights for service delivery are not protected.</p>
<p>Promotes participation of women in decision-making and delivery of public services to women</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 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</p>
<p>Promotes responsiveness to the needs of women</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enhances responsiveness of government to the demands and needs of women, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable; Implements new processes and institutional mechanisms to channel the demands and views of people and enables governments – policy makers and public officials – to better interact with the public, particularly individual people, and allows people, 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.</p>
<p>Promotes gender parity in public service</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 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 line and at decision making levels.</p>
<p>Transforms administration</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Involves transformation of the way a public institution works, rather than incremental improvements, to promote women's rights and respond to needs of women. These may include innovative ways to deliver public services, including through e-government; a change in organizational culture, administrative reforms, or the overhaul of government procedures for gender responsive service delivery.</p>

Annex III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development