Thematic Evaluation

Contribution of the UNDP-Led Regional Platforms to Regional Sustainable Development and Cooperation

May 2024

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project	Institutional Support to the Astana Civil Service Hub, Phase 3
Quantum ID	00123513
Corporate outcome and output	CPD Output 2.2: Institutions and systems enabled to develop and implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and local levels
Country	Kazakhstan
Region	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS)/RBEC
Date project document signed	03 November 2021

	Start	Planned end
Project dates	November 2021	December 2024

Project budget	**USD 3,600,000**
Funding source (for 2023 funding)	**Government of Kazakhstan**
Implementing party[1]	**UNDP**

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project	Capacity Building for Innovation in Governance and Digitalisation of Public Services
Quantum ID	00127858
Corporate outcome and output	CPD Output 2.2: Institutions and systems enabled to develop and implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and local levels
Country	Kazakhstan
Region	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS)/RBEC
Date project document signed	17 September 2021

	Start	Planned end
Project dates	17 September 2021	31 December 2023

Project budget	**USD 916,981**
Funding source (for 2023 funding)	**Government of Korea, UNDP Kazakhstan**
Implementing party[2]	**UNDP**

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[1] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

[2] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Executive Summary

The Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH) is a joint initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that aims to facilitate knowledge exchange, capacity building, and international cooperation in the areas of civil service and public administration reform. This evaluation assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of two UNDP-led projects that have supported the work of ACSH over the period 2021-2023.

The evaluation found that ACSH has been highly relevant in addressing the needs and priorities of participating countries and organizations. ACSH has taken a demand-driven approach, aligning its activities with national development strategies and reform agendas. It has also adapted well to the evolving context, including the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. ACSH's work is strongly aligned with UNDP's country programme in Kazakhstan and the broader UN strategic framework. It directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

In terms of effectiveness, ACSH has made notable contributions through its three pillars of work:

1. Capacity Building and Peer Learning - ACSH has organized a wide range of well-attended training events, workshops, and conferences that have built practical skills and facilitated peer learning.

2. Research and Knowledge Sharing - ACSH has produced an impressive number of high-quality knowledge products on key topics, which have informed policies and practices.

3. Partnerships and Networking - ACSH has expanded its network significantly, forged strategic partnerships, and served as a platform for international cooperation.

The two projects underpinning the operation of ACSH have shown mixed results in achieving their specific targets, with several indicators met or exceeded, while others fell short. ACSH's efficiency is rated positively overall, with its hub-and-spoke model allowing for lean operations, though monitoring and reporting systems could be strengthened. Some key impacts noted include improved civil service capabilities, contributions to public administration reforms and e-governance policies, and enhanced public services through digitalization.

In terms of efficiency, the evaluation found that ACSH is generally well-managed, with clear project documents, annual workplans, and oversight from its Steering Committee and Advisory Board. ACSH leverages partnerships effectively to amplify results and has shown flexibility in adapting to challenges like COVID-19. However, there are opportunities to strengthen outcome-level monitoring, disaggregate data for better inclusion analysis, and enhance transparency around monitoring processes. Budget execution has been adequate overall, though with some variation across projects and years.

ACSH's sustainability is assessed as relatively strong. Key contributing factors include the demand-driven nature of initiatives, capacity building focus, knowledge dissemination

strategies, and emphasis on institutionalization. However, ACSH could further improve sustainability by strengthening the institutional embedding of its learning within national training systems and providing more ongoing support for participants to apply learning. ACSH's extensive partnerships are a key sustainability asset, though there is potential to expand engagement with the private sector, startups, academia, and other UNDP offices. Strong country ownership, especially from Kazakhstan, bodes well for sustainability. ACSH would benefit from more explicit risk management strategies. While recent funding commitments from Kazakhstan and Korea are positive, ACSH should further diversify its resource base and plan for an eventual transition to an independent footing beyond UNDP.

On cross-cutting issues, the evaluation found that while ACSH includes women in its activities, it could do more to actively promote gender equality and address barriers for women in public administration. ACSH indirectly supports human rights principles and some vulnerable groups through its work on effective, inclusive governance, but a more explicit human rights-based approach would be beneficial. Efforts towards disability inclusion are moderate and could be strengthened through enhanced accessibility, targeted capacity building, and better data disaggregation. ACSH also makes indirect contributions to poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and conflict sensitivity through its support for more effective and responsive public administration.

Overall, ACSH is a highly valued and impactful initiative that is supporting important public administration reforms across the region. With some strategic adjustments and continued investment, it is well-positioned to deliver even greater sustainable results in the coming years.

The following is a set of key recommendations derived on the basis of the main findings of the evaluation.

1. **Strategic Direction:**

   o Conduct an assessment of the benefits and trade-offs of expanding ACSH's geographical scope beyond the CIS region, while maintaining specialized expertise in core areas.

   o Identify a set of core thematic areas with significant potential for the upcoming years – such as digital transformation, data analytics, and innovative governance models – where ACSH can deepen its engagement and expertise.

   o Develop a matrix of expertise that maps ACSH's strengths and capabilities against the evolving needs and priorities of its members.

   o Develop a long-term vision and strategy for ACSH's transition towards becoming an independent entity, in close coordination with UNDP.

2. **Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement:**

   o Deepen engagement with non-traditional stakeholders, such as the private sector, startups, and academia, through joint initiatives and innovative approaches.

- o Strengthen collaboration with UNDP Country Offices, regional hubs, and UN agencies to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks.

- o Deepen engagement with marginalized and vulnerable groups – including their advocacy groups and organizations – to ensure more inclusive and equitable outcomes.

3. **Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:**

- o Conduct in-depth country-level analyses to better understand the specific challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors that shape public administration reform in each participating country.

- o Promote more actively peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange among countries facing similar challenges or operating in comparable contexts.

- o Try to engage more actively local experts and practitioners from participating countries in the design and delivery of ACSH's activities.

- o Develop more proactively targeted interventions on gender equality, disability inclusion, and human rights mainstreaming in public administration and civil service reform.

- o Seek to strengthen where possible the institutionalization of ACSH's learning resources within national civil service training systems and provide ongoing support for the application of learning.

- o Explore alternative and innovative knowledge dissemination channels, such as video and audio formats, to reach a wider audience and cater to diverse learning preferences.

4. **Research and Knowledge Creation:**

- o Deepen collaboration with academic institutions and think tanks to conduct joint research projects and develop the research capacities of participating countries.

- o Integrate gender, disability, and human rights perspectives more effectively into the content of ACSH's research and knowledge products.

5. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:**

- o Enhance the monitoring system to better capture outcomes and impacts and disaggregate data more effectively by key dimensions. Where feasible, also seek to collect disability-disaggregated data to monitor inclusion.

- o Conduct regular impact assessments and tracer studies to assess the long-term effects of ACSH's interventions on civil service performance and governance quality at the country level.

6. **Sustainability and Resource Mobilization:**

   o Seek to further diversify ACSH's funding sources by exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, fee-for-service models, and endowment funds.

7. **Cross-Cutting Themes:**

   o Seek to integrate human rights principles more explicitly into ACSH's objectives, activities, and results frameworks.

   o Further enhance the accessibility of ACSH's activities, events, and outputs for persons with disabilities.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACSH - Astana Civil Service Hub

AI - Artificial Intelligence

CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States

CO - Country Office

CPD - Country Programme Document

CSO - Civil Society Organization

e-HRMS - Electronic Human Resource Management System

HRBA - Human Rights-Based Approach

ICT - Information and Communications Technology

IFI - International Financial Institution

IoT - Internet of Things

LPAC - Local Project Appraisal Committee

MOIS - Ministry of Interior and Safety (Republic of Korea)

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

NIA - National Information Society Agency (Republic of Korea)

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

ROAR - Results Oriented Analytical Report

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

UN - United Nations

UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP - United Nations Development ProgrammeUNEG - United Nations Evaluation Group

UNSDCF - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Programme Context

The Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH) was established through a cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Kazakhstan as a multilateral platform for global and regional cooperation on public administration and civil service reform. While a global hub in terms of reach and activities, ACSH's main focus thus far has been on the countries of the former Soviet Union, with a particular focus on Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus.

ACSH operates in a complex and dynamic political context, characterized by both opportunities and challenges for civil service reform and regional cooperation. On the one hand, many countries have recognized the importance of modernizing civil service systems and improving public service delivery, as part of their broader agenda for sustainable development, good governance, and social cohesion. This has created a conducive environment for ACSH to engage with governments and other stakeholders in supporting these efforts. On the other hand, many countries face significant political challenges that hinder the progress of these reforms. In addition, challenges like poverty, inequality, unemployment, and social exclusion limit access to digital services and technologies. Furthermore, the region is influenced by geostrategic competition and interests of major powers, which may have implications for the governance and digital transformation agendas of the participating countries.

Another complexity in the work of ACSH is the fact that participating countries have different political systems, institutional arrangements, and governance structures. While there is growing recognition of the importance of innovation and digitalization for improving governance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, there are also significant institutional and capacity constraints. These countries have varying levels of ICT infrastructure, connectivity, and innovation ecosystems, with some being more advanced than others. While some countries, such as Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, have relatively advanced ICT sectors and e-government systems, others, such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, have more limited technological capacities and enabling environments.

The rapid pace of technological change, including the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things, presents both opportunities and challenges for the participating countries to harness these technologies for innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery. The digital literacy and skills of citizens in these countries are often low, which may affect their ability to benefit from and engage with digital government initiatives. There are also concerns about the digital divide and the risk of exacerbating existing inequalities through the uneven distribution of digital opportunities and benefits.

To effectively operate in this context, ACSH has overall adopted a flexible, adaptive, and politically informed approach, considering the specific needs, priorities, and capacities of each participating country while leveraging regional and global knowledge and resources.

1.2.   Programme Description

The following is an overview of ACSH's mission and goals, as defined by the organization.

ACSH MISSION & GOALS

MISSION

To assist in promoting civil service effectiveness by supporting the efforts of governments of countries of the region and beyond in building institutional and human capacity.

GOAL

To become a multilateral platform engaged in the exchange of experience and knowledge, uniting efforts to reform and build capacity of civil services in participating countries.

HUB'S MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

- Partnerships and networking
- Capacity building and peer-to-peer learning
- Research and knowledge management

OBJECTIVES

• Strengthen cooperation among participating institutions and build partnerships with expert networks, thinks tanks and universities all over the world;
• Cultivate a network of policy makers, practitioners and other partners to share knowledge and experience on civil service reform in the region;
• Provide technical assistance and advisory services to the governments of the participation countries to enhance capacity on civil service issues;
• Facilitate and support capacity-building activities to enhance in-country and regional knowledge, skills and attitudes on civil service development and modernization;
• Introduce innovative approaches in learning and training to generate more effective acquisition of knowledge and skills among the beneficiaries;
• Carry out applied research and analysis on civil service development and professionalization;
• Publish and disseminate knowledge products, including review of innovations in civil service, case-studies, regular and occasional thematic policy and white papers, and a journal.

The work of ACSH in the period 2021-2024 is underpinned by two separate projects – the so-called "MOIS" and "Hub" projects – which are summarized as follows.

MOIS Project

The "*Capacity Building for Innovation in Governance and Digitalization of Public Services*" project is a joint initiative of UNDP Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Interior and Safety (MOIS) and the National Information Society Agency (NIA) of the Republic of Korea, implemented by ACSH in its capacity as a multilateral platform for knowledge and experience exchange. The project aims to enhance the knowledge and capacities of government officials and institutions in seven participating countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) to adopt and implement innovation and digitalization practices in governance and public service delivery.

The project's main objective is to contribute towards the development of institutions and systems that are enabled to implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and regional levels. The project also aims to initiate and maintain triangular development initiatives to support the positioning of the participating countries, with a focus on the empowerment of women.

The project has two main components or outputs:

1. Capacity building of government officials and executives of central and local government administration and agencies, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers in innovation policies and practices and in the provision of public services through differentiated channels of delivery, including digitally.

2. Government officials and executives of central and local government administration and agencies, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers are exposed to innovation practices through study visits to Korea.

Under the first output, the project was envisaged to conduct a needs assessment study to identify the essential areas and priorities for capacity building in innovation and digitalization across the participating countries. Based on the findings of the study, a regional conference was planned to validate the priorities and design the project's capacity building activities. The project was to deliver a series of seminars, workshops, and online courses on various topics related to innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery, such as digital government policy frameworks, open data policies and practices, and whole-of-government approaches to digitalization. The project has aimed to develop and disseminate knowledge products, such as research papers, case studies, and policy briefs, on innovation and digitalization best practices and lessons learned.

Under the second output, the project was to organize study visits to the Republic of Korea for government officials and executives from the participating countries to learn from Korea's experience and practices in innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery. The study visits included meetings with Korean government agencies, site visits to relevant institutions, and learning sessions on topics such as digital government policies, e-government services, and emerging technologies.

The project's expected results were the enhancement of knowledge and capacities of public officials and institutions in the participating countries to adopt and implement innovation and digitalization practices in governance and public service delivery, as well as strengthened regional cooperation and knowledge sharing on these topics. In this context, the project would also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Hub Project

The "*Institutional Support to the Astana Civil Service Hub*" project (Phase 3) started in 2021 with funding from the Government of Kazakhstan and support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project's overall goal is to contribute to effective, transparent, and accountable governance and improved public service delivery in the region and beyond, through civil service excellence and regional cooperation. To achieve this goal, the project focuses on three main pillars:

1. Research and knowledge sharing: The project conducts research and analysis on civil service reform trends, challenges, and good practices, and produces and disseminates knowledge products such as policy briefs, case studies, research papers, etc. It also facilitates knowledge sharing and learning through online platforms, publications, and events.

2. Capacity building and peer learning: The project designs and delivers capacity building programmes and resources for civil servants and public administration institutions, such as training courses, curricula, and toolkits. It also facilitates peer learning and exchange initiatives, such as peer learning alliances, study tours, and secondments, to enable civil service professionals and institutions to learn from each other's experiences and good practices.

3. Partnership and networking: The project establishes and strengthens partnerships and networks for regional cooperation and collaboration on civil service excellence, engaging diverse stakeholders such as governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. It also organizes dialogues through events such as annual conferences and forums, to showcase innovations and good practices in civil service reform and foster mutual learning and support.

The project's activities and outputs are intended to contribute to three main outcomes: (1) enhanced knowledge and evidence on civil service reform and effective governance, informing policy and practice; (2) strengthened capacities and skills of civil servants and public administration institutions, enabling improved performance and innovation; and (3) increased regional cooperation and exchange on civil service excellence, fostering mutual learning and support.

The following box summarizes the Theory of Change for the MOIS and Hub projects independently.

Box 1: Programme's Theory of Change

The following is an overview of the theory of change for the two projects underpinning the work of ACSH in the period in question.

Hub Project

Goal: To contribute to effective, transparent, and accountable governance and improved public service delivery in the region and beyond, through civil service excellence and regional cooperation.

Outcomes:
1. Enhanced knowledge and evidence on civil service reform and effective governance, informing policy and practice.
2. Strengthened capacities and skills of civil servants and public administration institutions, enabling improved performance and innovation.
3. Increased regional cooperation and exchange on civil service excellence, fostering mutual learning and support.

Outputs: 1.1. Research and analysis on civil service reform trends, challenges, and good practices produced and disseminated. 1.2. Knowledge products and platforms for sharing evidence and lessons learned on civil service reform developed and utilized. 2.1. Capacity building programs and resources for civil servants and public administration institutions designed and delivered. 2.2. Peer learning and exchange initiatives for civil service professionals and institutions facilitated and supported. 3.1. Partnerships and networks for regional cooperation and collaboration on civil service excellence established and strengthened. 3.2. Dialogues and events for showcasing innovations and good practices in civil service reform organized and promoted.

