



## **WORKSHOP 4**

Skilling, and Upskilling the Public Sector  
Workforce - What's Next After GenAI?

**CONCEPT NOTE**

## Introduction

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

The Forum will be comprised of a series of workshops where various elements related to the overall theme will be explored in more detail. This workshop will explore the evolving impact of artificial intelligence on the public sector, focusing on strategies to bridge the skills gap, strengthen digital and data literacy, and equip public sector employees with the competencies needed to harness emerging technologies such as generative AI and agentic AI for effective and responsible governance.

## Objective

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This workshop aims to equip the public sector workforce with the knowledge, skills, and practical tools needed to navigate and lead in the era of AI transformation, while also exploring what comes next. Participants will examine how to identify and address evolving skills gaps, strengthen digital and data literacy, and understand the transformative potential of emerging technologies such as generative AI and agentic AI. Through forward-looking discussions, the workshop will support the development of an AI-ready public workforce capable of leveraging frontier technologies to enhance public service delivery and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Focus

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The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, including both traditional and generative AI (GenAI), has created unprecedented opportunities for public sector innovation and transformation. As highlighted in the UN Global Digital Compact, digital technologies are fundamentally reshaping how governments deliver services, engage with citizens, and address complex societal challenges. The adoption of the Pact for the Future at the UN Summit of the Future on September 22, 2024, further underscores the international community's commitment to harnessing digital technologies to advance sustainable development, peace, and security.

However, the integration of AI technologies into public administration has also widened the skills gap faced by many public sector workforces. The evolving AI landscape raises challenges for the future of work, including in the public sector, such as increasing skills gaps and job displacement.<sup>1</sup> This necessitates proactive measures, including workforce retraining, to mitigate the risk of deepening digital disparities. The rapid pace of technological change, particularly in the field of AI, calls for a proactive and coordinated approach to workforce development.

As governments transition from exploring GenAI applications to preparing for the next wave of AI innovation—particularly agentic AI systems that can autonomously execute complex tasks—there is an urgent need to invest in targeted skilling and upskilling initiatives. To build strong institutions, the public sector entities must invest in targeted skilling and upskilling initiatives to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. These efforts are not only essential to align with the aspirations of the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact but also to build strong public institutions capable of effectively and efficiently delivering service.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/blog/governing-artificial-intelligence-all>

## Structure

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### ***Session 1: Next-Generation Public Servants: Building Skills for Future Government Delivery.***

As part of intensified digitalization and modernization efforts in recent years, public sectors across governments are increasingly harnessing digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) to complement and assist in their service delivery, processes and operations. The digital transformation of government services has revealed critical competency gaps among public servants worldwide. Studies indicate that many civil servants lack advanced IT and data analysis skillsets essential for implementing digital government policies effectively.<sup>2</sup> There is a lack of professional workforce within government organizations who are capable of developing, maintaining, training and working with AI technologies. [UNESCO's Digital Competency Frameworks in Government](#) recommends that governments conduct systematic assessments across different levels of administration to identify specific competency gaps, enabling tailored training programs that address both technical and non-technical skills required for digital governance in the AI era. The UN Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact emphasize that comprehensive skills gap analysis must serve as the foundation for developing next-generation public servants, identifying not only technical deficiencies but also gaps in innovation mindset and digital leadership capabilities. Addressing these gaps is particularly crucial as automation and AI integration transform public sector operations, requiring a workforce capable of adapting to new digital tools while maintaining ethical governance and public trust.

To prepare for this shift, governments are increasingly investing in AI readiness tools that assess institutional and individual capabilities in leveraging artificial intelligence for policy implementation and public service delivery. These tools help evaluate factors such as workforce proficiency, digital infrastructure, and regulatory preparedness, ensuring a smooth transition toward AI-driven governance.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this session is to explore practical tools, approaches and training resources for building essential digital and AI competencies among the public workforce for future delivery. The session examines methodologies for identifying skills gaps, evaluating AI readiness, and implementing successful digital transformation initiatives. By addressing these interconnected aspects, the session seeks to provide participants with actionable insights for developing a future-ready public workforce capable of leveraging emerging technologies while maintaining human-centered governance.

#### **Guiding questions:**

- What core competencies are essential for the next generation public servants to navigate today's complex policy and operational challenges?
- What are key fundamentals and practical tools in AI designed to equip public officials with skills related to artificial intelligence?
- How can government agencies build a public service of the future that is agile and capable of attracting, retaining, and developing top talent—empowering them to harness emerging technologies and drive innovation to address pressing public needs and adapt swiftly to fast-changing global circumstances?
- How can government design and implement effective learning and development strategies to continuously upskill and reskill their workforce and foster a culture of lifelong learning that meets the demands of a rapidly changing environment?

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO (2022). [Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Competencies for Civil Servants](#).

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO and OECD (2024). [G7 Toolkit for AI in the Public Sector](#)

- How can governments systematically identify and prioritize the most critical digital competency gaps among public servants, particularly in contexts where resources for upskilling are limited?
- How can AI readiness assessment tools be effectively adapted to different governmental contexts, and what metrics should these tools prioritize to ensure they provide actionable insights for workforce development?

## ***Session 2: Digital and Data Literacy for Public Sector Excellence.***

Twenty years ago, hardly any public organization offered digital services.<sup>4</sup> Today, digital technologies shape our lives, organizations, economies and societies, creating opportunities that we must take and risks that we must tackle. The UN Global Digital Compact recognizes the importance of digital skills and lifelong access to digital learning opportunities. By strengthening digital know-how public sectors can improve their work, help empower societies, close the digital divide and address risks of harm. Building modern digital capacities means transforming an organization's technologies, skills and processes towards digitally enabled solutions that improve connectivity, service delivery, stakeholder collaboration, engagement and decision-making – in ways that are secure, responsible and inclusive. The skills required for digitalization extend beyond technological competencies. It is necessary to support the acquisition of core digital capabilities in areas such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, data security and Web 3.0, but it is equally important to ensure that public workforce are strong in terms of data literacy and digital literacy and are able to adopt digital mindsets and participate in a process of continuous evolution.<sup>5</sup> Digital literacy for the public sector has become one of the top priorities worldwide – public workforce need to be able to use ICT tools to improve internal processes, deliver better services, and respond to the public's changing needs.<sup>6</sup>

Advancements in data access, collection, management, analysis, and utilization across public sector institutions have played a pivotal role in enhancing service delivery, operational efficiency, and the overall effectiveness of government programmes. As data becomes more integrated into decision-making processes, the experiences of citizens, beneficiaries, public sector employees, and data specialists continue to evolve. To ensure that government institutions remain agile in an increasingly data-driven landscape, building organizational data literacy and programme capacity is essential. Equipping public sector workforce with the skills to read, interpret, and communicate data in their respective roles strengthens evidence-based decision-making and promotes informed policy development. Data and analytics are no longer the sole domain of specialists, such as data engineers and scientists. Rather, data literacy is emerging as a fundamental competency across the public workforce, enabling inclusive and effective governance.

The objective of this session is to equip participants with the necessary digital and data literacy skills to enhance governance, service delivery, and decision-making. This session aims to strengthen the digital know-how of public sector workforce by fostering competencies in key areas such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data security. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of data literacy across all levels of governance, ensuring that public workforce can effectively access, interpret, and utilize data for evidence-based policymaking. By promoting a digitally skilled workforce and an inclusive approach to digital transformation, the session seeks to empower government institutions to bridge the digital divide, enhance connectivity, and implement responsible, data-driven solutions that improve public service delivery.

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<sup>4</sup> UN 2.0 Quintet of Change

<sup>5</sup> UN e-Government Survey 2024

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2022). [Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Competencies for Civil Servants](#).

### Guiding questions:

- Why are digital and data literacy essential for public sector organizations, and how do they contribute to more effective and inclusive governance?
- What key competencies (technical and non-technical) should public sector workforce develop to thrive in a data-driven and digitally transformed environment?
- How can public institutions effectively collect manage and safeguard data while ensuring privacy security and public trust?
- How can public sector organizations design effective digital literacy initiatives that not only raise awareness about available digital services but also ensure inclusive capacity-building, enabling diverse populations to confidently engage with and benefit from digital government solutions?
- How can public sector organizations build a workforce that is not only proficient in data literacy but also capable of critically assessing data quality, limitations, and ethical considerations to ensure responsible and effective data-driven decision-making?
- How can governments bridge the digital skills gap and ensure equitable access to digital learning opportunities across all levels of the workforce?