Activities: 1.1.1. Conduct comparative analysis and case studies on civil service reform experiences and trends in the region and beyond. 1.1.2. Produce policy briefs, research papers, and other knowledge products on key civil service reform challenges and opportunities. 1.2.1. Develop and maintain online knowledge hubs, databases, and communities of practice for sharing civil service reform knowledge and resources. 1.2.2. Disseminate knowledge products and lessons learned through publications, webinars, conferences, and other channels. 2.1.1. Design and deliver training programs, curricula, and resources on key civil service competencies and skills. 2.1.2. Provide technical assistance and advisory services to public administration institutions on civil service reform strategies and implementation. 2.2.1. Establish and facilitate peer learning alliances and networks for civil service professionals and institutions to exchange experiences and good practices. 2.2.2. Organize study tours, secondments, and other exchange initiatives for civil servants to learn from peers in other countries and institutions. 3.1.1. Map and engage potential partners and stakeholders for regional cooperation on civil service excellence, including governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. 3.1.2. Establish and operationalize partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding, and other cooperation frameworks with key partners and stakeholders. 3.2.1. Organize annual conferences, forums, and other high-level events to showcase innovations, good practices, and lessons learned in civil service reform. 3.2.2. Facilitate regional dialogues, working groups, and other platforms for cross-country learning and collaboration on civil service excellence.

Assumptions:
- Political will and commitment to civil service reform and regional cooperation among participating countries and institutions.
- Adequate resources and capacities of the ACSH project and its partners to implement planned activities and achieve desired outputs and outcomes.
- Relevance and applicability of knowledge, lessons, and good practices shared through the project to the specific contexts and needs of participating countries and institutions.
- Sustainability and institutionalization of project results and impacts beyond the project's lifetime, through ownership, mainstreaming, and scaling up by partners and stakeholders.

Risks:
- Political instability, turnover, or resistance to reform in participating countries and institutions, undermining the project's progress and impact.
- Limited absorption and application of knowledge, skills, and good practices acquired through the project, due to institutional constraints, cultural barriers, or competing priorities.
- Duplication, fragmentation, or competition among regional cooperation initiatives and platforms on civil service reform, reducing the project's efficiency and effectiveness.
- External shocks, such as economic crises, conflicts, or pandemics, diverting attention and resources away from civil service reform and regional cooperation.

MOIS Project

Goal: Improved effectiveness, transparency, and inclusiveness of governance and public service delivery in the participating countries through increased adoption and implementation of innovation and digitalization practices.

Outcomes:
1.1. Increased awareness and understanding among government officials of the concepts, benefits, and best practices of innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery. 1.2. Enhanced technical and functional capacities of government officials to plan, implement, and manage innovation and digitalization projects and initiatives. 1.3. Strengthened networks and partnerships among government institutions and officials across the participating countries for peer learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration on innovation and digitalization.
2.1. Improved policy and regulatory frameworks for innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery, aligned with national development priorities and international standards. 2.2. Increased investment and resource allocation for innovation and digitalization initiatives in governance and public service delivery, from both public and private sources. 2.3. Strengthened institutional structures, processes, and systems for the effective governance, coordination, and monitoring of innovation and digitalization initiatives.
3.1. Increased public awareness and demand for innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery, through effective communication and outreach strategies. 3.2. Improved accessibility, usability, and responsiveness of digital public services, particularly for marginalized and underserved populations. 3.3. Enhanced citizen engagement and participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovation and digitalization initiatives, through inclusive and participatory approaches.

Project Outputs and Activities:
Output 1: Capacity Building of government officials and executives of central and local government agencies, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers in innovation policy and practices and in digitalisation of public services and their delivery.

- Feasibility study to assess degree of readiness for introduction of innovative practices in government including provision of digitalised public services through differentiated channels of delivery.
- Regional conference to discuss findings of the feasibility study and decide on the topics the project will focus on with the participation of the ACSH P2P Alliances on Innovation, Digitalisation, and E-governance members among other.
- Seminars to introduce the concept of innovation and its potential uses in government and governance practices and utilising differentiated channels of public service delivery through digitalisation – including mainly the Korean experience.
- Workshops to present and elaborate on policy design to create an environment conducive to innovation practices, as well as uses of innovative practices by the Government of the Republic of Korea.
- Production and distribution of methodological guides on how to introduce innovative practices in government and on what steps to follow in digitalising public service for delivery through differentiated channels.
- Publication of knowledge products on methodologies to introduce innovation in government and case studies of successful implementation of innovation in government and in introducing differentiated channels of delivery for public services.

Output 2: Government officials, executives of central and local governments, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers are exposed to innovation practices through study visits to Korea.
- 2.1 Study visits to Korea, and training programmes organised for a selective group of government officials and executives of central and local government administration, special bodies and institutions, experts, and policy makers.

Assumptions:
- Political will and leadership commitment to innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery, at the highest levels of government in the participating countries.
- Adequate financial, human, and technological resources and capacities available within government institutions to support and sustain innovation and digitalization initiatives.
- Effective coordination and collaboration among different government institutions and stakeholders involved in innovation and digitalization initiatives, both within and across the participating countries.
- Supportive and enabling legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks for innovation and digitalization, including issues related to data protection, privacy, security, and interoperability.

- Inclusive and equitable access to digital infrastructure, devices, and services, particularly for marginalized and underserved populations, to avoid exacerbating the digital divide.
- Continuous learning, experimentation, and adaptation in the implementation of innovation and digitalization initiatives, based on feedback, monitoring, and evaluation data, and changing contexts and needs.

Risks:
- Lack of political will and leadership commitment to innovation and digitalization among the participating countries' governments.
- Inadequate financial, human, and technological resources and capacities within government institutions to support and sustain innovation and digitalization initiatives.
- Resistance to change and bureaucratic inertia within government institutions, hindering the adoption and implementation of new practices and technologies.
- Insufficient coordination and collaboration among different government institutions and stakeholders involved in innovation and digitalization initiatives.
- Gaps or inconsistencies in the legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks for innovation and digitalization, creating barriers or risks for implementation.
- Unequal access to digital infrastructure, devices, and services among different regions, communities, or population groups, exacerbating the digital divide.

Stakeholder Analysis

ACSH involves a wide range of stakeholders with diverse roles, interests, influence, and engagement. The key stakeholders include the Government of Kazakhstan as the main donor and political sponsor, UNDP as the implementing agency, participating countries as the main beneficiaries and partners, civil servants and public administration institutions as the main target groups, international and regional organizations as key partners, academia and think tanks as knowledge partners, civil society organizations as important stakeholders representing citizens' interests, the private sector as an emerging partner providing expertise and resources, and the media and public as important stakeholders shaping public opinion and demand for civil service reform.

Each stakeholder group has specific interests, such as promoting civil service excellence, enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of public administration, building capacities and skills, advancing knowledge and evidence, ensuring transparency and accountability, and leveraging opportunities for collaboration and growth. The level of influence and engagement of each stakeholder group varies, with the Government of Kazakhstan, UNDP, and participating countries having high influence and engagement, while other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, the private sector, and the media and public have varying levels of influence and engagement. ACSH engages with these stakeholders through various channels and activities, such as communication, reporting, coordination, joint initiatives, needs assessments, capacity building programs, research collaborations, consultations, dialogues, partnerships, and public outreach. This report's section on "partnerships" provides a more detailed analysis of the stakeholder roles and responsibilities.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Purpose of the Evaluation

The main purpose of this Thematic Evaluation was to provide an impartial review of UNDP-led regional platforms' contribution to regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration, including different aspects of public services digitalisation, in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, overall performance, management, and achievements. The information, findings, lessons learnt, and recommendations generated by the evaluation are designed to be used by the projects' boards, UNDP, donors and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen the following phases of these Projects and inform future programming.

2.2. Evaluation Scope and Methodology

The scope of the evaluation covered the results and impacts achieved by the two projects since their beginning in September/November 2021 and the likelihood of their full achievement by the end of the projects in December 2023. Government institutions of the participating countries, along with the Government of Kazakhstan and its appropriate departments and agencies, UNDP, and ACSH were actively involved in the evaluation process. The evaluation process unfolded in three phases, which are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1: Evaluation Phases

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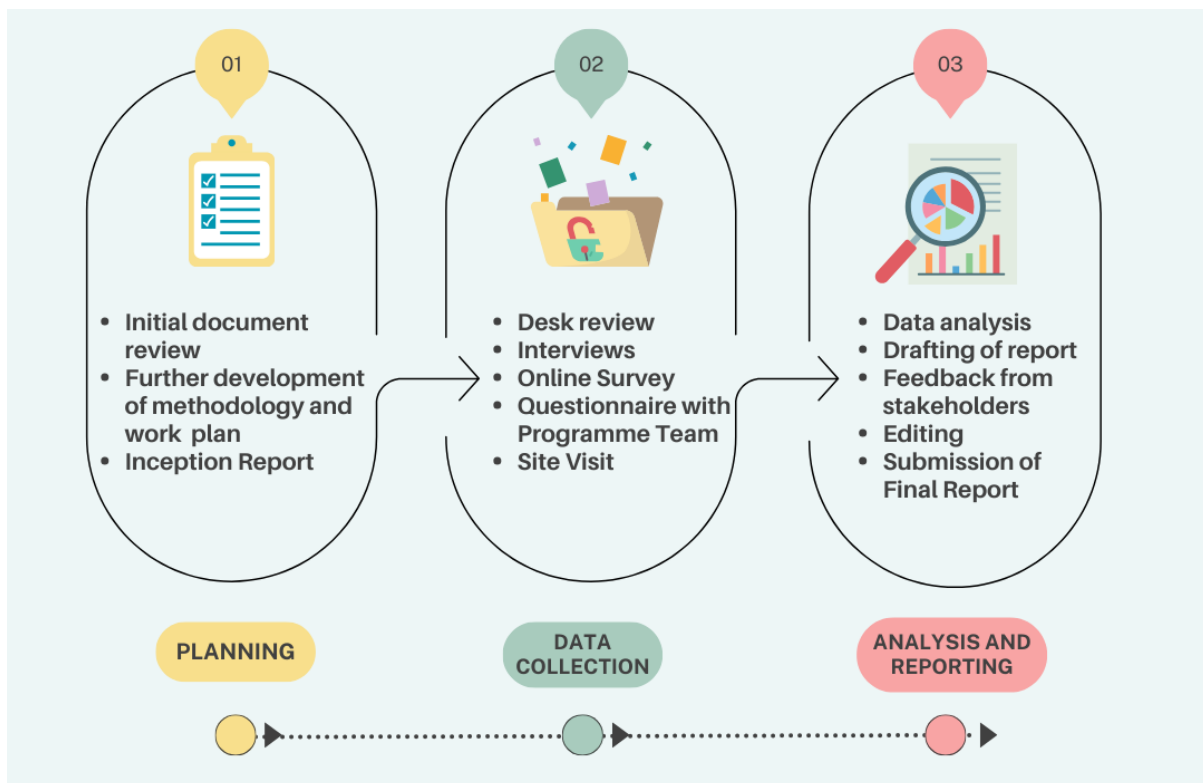
<u>Evaluation Planning</u>

The evaluation used a theory-based approach grounded in the analysed and confirmed Theory of Change for the two projects. It also included contribution analysis, reflected gender-responsive principles and followed a human-rights-based approach. This structured framework looked at the Theory of Change as a roadmap outlining the intended sequence of events and causal pathways leading to the desired outcomes. Contribution analysis examined the plausible connections between the two platforms and the changes at the observed outcomes. The evaluability analysis is underpinned by the evaluation matrix included in Annex IV of this report.

<u>Data Collection</u>

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach for data collection, including:

- Desk review of more than 50 relevant documents, reports, and publications.
- Detailed questionnaire with the ACSH team to solicit responses on key issues.
- Semi-structured interviews (including focus group discussions) with 27 key stakeholders such as government officials, experts, civil society, UNDP staff, donors and UN agencies. The complete list of interviewees is included in Annex V of this report.
- Online survey administered to national stakeholders involved as partners and beneficiaries. A total of 15 government officials from 8 different countries responded to the survey.

A purposive sampling approach was used to select the most relevant key informant stakeholders for interviews, ensuring representation across all institutions and countries with direct relevance to the two projects. For the survey, a stratified sampling approach was applied, dividing stakeholders into different strata based on their roles and involvement. The data collection process took into account gender considerations, ensuring that the information gathered is classified by sex and other pertinent categories. Additionally, a variety of data sources and methods were utilized to promote the inclusion of a diverse set of stakeholders, including those who are most vulnerable, when appropriate.

Table 1: Documentary Review Sources

Sources of information	
General documentation	• Revised UNDP Evaluation Policy and Guidelines • Independent Evaluator Induction Package • UNDP Guidelines on "Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit" • UNDP Gender Equality Strategy • UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (January 2021) • UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) • Guidance on Evaluation Institutional Gender Mainstreaming (2018) • UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation • UNEG Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations • United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), • Country Programme Document for Kazakhstan (2021-2025), • Results Oriented Analytical Reports (ROAR) for the programming cycle.
Project documentation	• Project Documents, • Project LPACs,

Sources of information	
	• Financing Agreements with Amendments, • Social and Environmental Screening Procedure Forms, • Annual Work Plans, • Annual Progress Reports, • Minutes of Project Board meetings, • Combined Delivery Reports, • Project knowledge materials, • Impact Assessment Survey results (MOIS project), • Financial overview of the two projects, • Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix. • Project evaluations and project progress reports; • Quality Assurance reports; • Reports prepared by project experts.
Third-party reports	• Relevant publications by governmental and non-governmental entities.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data underwent rigorous analysis using statistical software, applying descriptive and inferential methods to identify patterns, correlations and trends. Qualitative data from interviews and observational notes underwent thematic analysis, with responses categorized to identify commonalities and differences in perspectives across stakeholder groups. The analysis covered key aspects of the programme based on the standard criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting themes. Disaggregation of data highlighted findings related to gender equality, social inclusion, regional disparities and other focal points pertinent to the evaluation questions. Information obtained through the documentary review and interviewing process was triangulated against available documented sources, and then synthesized using analytical judgement. The method of triangulation is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Triangulation Method
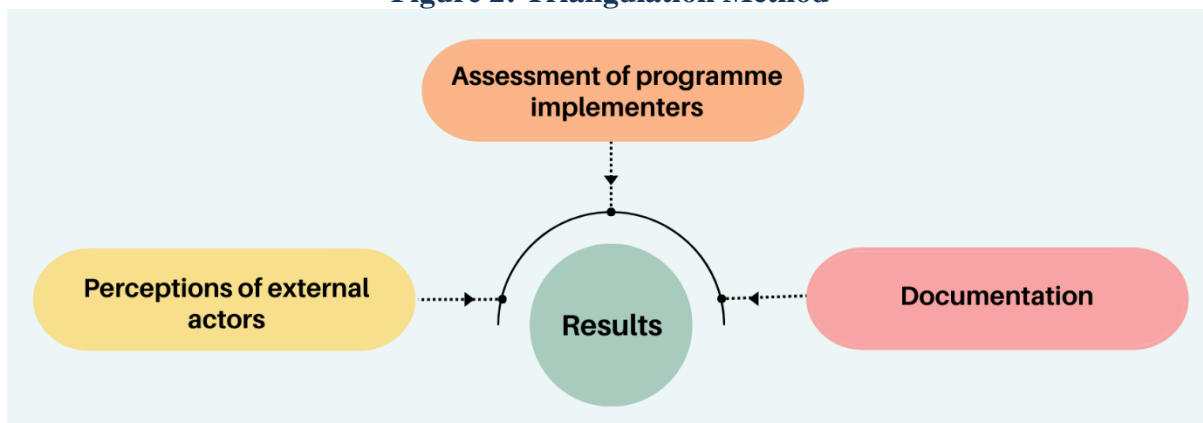
Some of the basic questions used in the analysis of the collected information are shown in Annex III of this report. Figure 3 shows the steps that were taken for the analysis which was conducted on the basis of the standard criteria of relevance, effectiveness and impact, coherence, efficiency, and sustainability.

Figure 3: Evaluation Criteria[3]
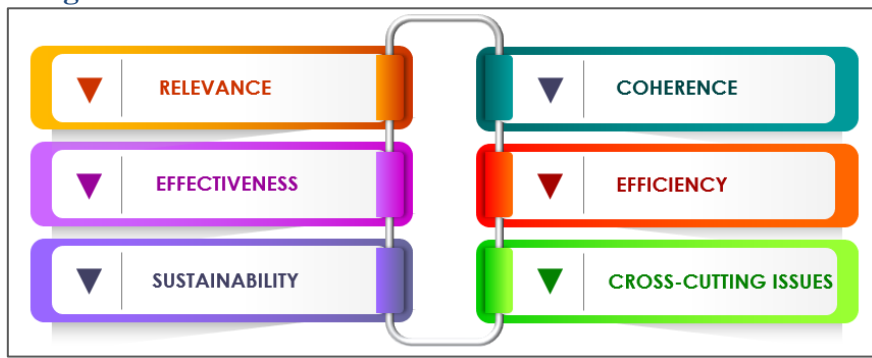
The steps that were taken in the analysis process are illustrated in the Figure 4 below. Care was given to the assessment of the extent to which the project has been successful in involving *marginalized groups*, especially *women, persons with disabilities* and minorities. The figure below shows the steps that were taken for the analysis.

Figure 4: Steps in Analysis Process
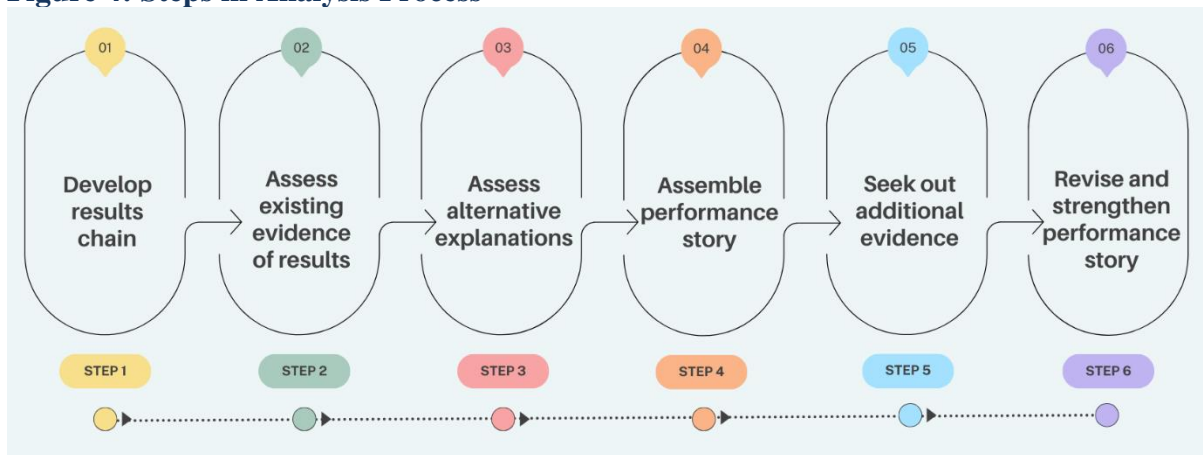
The analysis also covered aspects of formulation, such as the extent of stakeholder participation during project formulation; replication approach; design for sustainability; linkages between the project and other interventions; adequacy of management arrangements, etc.

2.3. Evaluation Process and Governance

The evaluation was conducted by an independent international evaluator under the guidance and supervision of UNDP's Monitoring and Evaluation Associate as the Evaluation Manager. UNDP and selected key stakeholders including key implementing partners functioned as the Evaluation Reference Group, reviewing and providing advice on the quality of the evaluation process and products.

2.4. Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation process went smoothly overall, with excellent support from the ACSH team. The only limitation encountered in the process was the fact that a meeting with the UNDP Country Office management was not possible, which did now allow this evaluation to reflect

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[3] The analysis of effectiveness included a section on the project's impact, which is a preliminary finding of the main contributions, as a real impact assessment requires a more profound process and also more time to have lapsed since the completion of the project.

the vision and impressions of the UNDP country office leadership on the work and the future of the Hub.

2.5. Structure of the Report

The report begins with an introductory section that provides a description of the two projects and the context of their implementation (previous chapter). The second (current) chapter provides an overview of the evaluation objectives and methodology. The third chapter presents the main findings of the report organized in the following standard dimensions: i) Relevance; ii) Effectiveness and Impact; iii) Coherence; iv) Efficiency; v) Sustainability; vi) Cross-cutting Themes, which include the Human Rights Based Approach, Gender and Youth Mainstreaming, Disability Inclusion, and Environmental Sustainability. The fourth chapter identifies key "lessons learned" drawn from the experience of this project. The fifth section summarizes the main conclusions and the last (sixth) chapter provides a set of recommendations for the consideration of project stakeholders. Additional information supporting the arguments made throughout the document is provided in the annexes attached to this report.

3. FINDINGS

The findings of the evaluation are structured into six sections: i) Relevance (the extent to which the two projects underpinning the work of ACSH have aligned with the partner countries' priorities and needs and the UN's strategic framework); ii) Effectiveness and Impact (the projects' contribution to governance transparency and accountability); iii) Efficiency (the efficient delivery of the projects' results); iv) Sustainability (the likelihood of projects' results being sustained after completion); v) Cross-cutting Themes, with a focus on the extent to which the projects have incorporated human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, and other key themes).

3.1. Relevance and Coherence

The following is a summary of the assessment of the relevance of ACSH's contributions in terms of its design and delivery, responsiveness to partner countries' and organizations' needs and priorities, and its alignment with the institutional frameworks of the United Nations and contributions to the achievement of the sustainable development agenda.

Relevance to Participating Countries' and Organizations' Needs

Key factors of ACSH's relevance to the needs of participating countries and organizations are its strategic focus on key priorities, demand-driven approach, sustained engagement with a growing network of organizations and countries, and its adaptability to changing global circumstances. The following is a brief analysis of these factors.

- **Clear Focus on Key Priorities:** ACSH has demonstrated strong commitment to enhancing public administration through *clearly prioritized strategic pillars*. These are illustrated in the figure on the right. Firstly, ACSH has a strong focus on *Capacity Building and Peer Learning*, conducting numerous capacity-building events, training sessions, and conferences that address pivotal issues such as digital transformation, public service delivery, and human resource management. These activities are designed to foster peer learning and skill development among civil servants. In addition, the *Research and Knowledge*

Astana Civil Service Hub Key Areas of Work

Capacity Building and Peer Learning
Capacity-building events, training sessions, and conferences that address contemporary issues in public administration such as digital transformation, public service delivery, and human resource management.

Research and Knowledge Sharing
Demand-driven research papers, policy briefs, and comparative analyses that inform and guide policy reforms based on empirical evidence and international best practices.

Partnerships and Collaborative Networks
Facilitating the exchange of expertise, resources, and best practices between member countries and relevant organizations.

Sharing initiative underscores the commitment to producing demand-driven research papers, policy briefs, books, and comparative analyses. These documents are valuable in guiding policy reforms, as they provide empirical evidence and insights into international best practices. Lastly, ***Partnerships and Collaborative Networks*** have been pivotal, as ACSH facilitates the exchange of expertise, resources, and best practices among member countries and relevant organizations, thus enhancing collaborative efforts and network strengthening.

- **Alignment with Strategic Frameworks and Priorities of Participating Organizations and Countries:** ACSH's work has been highly relevant to the strategic priorities of the participating organizations and countries. In these countries, ACSH has provided valuable support in promoting good governance, public administration reforms, and digital transformation, especially in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, where these reforms have been very important in light of the transition from highly centralized Soviet-style structures to more democratic institutions. ACSH has made a concerted effort to align its objectives and activities with the national development priorities and strategies of the participating countries. For example, ACSH has provided support to the implementation of Kazakhstan's Concept for the Development of Public Administration until 2030, which aims to modernize the civil service and improve the quality of public services. By demonstrating how its work contributes to the achievement of these national goals, ACSH has secured buy-in and ownership from key government stakeholders. The box below provides several examples of key reforms undertaken in some countries, which have been key partners of ACSH. Furthermore, ACSH's offering is perceived as highly relevant at the organizational level. Most evaluation interviewees felt that ACSH's contributions are

highly relevant to their organizations' needs, particularly in areas of civil service reform, public administration modernization, and digitalization of public services. This can also be seen in the results of the online survey conducted for this evaluation, whose results are summarized in the chart above.
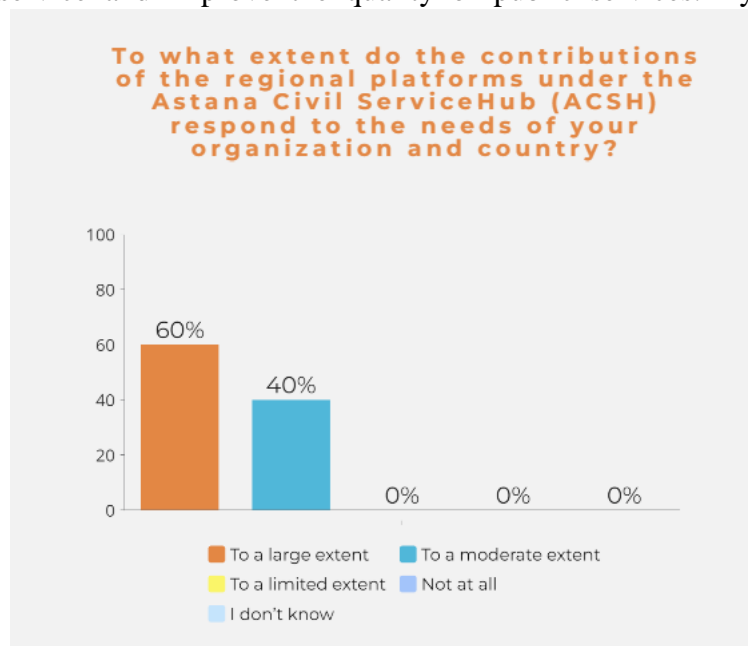
Box 2: Key Reforms in ACSH's Partner Countries

The following are key examples of the progress made by several countries in the Central Asia and the Caucasus regions:
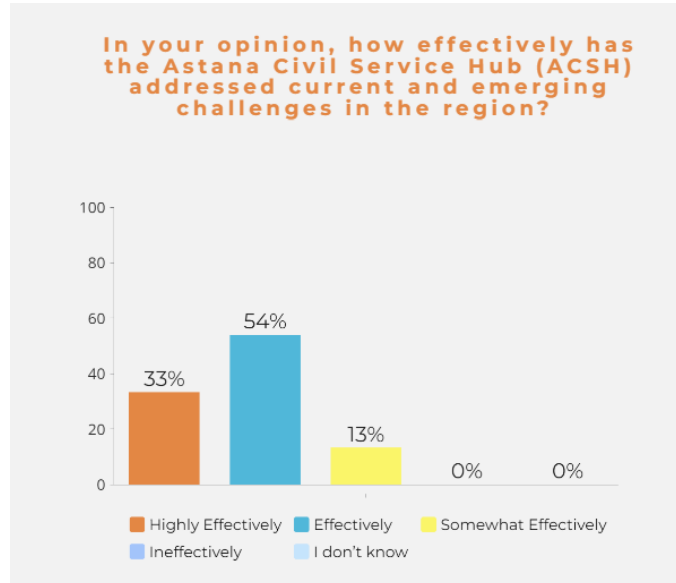
1. *Georgia*: Georgia has been a leader in public administration reform and the digitalization of service delivery. The country's Public Service Hall, a one-stop-shop for over 400 public services, has significantly improved efficiency and reduced corruption. Georgia's success in this area has been shared through ACSH events, allowing other countries to learn from its experience. For example, ACSH has organized a workshop on "Effective Public Service Delivery: The Case of Georgia," which brought together officials from 15 countries to study Georgia's reforms.

2. *Kazakhstan*: Kazakhstan has made significant strides in modernizing its civil service and digitalizing public services. The country's "Digital Kazakhstan" program aims to improve the quality of life through the use of digital technologies. ACSH has been instrumental in supporting Kazakhstan's reforms by providing a platform for sharing best practices and fostering regional cooperation. As an example, ACSH conducted a research project on "Digital Transformation of Public Administration in Kazakhstan: Current State and Prospects," which offered recommendations for further improving digital governance.

3. *Azerbaijan*: Azerbaijan has implemented several initiatives to enhance public service delivery and promote e-governance. The country's "ASAN Service" centers, which provide over 200 services from 10 government agencies, have been recognized as a model for reducing bureaucracy and increasing transparency. ACSH has facilitated the exchange of knowledge on Azerbaijan's experience through events such as the conference on "Innovations in Public Service Delivery: The Case of ASAN Service in Azerbaijan."

4. *Uzbekistan*: Uzbekistan has recently embarked on an ambitious reform agenda, including efforts to improve public administration and digitalize public services. ACSH has supported Uzbekistan's reforms by providing capacity-building assistance and facilitating the exchange of best practices. As an example, ACSH organized a workshop on "E-Government Development in Uzbekistan: Prospects and Challenges", which brought together experts from the region to discuss strategies for advancing digital transformation.

- **Demand-driven Approach:** ACSH has used a demand-driven approach to ensure that its initiatives are closely aligned with the needs and priorities of participating countries. This is achieved through regular needs assessments and active engagement with beneficiaries. For example, ACSH has used periodic surveys to tailor its programmatic focus. Similarly, the process of knowledge creation has involved surveys and discussions with participating countries to identify topics of interest. Knowledge products are either written in-house or outsourced to external consultants, with close collaboration and quality control from the ACSH team. This approach not only aligns with the immediate needs of member countries, but also ensures continued relevance and ownership of the projects by the beneficiaries. The focus on themes like innovation, digitalization, and open government data in capacity building activities further illustrates the responsiveness of ACSH to the evolving demands of its stakeholders.

- **Sustained Engagement:** For more than 10 years now, ACSH activities have attracted continued participation from a wide geographic scope, especially Central Asia, the Caucasus, but also other regions, which indicates a broad interest in its offerings. Many evaluation interviewees and survey participants emphasized the fact that they have a long-standing partnership with ACSH. The increasing number of participating countries (from an initial 25 to currently 42), along with partnerships with over 70 international and regional

organizations, reflects a significant expansion of its influence and the perceived value of its network. This continued engagement has facilitated the exchange of diverse experiences and expertise, enabling a richer cooperative environment for addressing shared challenges in public administration.

- **Adapting to Evolving Context:** ACSH has continually adapted to the changing environment – and especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the latter, with restrictions on travel and physical gatherings, ACSH shifted many of its activities online, focusing more on research and virtual engagement. This strategic shift not only ensured continuity in service delivery during adverse conditions, but also enabled ACSH to remain responsive to the needs of

In your opinion, how effectively has the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH) addressed current and emerging challenges in the region?

its beneficiaries, particularly concerning digital transformation and the pandemic's impact on public administration. ACSH's adaptability was confirmed by the majority of the participants of the survey for this evaluation, as can be seen in the chart above.