### ***Session 3: Generative AI in Government: The Next Frontier of Public Services.***

Generative Artificial Intelligence, or GenAI, is currently one of the most prominent and rapidly evolving fields within artificial intelligence. It uses deep learning techniques, especially artificial neural networks, to create original and realistic content. Many GenAI applications today are powered by foundation models, which are large AI systems trained on diverse and extensive datasets. These models are designed to be flexible and capable of performing a wide variety of tasks, such as generating images and videos, describing visual content, or translating text into different languages.<sup>7</sup>

GenAI is already reshaping the workforce by automating routine tasks, redefining job roles, and augmenting human capabilities. In the public sector, it is rapidly transforming the landscape of service delivery and governance. As governments explore GenAI's potential to enhance efficiency, responsiveness, there is an urgent need to ensure that public institutions are not only adopting new technologies, but also building the human capacity required to use them effectively and responsibly.

This session is grounded in the understanding that GenAI will only be transformative in the public sector if civil servants are empowered with the skills and knowledge to understand, evaluate, and apply these tools. Skilling and upskilling the public workforce on GenAI is therefore a key pillar of digital government transformation. This involves more than technical training; it requires critical thinking around data ethics, algorithmic transparency, human oversight, and the alignment of AI use with public values and policy priorities.<sup>8</sup>

The session will explore how GenAI is being applied across different government contexts and how it can be harnessed to build more adaptive and future-ready institutions. Drawing from national GenAI policy developments and use cases from countries such as the Republic of Korea and Japan, the discussion will emphasize the importance of public-private partnerships, ongoing learning, and leadership that promotes innovation while safeguarding the public interest.

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<sup>7</sup> [AI for Good Impact Report](#), ITU, 2024

<sup>8</sup> [Ensuring Transparency and Accountability of Artificial Intelligence Systems in Public Administration](#), UN CEPA 2025 (E/C.16/2025/4).

### **Guiding Questions:**

- What are the key competencies and skills public officials need to effectively use and oversee GenAI technologies in their work?
- How can governments design training and capacity-building programs that address not only the technical, but also the ethical and governance dimensions of GenAI?
- What are some promising examples of GenAI being used in public service delivery, and what lessons can we draw from them?
- How can public-private partnerships support the upskilling of the public sector workforce in GenAI, and what safeguards should be in place to ensure alignment with public values?
- What institutional and cultural shifts are needed within government to foster a workforce that is both digitally capable and innovation-driven?

### ***Session 4: Understanding Agentic AI: Streamlining Public Sector Workflows.***

Agentic AI is emerging as the next frontier in public sector innovation, offering capabilities that extend beyond traditional automation. These systems are designed to reason, plan, remember, and act autonomously<sup>9</sup>, requiring minimal human input once deployed. Agentic AI performs tasks on behalf of users, which can significantly improve operational efficiency and service delivery when implemented thoughtfully.

In the public sector, agentic AI is starting to be used to enhance workflows and support human workers in areas such as facilities management and healthcare, where timely decision-making and responsiveness are critical. For instance, in Singapore, AI agents have been deployed alongside facility managers to proactively identify and resolve issues in building management systems, demonstrating the practical benefits of human-AI collaboration.<sup>10</sup>

The integration of agentic AI into public sector environments requires not only the adoption of advanced technologies but also a capable and future-ready workforce. Civil servants must be prepared to work alongside AI agents by developing new competencies that span both technical and strategic domains. This includes understanding where agentic AI fits into organizational workflows, how to maintain appropriate levels of human oversight, and how to ensure that decisions made by AI align with public values and ethical standards.

This session will explore the transformative role of agentic AI in improving public sector workflows and highlight the importance of building a workforce equipped to manage and collaborate with such technologies. The session aims to help public institutions think critically and strategically about deploying agentic AI in ways that enhance service delivery while maintaining transparency, accountability, and trust.

### **Guiding questions:**

- What distinguishes agentic AI from other forms of AI, such as generative AI, and how can it contribute to more effective and responsive public services?
- In what areas of government operations can agentic AI be introduced to improve efficiency, and how can policy makers identify the most suitable use cases?
- What types of skills and organizational changes are needed to prepare the public sector workforce to work effectively with agentic AI?
- How can governments ensure that the use of agentic AI includes appropriate safeguards?

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<sup>9</sup> [AI for Good Global Summit 2025 to tackle the rise of autonomous AI](#)

<sup>10</sup> [GovInsider Asia](#)



- What policies and infrastructure must be in place to support the responsible and scalable deployment of agentic AI in government institutions?

## Organizational Details

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

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