Alignment with UNDP's Country Programme and UN's Strategic Framework

ACSH's work has been largely aligned with UNDP's Country Programme Document (CPD) for Kazakhstan. It directly contributes to CPD Output 2.2: "*Institutions and systems enabled to develop and implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and local levels.*" ACSH's work on promoting civil service excellence, knowledge sharing, and capacity building supports Kazakhstan's efforts to strengthen public administration and governance. Specifically, its research on topics like anti-corruption, strategic personnel planning, and performance evaluation feeds into evidence-based policy reforms. The capacity development activities for Kazakh civil servants, such as workshops on digitalization and social media engagement, enhance skills for effective and inclusive service delivery. ACSH's partnerships with various government agencies and academic institutions help foster an enabling environment for ongoing institutional development. Moreover, ACSH's global and regional approach, convening countries across Central Asia and beyond, positions Kazakhstan as a leader in advancing good governance and mutual learning. This reinforces UNDP's role in facilitating Kazakhstan's development cooperation and knowledge exchange with other countries, as envisioned in the CPD.

The programme underlying ACSH's work is also largely aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Kazakhstan (2021-2025). The following is a brief summary of this alignment.

- *UNDAF Outcome 1.3*: "*Resilient, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development enhanced.*" Effective public administration is crucial for creating an enabling environment for sustainable economic development. By strengthening civil service capacities and promoting evidence-based policymaking, the ACSH supports the government's ability to steer inclusive growth strategies.

- *UNDAF Outcome 1.4*: "*State institutions at all levels more effectively design and implement gender-sensitive, human-centred and SDG-aligned policies that leave no one behind.*" The ACSH's work directly supports this outcome by equipping civil servants with knowledge and skills to design people-centred policies. The project's research on meritocracy, performance management, and digital transformation provides insights for shaping inclusive and responsive institutions. However, as noted in the progress reports, more efforts are needed to consistently achieve gender balance in ACSH activities.

- *UNDAF Outcome 1.5*: "*Regional and international partnerships, including with IFIs, and South-South/Triangular cooperation, contribute to sustainable development.*" The ACSH is a prime example of Kazakhstan's engagement in regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. By convening countries, international organizations, and experts, the project fosters partnerships for mutual learning and collaborative problem-solving on shared governance challenges. This South-South and triangular cooperation approach is prominently highlighted in the UNDAF as a means to accelerate SDG progress.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

ACSH's work is also aligned with the SDGs, focusing on *SDG 16* (Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies) and *SDG 17* (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development).

- ACSH's core activities are most closely aligned with *SDG 16*. By enhancing the capacities of civil servants, advocating for transparency, and fostering integrity in the public sector, ACSH contributes to strengthening institutions and ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making.
- ACSH contributes to *SDG 17* through its collaborative approach, partnering with a range of stakeholders including regional and national institutions, international organizations, and the private sector to share knowledge, expertise, technological solutions, and financial resources. These partnerships are vital for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technological solutions, and financial resources to support the achievement of all the SDGs across different countries.

While ACSH's direct contributions are more aligned with the SDGs related to governance and innovation, its activities have also indirectly supported other SDGs. The following are some key examples.

- *SDG 3* (Good Health and Well-being) and *SDG 4* (Quality Education): Effective governance enables better management of public health systems and educational institutions, thereby improving access to quality health care and education.
- *SDG 5* (Gender Equality): ACSH's capacity-building activities have included women and promoted gender equality within the civil service contribute to this goal.
- *SDG 8* (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Improved public administration enhances economic performance by creating a more favorable business environment, promoting decent job creation, and ensuring efficient use of resources.

Programmatic Coherence

The two projects underpinning the work of the ACSH – the "*Institutional Support to the Astana Civil Service Hub*" project and the "*Capacity Building on Digital Transformation and Innovation*" project – have been highly coherent in their overarching goal of promoting good governance and modernization of public administration in the region. While they have had distinct objectives and activities, the two projects have complemented each other through their focus on capacity building, knowledge sharing, and regional cooperation. The synergies between the projects, such as the needs assessment informing the design of capacity-building activities and the leveraging of partnerships for expertise and resources, further demonstrate their coherence. Together, the two projects have contributed to strengthening the capacity of participating countries to implement public administration reforms and digital transformation. The following box provides a more detailed analysis of the coherence between the two projects.

Box 3: Coherence of the Two ACSH Projects

The following is an analysis of the coherence between the Institutional Support to the Astana Civil Service Hub project and the Capacity Building on Digital Transformation and Innovation project.

1. *Objectives*:
   - The Institutional Support to ACSH project aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Astana Civil Service Hub to serve as a regional platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and policy dialogue on public administration and civil service reforms.
   - The Capacity Building project focused specifically on enhancing the skills and knowledge of civil servants in the areas of digital transformation and innovation in government.
   - While the objectives are distinct, the two projects are coherent in their overarching goal of promoting good governance and modernization of public administration in the region.

2. *Activities*:
   - The Institutional Support project involved a range of activities, including needs assessments, research, conferences, and partnerships, to identify and address the priorities of participating countries in public administration and civil service development.
   - The Capacity Building project included targeted training sessions, workshops, and study visits to build the capacity of civil servants in digital transformation and innovation.
   - The activities of the two projects have been coherent in their focus on capacity building and knowledge sharing, but they differ in their scope and target audience. The Institutional Support project has had a broader remit, covering various aspects of public administration, while the Capacity Building project has been more specialized in its focus on digital transformation and innovation.

3. *Outcomes*:

- The Institutional Support project has strengthened the ACSH as a regional platform, with increased country participation, high-level engagement, and a growing network of partnerships. It has also produced demand-driven research and policy recommendations on public administration reforms.
- The Capacity Building project has enhanced the skills and knowledge of civil servants in digital transformation and innovation, as evidenced by the positive feedback from participants and the application of learning in their work.
- The outcomes of the two projects have been coherent in their contribution to the overall goal of improving public administration and governance in the region. The Institutional Support project has created an enabling environment for regional cooperation and knowledge sharing, while the Capacity Building project has enhanced the capacity of civil servants to implement digital transformation and innovation in their respective countries, utilizing the enabling environment the ACSH platform provides.

4. *Synergies*:
   - The needs assessment conducted under the Institutional Support project helped identify digital transformation and innovation as priority areas for capacity building, which informed the design of the Capacity Building project.
   - The partnerships and networks established through the Institutional Support project have helped mobilize expertise and resources for the Capacity Building project.
   - The knowledge products and policy recommendations generated through the Institutional Support project have helped guide the content and focus of the capacity-building activities.

Areas for Further Consideration

While the work of ACSH has been very relevant as described above, interviews for this evaluation also included different viewpoints about certain aspects of the Hub's work. The following are the main points that emerged more prominently during the discussions.

- *Geographical Scope*: Despite wide reaching activities,[4] in substantive terms ACSH has so far prioritized the CIS region, especially Central Asia and the Caucasus, which encompasses countries with a shared Soviet heritage. This focus has been instrumental in addressing specific regional needs and challenges, leveraging shared languages and historical connections to facilitate communication and mutual understanding. The common background provides a strong foundation for discussing reforms and practices that are pertinent to the post-Soviet administrative environment. Some stakeholders argued that maintaining a focus on the CIS region is beneficial due to the shared institutional and cultural context. This commonality helps in addressing specific governance challenges that are unique to these countries, such as transitioning from centralized to more democratic and transparent governance systems. Additionally, focusing on this region allows the Hub to tailor its programmes and research to the specific developmental stage and needs of these countries, potentially making the interventions more impactful. Other evaluation participants advocated for expanding the Hub's geographical scope to include experiences

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[4] The geographical diversity of ACSH's activities is notable, with events held from Dubai to New York, involving participants from a wide range of countries and organizations, indicating ACSH's broad impact on global civil service practices. For instance, the 2024 "ACSH Panel Session on Digital Transformation in Civil Service HRM" in Minneapolis not only catered to local participants but also involved multiple countries and organizations, emphasizing a global dialogue.

and best practices from Western Europe, North America, and advanced Asian economies like South Korea, Japan, and Singapore. These two views clearly involve a trade-off. Expanding the geographical focus could position the Hub as a more influential player in the global arena of public administration and governance, attracting wider participation and possibly more diverse funding sources. However, it requires careful consideration of how to balance the specific needs of the current CIS-focused membership with the benefits of a more diversified membership base.

- *Specialization vs. Flexibility*: ACSH has demonstrated a high degree of flexibility in its approach to capacity building and knowledge sharing, covering a wide range of topics and issues in public administration and civil service reform. This flexibility has allowed ACSH to be responsive to the diverse needs and priorities of participating organizations and countries, ensuring that its activities are relevant and valuable to its stakeholders. However, some evaluation interviewees pointed out the inherent trade-off between specialization and flexibility in ACSH's approach. While a flexible approach enables ACSH to address a broad spectrum of challenges and cater to the varying interests of its members, it may come at the cost of deeper specialization and expertise in specific areas. Specialization can be advantageous in terms of developing cutting-edge knowledge, providing targeted solutions, and establishing a clear niche and brand identity for the organization. In this situation, finding the right balance between specialization and flexibility will become increasingly important.[5] A balanced approach could involve identifying a set of core thematic areas where ACSH can deepen its knowledge and skills, while still retaining the flexibility to address emerging issues and respond to the evolving needs of its members. However, it is important to recognize that an expansion of scope and mission will require a commensurate increase in resources. Moreover, as noted by some survey respondents, there is a need for ACSH to further tailor its initiatives to local contexts. This may involve investing in more in-depth country-level analyses, engaging local experts and stakeholders in the design and delivery of activities, and developing more context-specific tools and resources. Ultimately, finding the right balance between specialization and flexibility will require a strategic and adaptive approach that combines the development of specialized expertise with the ability to respond to the diverse and evolving needs of its members. By striking this balance, ACSH can position itself as a leading hub for knowledge and capacity building in public administration reform, while also ensuring that its activities are relevant, valuable, and impactful for participating organizations and countries.

- *Future Directions*: As ACSH continues to serve as a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building in public administration, it is crucial for the organization to stay attuned to the latest developments in the field of public administration and governance, identifying emerging trends and issues and incorporating these into its activities. In the last couple of years, the rapid advancement of technology has had a profound impact on the public sector, presenting both opportunities and challenges for governments around the world. As

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[5] The ACSH is trying for a balanced approach between specialisation and flexibility. A manifestation of specialisation going deeper into some issues is done through its P2P Alliances.

highlighted by several evaluation interviewees, the increasing importance of data, artificial intelligence (AI), and digitalization in public administration is a key area where ACSH could position itself to build expertise and provide valuable support to its members. Looking ahead, ACSH could focus on cutting-edge areas such as AI in public sector management and advanced data analytics. AI has the potential to revolutionize the way governments operate, from improving decision-making and service delivery to enhancing citizen engagement and transparency. By building expertise in this area, ACSH can help its members harness the power of AI to improve governance outcomes and address complex public policy challenges. Similarly, the use of advanced data analytics in the public sector is becoming increasingly important, as governments seek to leverage the vast amounts of data they collect to inform policy-making, optimize resource allocation, and improve service delivery. Other emerging focus areas that ACSH could consider include blockchain technology for secure and efficient public services, smart cities and the Internet of Things (IoT) for urban governance, digital inclusion and accessibility, green governance and sustainability, agile and anticipatory governance models, and the development of GovTech startup ecosystems. Each of these areas presents unique opportunities and challenges for governments, and ACSH could play a valuable role in helping its members navigate these complex issues and develop effective strategies for addressing them. To effectively position itself in these cutting-edge areas, ACSH will need to expand its partnerships with technological innovators and academic institutions. Ultimately, the ability of ACSH to continuously adapt and evolve its offerings in response to the changing needs and priorities of its members will be critical to its long-term success and impact.

3.2. Effectiveness and Impact

This section of the report presents an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the two projects underpinning the work of ACSH in the period 2021-2023.

<u>Effectiveness</u>

ACSH is generally perceived as effective in addressing current and emerging challenges in the region through timely trainings, workshops, peer exchanges, and research on key issues like digital transformation, civil service performance, and public service delivery.

Interviewees and respondents to the survey organized for this evaluation consistently report significant personal and organizational benefits from ACSH activities. Key benefits include:

- Gaining knowledge, best practices, and practical skills related to public administration and civil service
- Strengthening professional networks and partnerships
- Achieving organizational goals related to capacity building, regional cooperation, and visibility
- Access to research, data, and expert insights to inform policies and strategies

ACSH' main achievements and contributions can be organized according to its three main pillars: *capacity building and peer learning*, *research and knowledge sharing*, and *partnerships and networking*.

1) Capacity Building and Peer Learning

ACSH has actively supported the public administration reforms efforts of participating countries and organizations through its diverse range of activities (workshops, seminars, and training sessions) aimed at capacity building and peer learning among public officials of various countries. ACSH's significant contributions in the area of capacity building and peer learning for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024, are listed in Annex VI of this report. The figure here summarizes the number of ACSH events and the number of participants, including women, for the period 2022 – 2024.[6]

ACSH Events from 2022 to 2024

2022
Number of Events: 24
Total Participants: 1,879
Number of Women Participants: 881

2023
Number of Events: 26
Total Participants: 999
Number of Women Participants: 456

2024
Number of Events: 4
Total Participants: 88
Number of Women Participants: 19

For the Period 2022-2024

2022-2024
Total Number of Events: 54
Grand Total of Participants: 2,966
Total Number of Women Participants: 1,356

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[6] The year 2021 is not included because both projects under the scope of this evaluation started at the latter part of that year.

ACSH has organized events covering a wide range of topics relevant to public administration and civil service. Such versatility has demonstrated ACSH's commitment to addressing current and emerging issues in the field. The following are the key thematic areas of UNDP's contributions:

- ACSH has facilitated discussions and learning on broader public administration reforms. For instance, the 2022 session on "*Public Administration Transformation in Post-Soviet Countries*" provided a platform to discuss the diverse experiences of post-Soviet states in reforming their public sectors. Evaluation participants noted that these discussions have been crucial for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities in different administrative systems and have contributed to the formulation of informed policies and practices.

- Integrity and ethical governance have also been key themes. The 2023 ACSH Annual Conference on "*Meritocracy, Integrity, Innovation*" was pointed out by evaluation participants as an event that offered extensive insights into building systems that promote ethical governance and meritocracy. They noted that this event emphasized the importance of ethical standards in public service, which is fundamental for gaining public trust and enhancing service delivery.

- ACSH has contributed to enhancing the capacities of civil servants by organizing tailored to modern administrative challenges. For example, in 2022, events such as the "*Digital Government Policy Frameworks*" workshop in Samarkand and the training on "*Techniques to Conduct an Interview*" in Astana focused on skill enhancement relevant to contemporary governance needs. Similarly, in 2023, the "*Workshop on Change Management for Digital Transformation*" in Astana facilitated the sharing of best practices and innovative approaches to digital governance, further exemplified by the 2024 "*Seminar on Emergency and Crisis Management in the Public Sector*". Also, specific skill development has been a core feature of ACSH's capacity-building efforts. The 2022 training on "*Techniques to Conduct an Interview*" focused on enhancing human resource capabilities within civil services, which is vital for improving the recruitment and retention of talent in the public sector. Such targeted trainings help in building a more competent and responsive civil service.

- ACSH has also featured technological adaptation in its capacity-building agenda. Evaluation participants highlighted the 2024 seminar on "*Progress, Challenges, and Prospects of E-Government*" as an example of ACSH's commitment to integrating digital solutions into public administration. They also highlighted the 2023 "*Workshop on Change Management for Digital Transformation*", which not only provided training on managing technological change, but also emphasized the leadership aspects necessary to drive such transformations.

- Recognizing the importance of preparedness and response strategies, ACSH has included crisis management in its capacity-building offer. Evaluation participants highlighted the

2024 "*Seminar on Emergency and Crisis Management in the Public Sector*", which provided crucial training in handling public sector emergencies – an increasingly important theme in a world facing multifaceted crises from natural disasters to pandemics.

As part of the capacity building efforts, ACSH's events have promoted substantial peer learning opportunities. Evaluation participants emphasized in particular international and regional forums, in which officials from different countries have shared insights and experiences. They highlighted the 2023 ACSH Annual Conference on "*Meritocracy, Integrity, Innovation*" had a massive turnout, serving as a platform for dialogues and exchanges. In 2024, the "*World Government Summit*" with a focus on "*Empowering A.I. for Emerging Nations*" highlighted the forward-looking agenda of ACSH, promoting advanced technological integration in governance. The international scope of ACSH's events has facilitated cross-border learning and collaboration. For example, the series of workshops and seminars involving multiple countries have facilitated the sharing of best practices and learning from the experiences of others. According to evaluation participants, these events have not only enhanced individual capabilities, but have also promoted a cooperative international approach to public administration challenges. ACSH has collaborated with various international bodies and governments, which has demonstrated ACSH's role in bridging global expertise and local administrative practices. All this work has been largely effective in improving the capacities of participating officials and organizations. As can be seen from the chart on the right, an overwhelming majority of the respondents of this evaluation's survey responded that the ACSH has improved to some extent the capacities of their organizations.
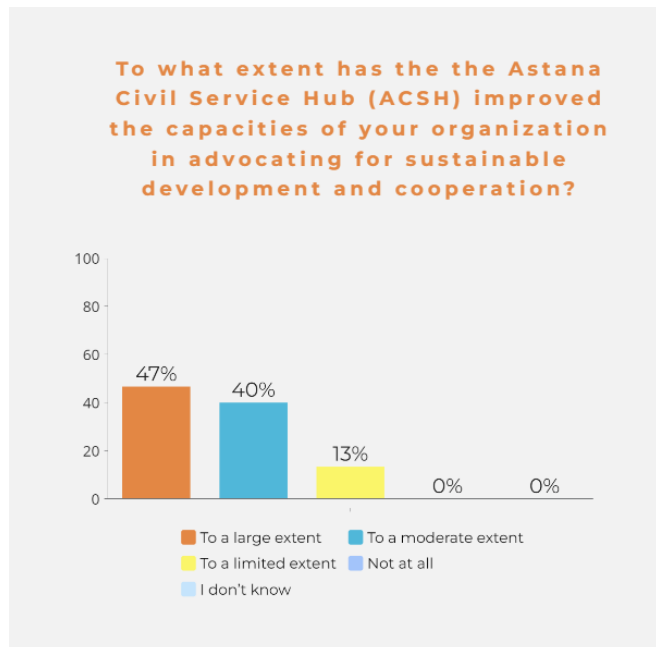
2) Research and Knowledge Sharing

ACSH has made notable contributions in the area of Research and Knowledge Sharing, as demonstrated by the long list of 66 knowledge products produced by the center and listed in Annex VII of this report. ACSH's knowledge products have covered a broad spectrum of public administration issues, including HR management, digital transformation, communications, project management, and public management practices. These products have been generally tailored to the needs of different geographical regions, with many focusing on Central Asia, but also extending to global contexts. This geographical specificity has given strength to the relevance and applicability of the research, making it a valuable for policymakers and practitioners. Collaboration with various international, regional and country-level

organizations has enriched the quality and scope of the research. These partnerships have not only brought in diverse expertise, but have also facilitated the sharing of best practices.

By addressing both fundamental and advanced topics related to public administration, ACSH's knowledge products have served as tools for capacity building. According to evaluation participants, they have provided civil servants and government organizations with fresh insights and updated methodologies for effective public management, digital governance, HR management and other topics. With digital transformation being a key focus area, ACSH has developed multiple resources to guide the digitalization efforts of public sectors. Products such as the "*Standards Frameworks for digital transformation*" have provided guidelines on utilizing information technologies, cybersecurity, and data privacy, which are crucial for modernizing government operations. Furthermore, the introduction of behavioral public policy as a theme shows ACSH's commitment to innovating within public administration by applying behavioral insights from economics and psychology. This approach helps beneficiary governments design policies that better address the needs and behaviors of the population, ensuring more effective governance.

ACSH has made efforts to make its knowledge products accessible to a broad audience by producing materials in multiple languages, including English, Kazakh, Russian, and Korean. This multi-lingual approach has broadened access and has facilitated the integration of ACSH's research into various contexts. The knowledge products are disseminated through various channels, including ACSH's website, the UNDP Knowledge Depository, social media, and partner networks, to reach a wider audience and maximize their impact. ACSH has conducted regular needs assessment surveys and produces reports that track changes and developments in public administration, helping to identify ongoing challenges and areas for future research.
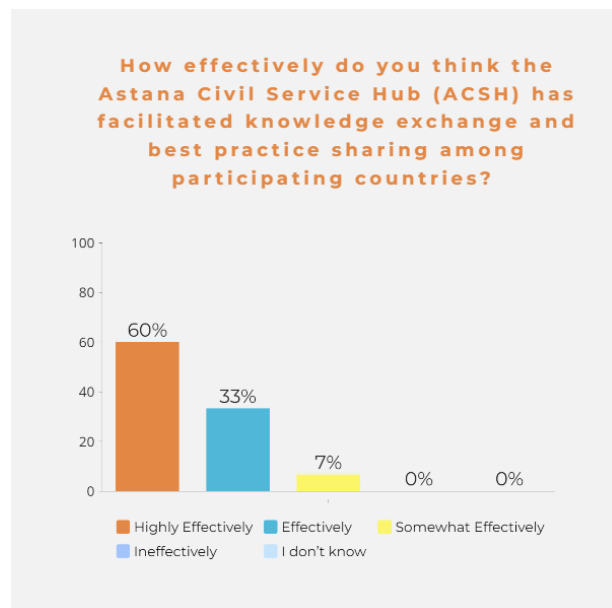
As can be seen from the chart, respondents of the survey for this evaluation overwhelmingly found ACSH highly effective in facilitating knowledge exchange and best practice sharing among countries. Specific initiatives highlighted include peer-to-peer learning alliances, capacity building workshops, research dissemination, and annual conferences.

There are however issues that evaluation participants thought deserve further consideration in this area. The following are some suggestions that might make the work of ACSH more effective.

- *Navigating Existing Resources*: Some evaluation participants noted the challenge of navigating the vast amount of information available online. They suggested that ACSH

could help by not only producing knowledge (which is a highly appreciated feature of the organization), but also by leveraging existing knowledge that is available out there. To this end, ACSH could provide guidance to participating countries on how to effectively search and locate relevant information.

- *Engagement with Academic Institutions*: ACSH already engages with academic institutions by inviting academics to events and having them author knowledge products. Some interviewees suggested that ACSH could explore more intensively and proactively joint research projects with academic institutions, similar to their collaboration with government institutions. Furthermore, as part of its functions, ACSH could also place greater emphasis on supporting and developing the research capacity of participating countries.

- *Non-traditional Channels of Knowledge Dissemination*: Another idea that emerged during the interviews for this evaluation was the need for ACSH to make more effective use of non-traditional channels of knowledge dissemination, such as video and audio, which are becoming very common now and gathering a larger audience. Some evaluation participants thought that ACSH could be more effective in the delivery of certain types of knowledge if it were to use video and audio channels of dissemination more intensively. While the cost of production for these media are greater, they have been on a fast downward trend in recent years, which makes them more accessible to ACSH from a cost perspective.

3) Partnerships and Networking

ACSH has established strategic partnerships with a range of international and regional organizations to enhance the scope and depth of its initiatives. The Hub has been successful in expanding its network to include 42 participating countries and over 70 institutional partners. The Hub has facilitated over 50 bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives and agreements among participating countries. These partnerships include collaborations with governmental bodies, and educational institutions across countries, which have been crucial in leveraging global expertise and local insights. For example, the partnership with the Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea has been instrumental in producing comparative studies on HR management systems that benefit not only the involved countries but also provide benchmarks globally. The Hub has also established partnerships with leading international organizations such as UNDESA, OECD, UNDP, and the World Bank.

ACSH has organized high-profile events, workshops, and conferences that have served as networking platforms. These events have consistently involved a significant number of organizations and countries, fostering collaboration and networking among participants. Evaluation participants pointed out the World Government Summit Ministerial Round Table which attracted representatives from 23 countries and 8 organizations, as well as the ASPA Annual Conference panel session which involved participants from 5 countries and 6 organizations. These events have brought together policymakers, practitioners, academics, and other stakeholders from various countries, facilitating rich dialogues and the exchange of ideas. Evaluation participants also noted the importance of annual conferences and specialized

seminars on topics like digital transformation and crisis management in the public sector, which have provided them with valuable opportunities for networking and peer learning.

The workshops organized by ACSH, often in collaboration with international partners, have focused on building specific capabilities within the public service sector. According to the majority of evaluation participants, these workshops have not only delivered targeted training, but have also served as networking events where participants could connect with experts and peers facing similar administrative challenges. They have fostered a community of practice that extends beyond the events, enhancing sustainable learning and cooperation. These networking opportunities have contributed to the establishment of partnerships, the exchange of ideas, and the identification of potential areas for collaboration and mutual support.

Assessment of the Achievement of Projects' Targets

The evaluation included an assessment of the achievement of the targets of the two projects based on their results frameworks. The box below shows the assessment of the achievement of each indicator for both projects.

Box 4: Achievement of Project's Targets

The following is the achievement of the targets of the two projects based on the established indicators in the results frameworks of the two respective projects.

Hub Project

Based on the provided results framework for the Hub project, here is a detailed analysis of the achievement of results against the established targets:

Output 1: Research and Knowledge Management

- *Books published and disseminated*: The final target of publishing and disseminating 3 books was not fully achieved. The actual number of books published was 2, which is 67% of the target.
- *Research papers, comparative analyses, and case studies*: The final target of publishing and disseminating 23 demand-driven and evidence-based research papers, comparative analyses, and case studies was exceeded. The actual number published was 38, which is 165% of the target.
- *Position papers and policy briefs*: The final target of developing and disseminating 5 demand-driven and evidence-based position papers and policy briefs was exceeded. The actual number developed was 7, which is 140% of the target.
- *International Journal of Civil Service editions*: The final target of preparing, publishing, and disseminating 20 editions of the International Journal of Civil Service was almost fully achieved. The actual number of editions prepared was 19.

Output 2: Capacity Building and Peer Learning

- *Capacity development events for civil service modernization and innovation*: The final target of coordinating 176 capacity development events to support civil service modernization and innovation was not fully achieved. The actual number of events coordinated was 165, which is 94% of the target.
- *Capacity development events for public service delivery and digitalization*: The final target of coordinating 15 capacity development events to support public service delivery and digitalization was exceeded. The actual number of events coordinated was 16, which is 107% of the target.

- *Participants in capacity development events*: The final target of having 10,300 participants in capacity development events, with 50% women, was nearly achieved. The actual number of participants was 10,205, which is 99% of the target. However, the proportion of women participants was 45%, slightly below the 50% target.
- *Scholarships granted to civil servants*: The final target of granting 25 scholarships to civil servants to study at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan was not fully achieved. The actual number of scholarships granted was 25, which is 100% of the target.
- *P2P Learning Alliances created and functioning*: The final target of creating and having 7 P2P Learning Alliances functioning within ACSH activities was not achieved. Only 4 alliances were created.
- *Activities within the P2P Learning Alliances*: The final target of having 17 activities take place within the framework of the P2P Learning Alliances was not fully achieved, with 15 activities taking place.

Output 3: Partnerships and Networking

- *Triangular cooperation exchanges*: The final target of having 55 triangular cooperation exchanges involving ACSH participating countries was exceeded. The actual number of exchanges was 57, which is 104% of the target.
- *ACSH countries participating in knowledge and experience exchange*: The final target of having 43 ACSH countries participating in the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of civil service excellence and public administration development was achieved, with 43 countries participating, which is 100% of the target.
- *Experts in the ACSH roster*: The final target of having 140 experts in the ACSH roster who provide expert advice to civil servants of the participating countries was nearly achieved. The actual number of experts in the roster was 138, which is 99% of the target. This target can be considered achieved.

MOIS Project

Output 1: Capacity Building

- *Feasibility study*: The target of completing 1 feasibility study has been achieved.
- *Regional conference attendance*: The target of 60 participants attending the regional conference was not fully achieved. The actual attendance was 50 participants, which is 83.3% of the target.
- *Workshop and seminar attendance*: The cumulative target of 350 participants attending innovation seminars over three years has not been fully met. The actual attendance was 308 participants, which is 88% of the target.[7]
- *Methodological guides*: The target for producing methodological guides was marked as "NA" (not applicable) for all three years, and the achievement of results was reported as 0. This indicator was not included in the project's scope.
- *Knowledge products*: The cumulative target of preparing and publishing 2 knowledge products has been achieved.

Output 2: Exposure to Innovation Practices

- *Study visits to Korea*: The cumulative target of 60 government officials, executives, experts, and policymakers participating in study visits to Korea over three years has not been fully achieved. The actual number of participants was 39, which is 65% of the target.

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[7] Indicators 1.3 and 1.4 in the Results Framework of the MOIS project have been consolidated because the project has tracked workshops and seminars jointly, considering them as one type of activity.

As can be seen from the box above, the Hub and MOIS projects have demonstrated a mixed degree of success in the achievement of their targets.

- *Hub Project*: Out of the 13 indicators across all three outputs, 4 indicators were achieved, 5 indicators were nearly achieved (>90% of the target), and 3 indicators were not achieved.

- *MOIS Project*: Out of the 6 indicators across both outputs, 2 indicators were achieved, 3 indicators were not achieved, and 1 indicator was not applicable or not measured.[8]

Impact

ACSH's impact is dispersed in several thematic areas, due to its wide range of activities. For the purpose of this evaluation, the assessment is focused on the key areas of ACSH's work – Civil Service Management, Public Administration Reform, and Digitalization of government Operations and Public Services.

Civil Service Management

ACSH has made notable contributions in promoting best practices, building capacity, and fostering regional cooperation in civil service management among participating countries. Through its various initiatives, including workshops, conferences, publications, and training programs, ACSH has emerged as a leading platform for sharing experiences and innovative solutions to common challenges faced by civil services worldwide.
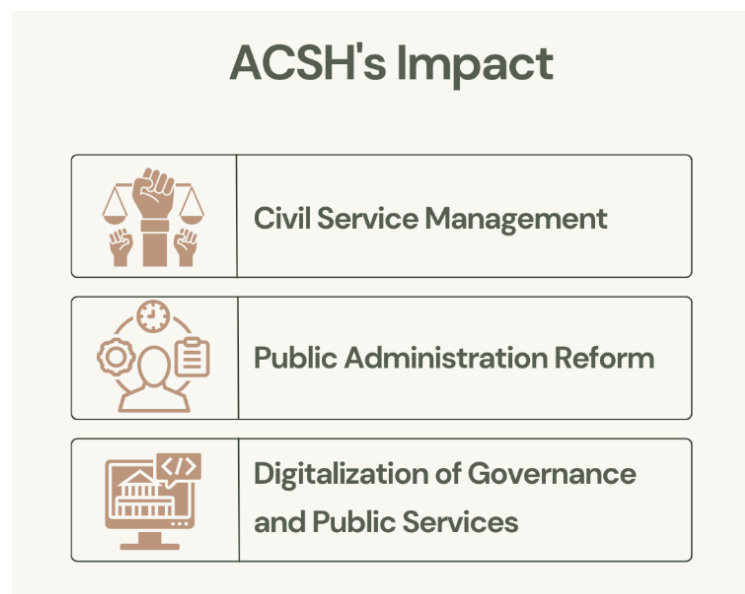
One of ACSH's key achievements has been the dissemination of good practices in areas such as digital transformation and human resource management. For instance, ACSH's collaborative studies on electronic human resource management systems (e-HRMS) in Central Asia, benchmarked against advanced systems like those in South Korea, have provided valuable insights to help member countries modernize their civil service operations.

Moreover, ACSH's capacity-building workshops and training programmes have improved the skills and capabilities of civil servants. These initiatives were generally tailored to meet the specific needs of civil services in various geopolitical contexts, focusing on both foundational

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[8] This is because the Project Board unanimously agreed not to proceed with the production of methodological guides but focus on knowledge products instead.

public administration skills and specialized areas such as crisis management, policy analysis, and public sector innovation. By improving the professional capabilities of individual civil servants, ACSH has indirectly enhanced the overall quality of public administration and service delivery in participating countries.

In the area of digital transformation, ACSH has been instrumental in building the capacities of civil servants to lead and implement digital governance efforts. Through online seminars, workshops, study visits, and online courses, government officials have gained exposure to key concepts, best practices, and practical tools related to digital governance.

ACSH's commitment to research and the development of knowledge products has established it as a think tank and knowledge leader in public administration. The Hub's research activities cover a broad spectrum of public administration themes, including governance, public policy, and administrative reforms. These efforts are vital for supporting evidence-based policy-making and administrative practices, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of governments. Publications like the "Analysis of communication channels of state bodies with the population" provide actionable insights that governments can implement to enhance transparency and citizen engagement.

Furthermore, ACSH's emphasis on meritocracy, integrity, and anti-corruption has contributed to fostering a culture of ethical governance and accountability in civil services. Initiatives like the development of competency frameworks and performance evaluation systems are part of ACSH's broader strategy to promote transparency and accountability in civil service systems. These frameworks help ensure that civil service appointments and promotions are based on merit and performance, rather than nepotism or patronage.

Despite these significant achievements, a challenge identified by some evaluation participants lies in institutionalizing the learning within government training systems and applying it in practice beyond ACSH activities. They suggested that stronger partnerships with civil service training institutions and ongoing support for alumni networks will help ensure that ACSH's investments in civil service capacity building translate into lasting improvements in digital leadership and innovation.

<u>Public Administration Reform</u>

ACSH has played a notable role in influencing public administration reforms in participating countries through its advisory services, research activities, and strategic dissemination of findings. Interviews conducted for this evaluation indicated that ACSH has, to some extent, impacted the development of national policies and strategies in member states.

As a major platform for advocating and implementing best practices in public administration, ACSH has facilitated the exchange of innovative ideas and successful governance models among countries. Through its extensive network and collaborative projects, ACSH has assisted participating countries and organizations in adopting practices that enhance transparency, efficiency, and service delivery in their public sectors. For example, ACSH's initiatives on e-governance and digital transformation have provided governments with the necessary

frameworks and tools to modernize their operations, making public services more accessible to citizens.

Several evaluation participants noted that ACSH's research activities have provided them with valuable insights into public administration challenges and solutions. The Hub's research outputs, which include comparative studies, policy analyses, and best practice guides, are disseminated through its website and events. This dissemination of knowledge not only informs policy decisions, but also supports the continuous professional development of civil servants. By providing a solid empirical basis for reform initiatives, ACSH's research helps ensure that public administration reforms are grounded in reliable data and tailored to the specific needs of each member country.

The impact of ACSH on public administration reform extends beyond national boundaries through its role in fostering international collaboration. The Hub organizes international conferences, roundtables, and forums that bring together policymakers, experts, and practitioners from various countries. Evaluation participants appreciated these types of events, as according to them they facilitate the sharing of experiences and challenges, fostering a collaborative environment where solutions can be co-developed and adapted to different contexts. Such international engagement not only contributes to the reform process in their countries, but also promotes a sense of shared purpose among participating officials.

Through its advisory and consultative roles, ACSH has influenced some policy and structural reforms in public administration. The Hub's guidelines and recommendations have sometimes served as the basis for legislative changes and institutional restructuring in member states. For instance, ACSH's work on merit-based recruitment and anti-corruption measures has led to improvements in civil service regulations, promoting greater integrity and accountability in government institutions.

Moreover, ACSH has played a role in promoting technological innovation within public administrations. Some evaluation participants noted that the Hub has helped them implement technology-driven solutions that streamline government processes and enhance citizen engagement. By acting as a bridge between technology experts and government bodies, ACSH has ensured that public administrations can adopt and benefit from the latest technological advancements.

Digitalization

ACSH has promoted digitalization and e-governance frameworks across countries, especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. By advocating for the integration of digital technologies into government processes, ACSH has helped public administrations enhance their operational efficiencies and improve citizen access to services. Several country representatives noted that workshops and seminars organized by ACSH have provided them with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement e-governance solutions, which are crucial for modernizing government interactions and increasing transparency.

One of the key impacts of ACSH is its focus on building the digital capacities of participating countries. The Hub has organized targeted training sessions that cover essential aspects of digital governance, such as data management, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure development. These training programs are designed to equip civil servants with the skills needed to manage and implement digital projects effectively, ensuring that governments can keep pace with rapid technological advancements. Moreover, ACSH has facilitated knowledge sharing on digital transformation through its publications, research studies, and case studies. By disseminating best practices and success stories from leading digital governance models—such as those from Estonia and South Korea—ACSH has provided valuable insights that other countries could adapt and apply.

ACSH has also contributed to digital policy development by providing expert advice and consultancy services to governments. Through its networking events, ACSH has enabled stakeholders to exchange ideas and forge partnerships that are essential for driving digital transformation. Evaluation participants noted that they have benefitted from ACSH's good practices and recommendations on digital strategies, which has helped them ensure that digitalization efforts are well-aligned with broader administrative reforms and national development goals. This policy support has been helpful for creating a coherent and supportive legislative environment that facilitates the successful implementation of digital initiatives.

Furthermore, ACSH has encouraged the development of innovation ecosystems within governments by supporting the establishment of digital labs, innovation hubs, and pilot projects. These ecosystems allow for the experimentation with and adoption of new technologies in a controlled environment, mitigating risks associated with large-scale implementation. Such initiatives have been useful for cultivating a culture of innovation within public administrations and ensuring that governments remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of citizens.

Overall, the ultimate impact of ACSH's work in digitalization is seen in the enhanced delivery of public services. By promoting digital solutions, ACSH has helped governments provide services that are more accessible, faster, and more responsive to citizens' needs. This improvement in service delivery has been useful for increasing public trust and satisfaction with government performance.

3.3. Efficiency

This section provides an assessment of the efficiency with which the programme that underpins the work of the ACSH is planned, financed, and implemented.

<u>Programme Management</u>

The programme underpinning the work of ACSH is implemented by UNDP Kazakhstan, in partnership with the Government of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Korea. The two projects that constitute this programme are based on clear project documents that outline objectives, strategies, activities, and budgets of the respective projects. These documents have been approved by the respective donors and the implementing agency (UNDP), providing a framework for the efficient allocation and utilization of funds. The projects are implemented on the basis of annual workplans that detail the specific activities, timeframes, and resources required, ensuring that funds are used in a planned and targeted manner.

ACSH's Main Governance Bodies:

- *Steering Committee*: This is the main strategic oversight body responsible for proposing the strategic vision and directions for the Hub. The Committee is chaired by an appointee of the Government of Kazakhstan and approved by the UNDP Resident Representative. The Steering Committee's main duties include providing overall directions on research, capacity building, and strategies; promoting cooperation between participating countries; stimulating collaboration among national institutions; and offering strategic advice for the Hub's sustainability. Comprises distinguished members from various countries, the Steering Committee has played a notable advocacy role and has significantly contributed to the visibility of ACSH.

- *Advisory Board*: This is a 15-member body that provides strategic recommendations, substantive support, and consultations on the Hub's activities. The members, who mostly represent the founding organizations of the Hub, are experts in public administration, civil service reform, and public service delivery from various countries, including Georgia, the United States, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, and North Macedonia. The Advisory Board's role is to offer guidance on the Hub's framework, impact, and general direction, review strategy papers, contribute to needs assessment studies, advise on public administration reform priorities, promote new partnerships, and provide input on the Hub's publications. The membership and annual meetings of the Advisory Board are open to representatives of all participating countries, and some members also serve on the Editorial Board of the Hub's International Journal. While the Advisory Board plays a crucial role in the operations of the Hub, board members interviewed for this evaluation expressed the need for more frequent advisory board engagement by the ACSH team and more effective flow of communications from the Hub to the Board.

- *ACSH Team*: The team comprises a diverse group of professionals with expertise in various areas related to public administration, capacity building, and project management.

This diverse mix of skills and expertise has enabled the ACSH team to effectively design, implement, and manage initiatives that promote excellence in public service and support the modernization of public administration in participating countries. Evaluation interviewees from participating organizations and countries praised the professionalism and integrity of ACSH staff members and identified the team as a key factor of success.

Programme Implementation

As a UNDP-implemented programme, ACSH is subject to UNDP's standard financial management and oversight procedures, such as annual audits, spot checks, and financial reporting requirements. In this regard UNDP plays a key role as the hosting organization, providing the Hub with operational and logistical support, as well as guaranteeing its independence and integrity.

From an effiency perspective, ACSH has leveraged additional funds by engaging in cost-sharing arrangements with partner institutions and by mobilizing additional resources from other sources. For example, many of the project's events and activities have been co-funded or hosted by partner institutions, reducing the direct costs to the project. The project has also secured additional funding from other donors, such as the Republic of Korea, for specific initiatives, demonstrating its ability to attract and efficiently utilize diverse resources.

Furthermore, partner institutions have played a valuable role in supporting ACSH activities. ACSH has been able to leverage the strengths, networks, and resources of its partners to amplify results and impacts that would not have been possible through a standalone approach.

- Many of ACSH's conferences, workshops, training courses, and other events have been co-organized and hosted by partner institutions, such as government agencies, universities, and training centers in participating countries. For example, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan has hosted several of the project's annual conferences and other events, providing logistics, facilitation, and expertise. Partner institutions have contributed their expertise, knowledge, and resources to support the project's research, capacity building, and policy dialogue activities.

- Experts from the EU, OECD, UNDESA, and other international organizations have provided technical assistance and advice on various aspects of civil service reform, while government agencies and universities in participating countries have shared their experiences and practices.

- Some of the research papers, case studies, and policy briefs have been co-authored or reviewed by experts from partner institutions, ensuring their relevance, quality, and usefulness for policymakers and practitioners. For example, the book on "*Public Service Evolution in the 15 Post-Soviet Countries*" involved collaboration with scholars and practitioners from these countries.

- Representatives of partner institutions have participated in the ACSH's governance and advisory bodies, such as the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board, providing strategic guidance and oversight for the project's implementation. This has helped to ensure alignment with national priorities and ownership of project results.

For the most part, ACSH activities are implemented in a timely and efficient manner. Evaluation participants expressed satisfaction with the responsiveness of ACSH staff and the smooth logistics of the various events in which they have participated. This was also confirmed by the results of the survey organized for this evaluation (see chart on the right). This can be attributed to the effective coordination and communication between the project team and partner institutions, which has been essential for the successful execution of activities.

Reflecting on the activities you are familiar with, to what extent do you think they were completed within the allocated time frame?
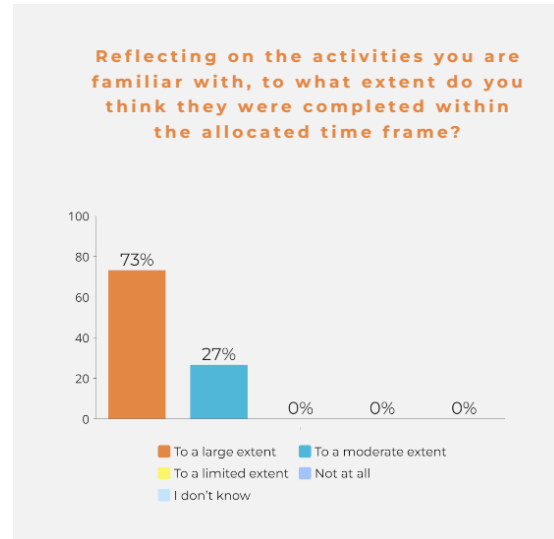
However, as with any complex project involving multiple stakeholders, there have been instances where challenges have arisen in aligning schedules, expectations, and reporting requirements. These issues have occasionally led to misunderstandings or delays in the implementation of certain activities. Some partner institutions, particularly those in developing countries or with limited budgets, have faced difficulties in allocating sufficient staff, time, and resources to support the project's initiatives. As a result, some planned activities have had to be delayed, cancelled, or scaled down.

Despite these challenges, ACSH has shown remarkable flexibility and adaptability in responding to unforeseen circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. By swiftly shifting to online and hybrid modalities for events and activities, and by adjusting its workplans and budgets accordingly, ACSH has been able to maintain the continuity of its operations and continue delivering value to its members. This agility has been particularly important in ensuring that women, who often face additional care responsibilities and digital barriers during crises, can continue to access and participate in ACSH's programs. The combination of online and in-person events has been a key strength of ACSH's approach. By leveraging both traditional and digital platforms for learning and collaboration, ACSH has been able to reach a wider audience and cater to the diverse needs and preferences of its members. This flexibility has become increasingly important in the context of the pandemic, as travel restrictions and social distancing measures have made in-person gatherings more challenging.

Looking ahead, it will be important for ACSH to continue building on its strengths in flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness, while also addressing some of the challenges that have emerged in the implementation of activities. This may involve working more closely with partner institutions to build their capacity and resources for supporting the project's initiatives, as well as exploring new ways of streamlining coordination and communication to minimize delays and misunderstandings.

Programme Monitoring

The ACSH team has implemented a comprehensive monitoring system to track the progress and performance of its activities, allowing for timely corrective action when necessary. The two project documents include a results framework with output-level indicators and targets, providing a clear basis for monitoring and measuring the project's achievements. The monitoring framework encompasses specific output and outcome indicators for each of ACSH's key functions, namely research and knowledge sharing, capacity building and peer learning, and partnerships and networking. These indicators are tracked and reported on an annual basis, enabling the team to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. To ensure that its activities are relevant and impactful, ACSH actively collects feedback from participants in its events and activities, as well as from partner institutions. This feedback is gathered through surveys, evaluations, and consultations, and provides valuable insights that inform the design and delivery of subsequent activities.

ACSH prepares annual progress reports that offer a comprehensive overview of the implementation of activities, achievement of outputs and outcomes, and challenges faced. These reports are reviewed by the project management team, Steering Committee, and other stakeholders, facilitating reflection and allowing for the adjustment of strategies and workplans as needed. The annual progress reports include data on the actual values achieved for the project's indicators, such as the number of capacity building events organized and the number of participants reached. This data is derived from various monitoring and documentation activities, including needs assessment surveys, participant feedback forms, and event reports.

ACSH makes an effort to track and analyze the project's reach and inclusiveness by providing disaggregated data, such as the gender breakdown of participants. This is a good practice in terms of monitoring gender participation. However, the objectives and indicators do not explicitly incorporate gender-specific targets or measures of success, which could be an area for improvement.

In terms of financial monitoring, ACSH provides regular financial reports to the donor and the implementing agency, including quarterly and annual expenditure reports. These reports are reviewed by the project management team, the steering committee, and the UNDP Country Office, ensuring robust monitoring of fund utilization and the identification of any deviations or issues. Additionally, the project undergoes annual audits by external auditors, providing an extra layer of financial oversight and accountability.

Despite these strengths, there are areas for improvement in ACSH's monitoring system.

- The Hub collects limited data on the direct impact and outcomes of its activities on civil service performance and governance quality in participating countries, beyond output-level indicators such as the number of events organized or publications produced. There is also limited information on how the knowledge and skills gained by the participants have been applied in their work, or how the project's activities have influenced policies, practices, or institutional capacities in the participating countries. Also, there is limited analysis of the sustainability and institutionalization of results, including the extent to which ACSH-

supported reforms and initiatives are maintained and scaled up by national partners beyond the period of support.

- As a reflection of the above point, ACSH's annual progress reports tend to focus more on reporting output-level data than on assessing outcomes and impacts, which limits the depth of the monitoring data for informing strategic decision-making. Moreover, ACSH's monitoring data is not consistently disaggregated by key variables such as gender, age, country, or institution, making it difficult to assess the project's reach and impact on different groups and identify potential inequalities or gaps in participation and benefits.
- Also, ACSH's annual progress reports do not provide detailed information on monitoring processes, tools, and platforms, such as how data is collected, analyzed, and used by different stakeholders. Greater transparency and documentation of these aspects would help to assess the robustness and reliability of the monitoring systems.

Overall, while ACSH has established a comprehensive monitoring system that tracks progress, collects feedback, and ensures financial accountability, there are opportunities to strengthen the system by placing greater emphasis on outcome and impact assessment, disaggregating data by key variables, and enhancing transparency around monitoring processes and tools.

Programme Budget and Expenditure

The following tables summarizes budget execution figures for the two projects (budgeted expenditure, actual expenditure, and execution rate) for the period from 2021 to 2023.[9]

Table 2: Projects' Budget Execution

No.	Project	Budgeted	Expenditure	Execution Rate
2021				
1	Hub Project	252,774	146,014	58%
2	MOIS Project	194,430	48,403	25%
2022				
1	Hub Project	1,400,000	1,395,660	100%
2	MOIS Project	573,000	517,914	90%
2023				
1	Hub Project	1,350,000	1,205,547	89%
2	MOIS Project	341,585	341,381	100%
TOTAL				
1	Hub Project	3,002,774	2,747,221	91%
2	MOIS Project	1,109,015	907,698	82%

The following is a summary of the analysis of the data in the above table.

- Hub Project: In 2021, the Hub project had a budgeted expenditure of $252,774, but only spent $146,014, resulting in a low execution rate of 58%. This was primarily the result of the late start of the project and COVID-19 restrictions. In 2022, the project's budget

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[9] This information is provided by UNDP Kazakhstan and has not been verified independently by the evaluator.

increased significantly to $1,400,000, and the execution rate improved to 100%, with actual expenditure matching the budgeted amount. In 2023, the project's budget slightly decreased to $1,350,000, and the execution rate dropped to 89%, with actual expenditure of $1,205,547. Overall, the Hub project had a total budgeted expenditure of $3,002,774 and an actual expenditure of $2,747,221 over the three years, resulting in a high execution rate of 91%.

- MOIS Project: In 2021, the MOIS project had a budgeted expenditure of $194,430, but only spent $48,403, resulting in a very low execution rate of 25%. As in the case of the Hub project, this was primarily the result of the late start of the project and COVID-19 restrictions. In 2022, the project's budget increased to $573,000, and the execution rate improved significantly to 90%, with actual expenditure of $517,914. In 2023, the project's budget decreased to $341,585, but the execution rate reached 100%, with actual expenditure matching the budgeted amount. Overall, the MOIS project had a total budgeted expenditure of $1,109,015 and an actual expenditure of $907,698 over the three years, resulting in a good execution rate of 82%.

As can be seen from the above analysis, both projects have demonstrated adequate budget execution, with the Hub project having a higher overall execution rate and budget compared to the MOIS project. The MOIS project demonstrated a more consistent improvement in execution rate, reaching 100% in the final year.

3.4. Sustainability

This section provides an assessment of the sustainability of the operations of ACSH, based on the following key factors: i) sustainability of results; ii) partnerships; iii) ownership; iv) risk management; and, v) sustainability of funding.

Sustainability of Results

Survey results indicated that ACSH's results are generally perceived by participating organizations as moderately to very sustainable. This sustainability is attributed to several key factors, including the demand-driven nature of ACSH's initiatives, strong ownership and engagement, adaptability of programmes, and the lasting impact of capacity building efforts. Peer learning alliances and knowledge products are specifically highlighted as sustainable mechanisms that contribute to the long-term success of ACSH's work.

ACSH has put in place a set of mechanisms designed to ensure the sustainability of its results in public administration reform and capacity building across its member states. These mechanisms are crafted to promote lasting impact, promote continuous improvement, and secure the institutionalization of successful practices.

- One of the central pillars of ACSH's sustainability approach has been its emphasis on capacity building. By investing in human capital development, ACSH ensures that institutions have the internal capabilities to sustain improvements over the long term.

- Another key component of ACSH's approach to sustainability has been the establishment of strategic partnerships and collaboration with diverse stakeholders. This component is discussed in more detail in the following section of this report.

- ACSH has also placed a strong emphasis on knowledge creation and dissemination as a means of sustaining its impact. It actively conducts research, produces comparative studies, and develops best practice guides that are shared across its network.

- Networking and community building have been additional essential elements of ACSH's sustainability strategy. The Hub has sought to foster a community of practice among civil servants and public administration experts through networking events, forums, and online platforms.

- Further, ACSH has engaged in policy advocacy and institutionalization to embed successful practices into formal policies and institutional frameworks.

Two sustainability-related aspects emerged in the course of this evaluation as deserving further attention.

- *Institutional embedding of learning*: There is a need to strengthen the way in which ACSH's learning and knowledge resources are formally integrated into the participating countries' civil service training and capacity building systems. Without targeted efforts to

institutionalize the learning within human resource development frameworks, there is a risk that the benefits may dissipate once ACSH support concludes. Stronger partnerships with national training institutions and explicit strategies for embedding the learning could enhance sustainability.

- *Ongoing support for application of learning*: While ACSH has provided opportunities for participants to apply their learning, there is a need for mechanisms that provide ongoing support, mentoring, or resources for participants as they seek to implement initiatives in their own contexts. Sustained follow-up support and peer networks could help participants overcome challenges and maintain momentum.

Partnerships

ACSH has strategically established a diverse range of partnerships with regional and national institutions, NGOs, UN agencies, the private sector, and development partners. These partnerships are fundamental to ACSH's approach to sustaining the results of its initiatives and amplifying the impact of its programmes across regions and sectors.

- ACSH's partnerships with regional and national institutions are particularly crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of its interventions. For instance, ACSH has collaborated closely with the Agency for Civil Service Affairs of Kazakhstan and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan to support civil service reform efforts and build institutional capacities in areas such as policy development, training and education, performance management, and digitalization. These partnerships enable ACSH to support the implementation of reforms and the improvement of public administration systems, ensuring that the changes introduced are deeply embedded within the existing institutional frameworks.

- To incorporate a broader range of perspectives and address the needs of various stakeholders in society, ACSH has engaged with NGOs. For example, ACSH has collaborated with the Association of HR Managers of Kazakhstan on several capacity-building events related to human resources management in the public sector. These partnerships have enabled ACSH to leverage the expertise of NGOs in areas such as governance, transparency, and civil society engagement, ensuring that its initiatives are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of the communities they serve.

- UN agencies and international organizations are another key group of partners for ACSH, providing both a platform for collaboration and access to international expertise. ACSH has conducted joint studies, organized forums, and developed capacity-building programmes. For example, ACSH has collaborated with UNDESA to organize a global conference on public service innovation and digital transformation, bringing together experts and practitioners from around the world to share knowledge and best practices. ACSH has engaged experts from international organizations, such as the European Union, OECD and the World Bank, in providing training and sharing knowledge during the capacity building seminars and workshops.

- ACSH has also engaged with the private sector. By collaborating with tech companies and consultancies, ACSH brings the latest digital solutions to public administrations, fostering innovation and ensuring that digital transformation initiatives are based on practical, scalable solutions. For example, ACSH partnered with the Zerde National Infocommunication Holding in Kazakhstan to organize a "*Demo Day*" event showcasing innovative start-up projects in the field of public administration.

The collaborative networks established by ACSH are crucial for sustaining the results of its interventions and ensuring their long-term impact. However, interviews conducted for this evaluation revealed that there is significant potential for ACSH to expand its engagement with non-traditional stakeholders, such as the private sector, startups, and academia. Given the increasingly critical role that these actors play in driving innovation and digital transformation in the public sector, involving them more actively in ACSH's activities could greatly enrich the learning experience and foster valuable new networks.

In particular, there is a clear opportunity for ACSH to deepen its engagement with the private sector. Public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly important in enabling governments to leverage the expertise, resources, and agility of the private sector to drive digital transformation and improve public service delivery. By involving technology companies, entrepreneurs, and other private sector actors in its capacity building and knowledge exchange activities, ACSH could expose participants to cutting-edge ideas and practices, while also fostering new collaborations and partnerships. Survey respondents suggested a range of potential activities and initiatives that ACSH could pursue to strengthen its engagement with the private sector. These include joint innovation labs and accelerators, where public sector officials and private sector innovators could work together to co-design and test new solutions; running challenges and hackathons to crowdsource ideas and prototypes; pursuing joint research and pilot projects to explore new approaches and technologies; providing sandboxes and co-development opportunities for startups and entrepreneurs to collaborate with government agencies; facilitating cross-sector fellowships and secondments to promote knowledge exchange and capacity building; and convening communities of practice that blend diverse stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, civil society, and academia.

In addition to engaging more actively with the private sector and other non-traditional stakeholders, there is also an opportunity for ACSH to collaborate more intensively with other UNDP Country Offices (COs) and regional hubs, as well as with regional centers of UN agencies. While the fragmentation of the UN system can make this challenging, these entities often have valuable resources, expertise, and connections that ACSH could tap into to support its work and amplify its impact.

Ownership

ACSH has managed to create a strong sense of ownership among key institutional stakeholders in the participating countries, especially the host government of Kazakhstan which has

provided strong support to the Hub. This ownership is crucial for the sustainability and ongoing success of the public administration reforms initiated or supported by ACSH. The Hub has achieved this through a comprehensive approach that actively involves stakeholders in program design, aligns with national priorities, builds institutional capacities, and promotes collaboration and knowledge sharing.

One of the critical factors contributing to the success and sustainability of ACSH's activities has been the level of commitment and support from political leaders and senior officials in partner institutions. In cases where there has been strong political will and leadership, ACSH has been able to achieve more significant and lasting results. This highlights the importance of securing buy-in from high-level decision-makers to ensure the long-term impact of public administration reforms.

ACSH has actively engaged government officials and institutions from the participating countries in various activities, such as needs assessments, regional conferences, seminars, workshops, and study visits. This inclusive approach has ensured that ACSH's activities and outputs have been relevant and tailored to the needs and priorities of the stakeholders, while also providing them with opportunities to shape the Hub's focus and direction. By giving stakeholders a voice in the design and implementation of the project, ACSH has cultivated a strong sense of ownership and commitment to its objectives.

Capacity building and knowledge transfer have been at the core of ACSH's strategy for creating ownership among institutional stakeholders. The Hub has made significant investments in strengthening the skills, knowledge, and competencies of civil servants and public administration professionals through a range of learning activities, including seminars, workshops, study visits, and other initiatives. By empowering stakeholders with the necessary capacities to drive and sustain reforms, ACSH has nurtured a sense of ownership and responsibility for the project's results.

To further reinforce ownership, ACSH has sought to institutionalize its tools, methodologies, and approaches within the systems and practices of national partners. This has involved integrating ACSH's training modules and curricula into the regular programs of civil service academies and supporting the development of national strategies and frameworks for public administration reform. An example of this is ACSH's collaboration with the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia to develop a competency framework for civil servants, which has been adopted as a national standard.

Overall, ACSH has created a strong foundation for long-term impact. As it continues to strengthen partnerships and adapt to the evolving needs of the participating countries, it is well-positioned to drive lasting change and innovation in public administration across the region.

Risk Management

As any other programme in the context of public sector and international relations, the ACSH faces certain risks that are of a strategic, operational and financial nature. The following is a

brief summary of the main risks faced by the Hub, based on insights from interviews conducted for this evaluation.

- *Strategic Risks*:
  - ➢ *Alignment with participating countries' priorities*: ACSH must continually adapt its activities and initiatives to remain relevant and address the evolving needs of participating countries in public administration. Failure to do so could diminish the center's impact and relevance.
  - ➢ *Competition from other organizations*: The presence of other regional or international organizations offering similar services in public administration capacity building and knowledge sharing could compete with ACSH for resources, participants, and influence.
  - ➢ *Political instability or changes in the region*: Political instability, changes in government, or shifts in regional dynamics could affect member countries' involvement and commitment, potentially impacting ACSH's operations and effectiveness.

- *Operational Risks*:
  - ➢ *Capacity constraints*: ACSH's ability to deliver high-quality services may be limited by its internal capacity, including human resources, expertise, and infrastructure. Overextending its resources could compromise the quality and effectiveness of its initiatives.
  - ➢ *Technology and data management*: As ACSH increasingly relies on digital platforms and tools, it faces risks related to technology infrastructure, data security, and privacy. Cybersecurity threats, system failures, or data breaches could disrupt its activities and damage its credibility.
  - ➢ *Monitoring challenges*: Measuring the impact and effectiveness of ACSH's initiatives can be challenging, given the complex and long-term nature of public administration reforms. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems could limit the ACSH's ability to demonstrate its value and make evidence-based decisions.

- *Financial Risks*:
  - ➢ ACSH relies on financial support from participating countries, international organizations, and donors to sustain its operations. Changes in funding priorities, economic downturns, or shifts in donor interests could impact the center's financial stability and its ability to implement its activities.

While these risks are real and tangible and well understood by the ACSH team, the Hub could articulate these risks more explicitly and monitor them more systematically. More importantly, to mitigate these risks, ACSH could develop and implement risk management strategies, including regular risk assessments, contingency planning, and risk monitoring and reporting. Strengthening its internal capacity, diversifying its funding sources, investing in monitoring and evaluation systems, and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct will be crucial for ACSH's long-term success and sustainability.

Sustainability of Funding

ACSH's sustainability of funding is a key determinant of its long-term success and impact. The recent funding commitments made by the governments of Kazakhstan and South Korea can be seen as a strong vote of confidence in the Hub's relevance and effectiveness. This ongoing support from two key donors demonstrates their belief in ACSH's mission and its ability to drive positive change in public administration across the region.

However, relying heavily on two major donors also presents a potential risk to ACSH's sustainability. While the strong ownership and support from Kazakhstan and South Korea are undoubtedly valuable, any changes in their priorities or funding commitments could have a significant impact on ACSH's operations. To mitigate this risk and ensure long-term sustainability, it is essential for ACSH's leadership and UNDP to explore new and innovative ways of financing the Hub's operations.

Another important long-term consideration is the eventual decoupling of ACSH from UNDP. Since its creation, ACSH has operated as a UNDP structure, benefiting from the organization's expertise, networks, and resources. While this arrangement has been instrumental in establishing and growing ACSH, it is important to recognize that, in the long run, the Hub will need to become an independent entity within the institutional landscape of the region and beyond. While most stakeholders currently believe that the best operating model for ACSH is to remain nested within UNDP, it is important to acknowledge that this arrangement may not be sustainable in the long run. As ACSH continues to grow and evolve, it will need to establish itself as an independent fixture in the regional and global landscape of public administration reform. This transition will require careful planning and coordination between ACSH's leadership and UNDP to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

3.5. Cross-cutting Themes

This section presents an overview of the assessment of the project against cross-cutting themes such as Gender Mainstreaming, Human Rights Based Approach, Environmental Sustainability, and Disability Inclusion.

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender-Sensitive Approaches

ACSH has made efforts to promote gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive approaches in its capacity building and peer learning activities, primarily through the engagement of women participants in its activities. According to the gender disaggregation of the list of participants presented in Annex VI of this report, women have been present in all events organized by ACSH. However, as can be seen from the numbers, their representation could be further improved to achieve a greater gender balance. The predominance of men in senior civil service positions is a primary factor contributing to such gender imbalances. This highlights the usefulness of ACSH activities that seek to address the underlying structural barriers to women's career advancement and leadership in public administration.

Despite the inclusion of women in its events, an analysis of the events listed in Annex VII revealed that has been limited (dedicated) focus on gender equality, women's empowerment, or gender mainstreaming in public administration and civil service. ACSH could invest greater efforts to address gender-related challenges or barriers in public administration. By organizing events more specifically targeted at gender issues, ACSH could raise awareness and promote gender-sensitive practices among its participants and stakeholders. These events could provide a platform for discussing the unique challenges faced by women in the public sector and exploring strategies for promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

Moreover, ACSH could integrate more effectively gender perspectives into the content of its events and publications. ACSH could also collaborate more actively with women's organizations and gender experts to provide insights, guidance, and support in mainstreaming gender and adopting gender-sensitive approaches. These partnerships would help ACSH to develop targeted interventions and strategies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the public sector.

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)[10]

ACSH has made certain contributions to promoting human rights principles through its efforts to enhance digital government capacities and improve public service delivery. While the Hub does not explicitly frame its objectives and activities in terms of specific human rights, its overall goal of promoting effective, transparent, and accountable governance contributes to fundamental human rights principles.

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[10] HRBA is a conceptual framework that integrates human rights principles and standards into the entire process of development programming. It focuses on the realization of human rights, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups, and emphasizes principles such as participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency.

ACSH's focus on strengthening government capabilities to deliver services transparently and responsively has indirectly supported the realization of human rights, particularly the right to access information and the right to participate in public affairs. By creating an enabling environment for citizens to claim their rights, ACSH has contributed to fostering a more inclusive and accountable public administration.

The project's emphasis on improving governance and public service delivery has the potential to strengthen accountability mechanisms, which are essential for upholding the rule of law and protecting human rights. ACSH's research and capacity building activities on topics such as anti-corruption, performance evaluation, and digital governance contribute to creating an enabling environment for holding public institutions accountable, thereby promoting greater transparency and accountability in public administration.

ACSH has also demonstrated a commitment to participation and inclusion by involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, and international partners, in its activities. The needs assessment surveys and demand-driven approach to designing initiatives reflect a commitment to stakeholder participation. Moreover, the active involvement of CSOs in ACSH's events promotes a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to capacity building and peer learning, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered.

ACSH's focus on promoting meritocracy, impartiality, and inclusiveness in civil service aligns with the principle of non-discrimination. Its efforts to ensure gender balance in project activities and collect gender-disaggregated data demonstrate attention to gender equality, which is a fundamental human rights principle. Furthermore, ACSH's capacity building activities have empowered the government officials of participating countries with knowledge and skills related to innovation and digitalization, thereby enhancing their ability to fulfill their obligations as duty-bearers in respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights.

As can be seen from the figure on the right, most survey respondents perceived moderate benefits to these groups, mainly indirectly through improved accessibility and quality of public services, capacity building and digital literacy efforts, peer learning on inclusion strategies, and ACSH's work to empower civil service as an equalizing force.
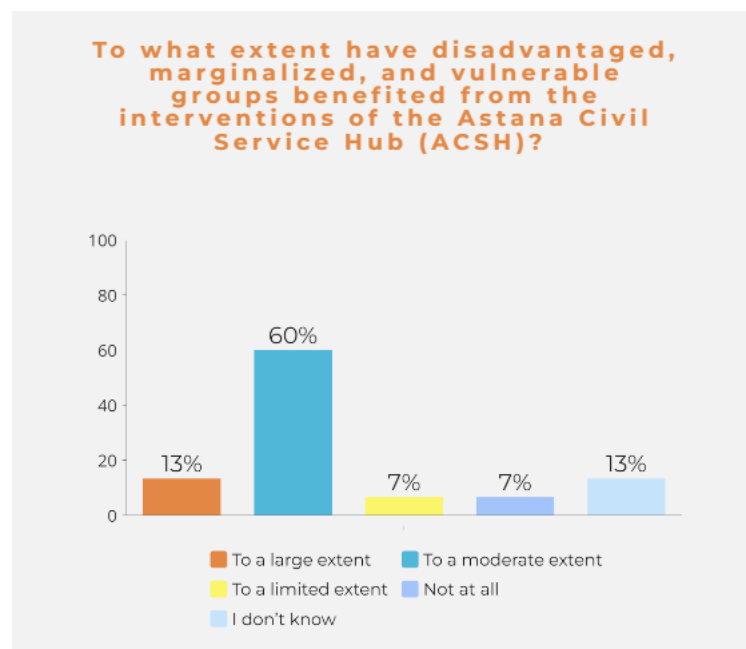
The evaluation identified areas where ACSH could strengthen its human rights-based approach (HRBA).

- While the Hub has contributed to some human rights standards, such as the right to participation, the right to information, and the right to access public services without discrimination, ACSH does not explicitly frame its objectives and activities in terms of their contributions to the realization of specific human rights. Making these linkages more explicit and drawing on international human rights frameworks could help anchor the project's work in a rights-based approach.

- The extent to which ACSH has sought out and enabled the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups has been limited. There is limited evidence of the participation or inclusion of marginalized or vulnerable groups in planning, implementation, or monitoring processes. To strengthen its HRBA, ACSH could consider conducting human rights analyses to examine the root causes of governance challenges, identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding obligations of duty-bearers, and assess the capacities of both to fulfill these claims and obligations.

- ACSH could place greater emphasis on empowering citizens, particularly from marginalized groups, to claim their rights and participate in decision-making processes. A stronger focus on civic engagement, public information campaigns, and capacity building for CSOs could help foster a more active and empowered citizenry.

<ins>Disability Inclusion</ins>

Overall, ACSH is perceived by evaluation participants as contributing moderately to inclusivity for persons with disabilities through its capacity building, digital service enhancements, peer exchanges on inclusion strategies, research and policy support, and promoting innovative inclusion-focused solutions. ACSH could strengthen its efforts towards disability by enhancing training and resources to staff, partners, and beneficiaries on disability rights, inclusive practices, and strategies for mainstreaming disability considerations into civil service and public administration reform efforts. The evaluation found a need for training and capacity-building activities specifically focused on disability inclusion or disability-responsive approaches to innovation and digitalization in governance and public service delivery. By equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the unique needs and challenges faced by persons with disabilities, ACSH could foster a more inclusive and accessible environment.

Another key aspect of disability inclusion is accessibility. The evaluation found that ACSH's activities, such as seminars, workshops, and study visits, seem to have been designed for government officials and experts in general, without specific components or adaptations to address the needs or barriers faced by disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, in accessing or benefiting from innovation and digitalization in governance and public services. To promote disability inclusion, ACSH could ensure that its

activities, events, and outputs are accessible to persons with various types of disabilities, including physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities.

Data collection and monitoring is another critical component of disability inclusion. The evaluation did not find strong focus on disability-disaggregated data. By incorporating disability-specific indicators and collecting data on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, ACSH will be better able to understand the impact of its programs on this population and identify areas for improvement.

Other Cross-cutting Issues

Through its broad spectrum of activities, ACSH has contributed to a range of cross-cutting factors. The following are the main ones.

- ***Poverty Reduction***: ACSH's efforts to improve public administration efficiency and service delivery, particularly through digital transformation, have indirectly contributed to poverty reduction. Effective and efficient public services ensure that resources are allocated equitably and reach the intended beneficiaries, which is crucial for poverty alleviation programmes. Moreover, capacity building in policy development and implementation can empower local governments to design and execute more effective poverty reduction strategies.

- ***Environmental Sustainability***: ACSH has promoted the integration of environmental considerations into civil service reform and regional cooperation efforts. It has supported initiatives such as green public procurement, sustainable infrastructure development, and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. It has also facilitated knowledge sharing and capacity building on environmental governance, such as through regional networks and communities of practice.

- ***Crisis and Disaster Risk Management***: Recognizing the importance of preparedness and response strategies, ACSH has included crisis management within its capacity-building framework. The 2024 "*Seminar on Emergency and Crisis Management in the Public Sector*" provided crucial training in handling public sector emergencies, which is increasingly important in a world facing multifaceted crises from natural disasters to pandemics. While specific interventions in disaster risk management have not been at the center of activities, the training of civil servants in the variety of areas outlined in this report strengthens the governments' ability to plan for and respond to disasters more effectively. Furthermore, enhanced digital infrastructure and data management capabilities, promoted by ACSH, play a key role in disaster preparedness and response, allowing for better risk assessment and more timely interventions.

- ***Conflict Sensitivity and Resolution***: ACSH's emphasis on governance and public administration has indirectly contributed to conflict sensitivity and resolution. By promoting good governance practices, transparency, and public service excellence, ACSH has helped create more stable and equitable systems of governance, which are essential for

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addressing and mitigating conflicts. Although not explicitly aimed at conflict resolution, fostering a culture of meritocracy, transparency, and effective public service can contribute to a more harmonious society by reducing grievances that may lead to conflicts. Furthermore, the activities organized by ACSH have brought together representatives (officials) from countries at conflict with each other, which has fostered bridges of communication and engagement between these countries.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

The following are two key lessons drawn from the experience of the ACSH.

Lesson 1: *Importance of Sustained Support by Countries and International Organizations for the Establishment of a Center like ACSH*

ACSH's experience demonstrates the crucial role that support from entities like the Government of Kazakhstan, the Government of South Korea, and UNDP plays in the establishment and successful operation of a regional center for capacity building and knowledge sharing in public administration and civil service reform.

Firstly, the continued political and financial support provided by the Government of Kazakhstan has been instrumental in the establishment and sustainability of ACSH. By hosting the center and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources, Kazakhstan has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting excellence in public service and fostering regional cooperation. This high-level political support has lent credibility and legitimacy to ACSH, enabling it to attract partners and participants from across the region.

Secondly, the strategic partnership with the Government of South Korea, particularly the Ministry of Interior and Safety (MOIS) and the National Information Society Agency (NIA), has been invaluable in terms of technical expertise and knowledge sharing. South Korea's success in e-governance and public service innovation has provided a model for other countries to learn from, and the involvement of Korean experts in ACSH's capacity building activities has helped to transfer this knowledge and experience to the region. This partnership demonstrates the value of south-south cooperation in promoting public administration reform.

Thirdly, the support and collaboration with UNDP have provided ACSH with access to global networks, expertise, and resources in the field of public administration and development. UNDP's involvement has helped to align ACSH's activities with broader development goals and priorities, such as the SDGs, and has provided opportunities for synergies with other UNDP programs and initiatives. Moreover, UNDP's technical assistance and quality assurance have contributed to the effectiveness and impact of ACSH's activities.

The lesson that can be derived from this is that the establishment and successful operation of a regional center like ACSH requires a multi-stakeholder partnership approach, involving collaboration with national governments, international organizations, and development partners. The political, financial, and technical support provided by these entities is essential for creating an enabling environment for the center to thrive and achieve its objectives.

Moreover, the involvement of partners with complementary strengths and expertise can help to create a comprehensive and holistic approach to capacity building and knowledge sharing. In the case of ACSH, the combination of Kazakhstan's leadership and commitment, South Korea's technical expertise, and UNDP's global perspective and development focus has created a powerful platform for promoting public administration reform in the region.

Lesson 2: *Key Role of Strong and Competent Leadership*

The success and impact of a regional center like ACSH can be attributed, in significant part, to the combined efforts of its strong leadership and the contributions of competent experts serving as staff members and advisory committee members. The strategic vision and direction provided by the leadership, combined with the expertise and insights brought by the technical staff and advisors, has played a key role in ensuring the ACSH's effectiveness as a platform for capacity building and knowledge sharing in public administration.

The Chairman's career in public service, including roles in high-level government positions, have been crucial for providing strategic direction to the ACSH, ensuring that its activities are responsive to the needs and priorities of participating countries. Moreover, his leadership in driving civil service reforms, including the implementation of laws, competition-based recruitment of civil servants, the significant contribution to developing a new remuneration system for the public sector, and the introduction of senior executive services, demonstrates his commitment to promoting meritocracy, professionalism, and innovation in public administration. This reform-oriented mindset has been reflected in the center's focus on sharing best practices and supporting participating countries in their efforts to modernize their civil service systems. The Chairman's academic background and contributions to the literature on social protection, public management, and civil service have also lent credibility to the center's knowledge-sharing function. Their intellectual leadership has helped to position the center as a thought leader and a source of expertise on public administration reform in the region. Furthermore, the Chairman's ability to foster partnerships and collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, academia, and civil society, has been crucial in expanding the center's reach and impact. Their leadership has been instrumental in building a network of numerous institutional partners from different parts of the world, creating a vibrant platform for exchange of experience and knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, ACSH's ability to deliver high-quality content has relied heavily on the expertise of its staff members and advisory committee. These experts, often renowned professionals in their respective fields, bring a wealth of knowledge and practical experience to the center's work. Staff members, including researchers, trainers, and project managers, have contributed to the design and implementation of the center's capacity building initiatives, ensuring that they are tailored to the specific needs of participating countries and are delivered effectively. The Advisory Board, comprising senior officials, academics, and practitioners from various countries and international organizations, provides strategic advice and guidance to the center's leadership. The Board's diverse perspectives and expertise help to ensure that the Hub's activities are relevant, impactful, and aligned with global trends and best practices in public administration reform.

Overall, the synergy between leadership and expert staff and advisors has been essential for creating a dynamic and responsive platform for capacity building and knowledge sharing.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The following are the evaluation's main conclusions organized according to the evaluation criteria and aligned with the evaluation questions identified in the Terms of Reference.

Relevance and Coherence

- ACSH's activities have been highly relevant to the needs and priorities of participating countries and organizations, focusing on key areas such as capacity building, peer learning, research, and knowledge sharing.
- The demand-driven approach, sustained engagement, and adaptability to the changing global context have ensured ACSH's relevance.
- The two projects underpinning ACSH's work have been highly coherent in their overarching goal of promoting good governance and modernization of public administration. While having distinct objectives and activities, they have complemented each other through their focus on capacity building, knowledge sharing, and regional cooperation.
- Synergies between the projects, such as needs assessments informing capacity-building activities and leveraging partnerships, have further demonstrated their coherence.
- ACSH's work aligns well with UNDP's Country Programme Document for Kazakhstan, as well as other participating countries, the UN Development Assistance Framework, and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16 and 17.
- While ACSH has been effective in its current geographical scope, there is a balancing act the Hub has to maintain between expanding its focus beyond the CIS region and at the same time maintaining a degree of specialization that gives it a comparative advantage.

Effectiveness and Impact

- ACSH has been effective in addressing current and emerging challenges in the region through its capacity building, research, and knowledge sharing activities.
- Evaluation participants have reported significant personal and organizational benefits from ACSH's activities, including enhanced knowledge, skills, networks, and partnerships.
- The Hub has made notable contributions to civil service management, public administration reform, and digitalization in participating countries.
- The Hub has influenced national policies and strategies, promoted best practices, and fostered a culture of innovation and collaboration in public administration.
- Areas for improvement include strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts, and providing more targeted support for the application of learning.

Efficiency

- ACSH has demonstrated adequate budget execution, with the Hub project having a higher overall execution rate (91%) compared to the MOIS project (82%).
- The Hub has leveraged additional funds through cost-sharing arrangements and mobilizing resources from other sources.

- Partner institutions have played a valuable role in supporting ACSH activities, providing expertise, resources, and logistical support.
- ACSH has shown flexibility and adaptability in responding to challenges, such as shifting to online modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Areas for improvement include strengthening the monitoring system by placing greater emphasis on outcome and impact assessment, disaggregating data, and enhancing transparency around monitoring processes.

Sustainability

- ACSH's results are perceived as moderately to very sustainable due to factors such as the demand-driven approach, strong ownership, adaptability, and lasting impact of capacity building efforts.
- The Hub has established a diverse range of partnerships with regional and national institutions, NGOs, UN agencies, the private sector, and development partners, which are crucial for sustaining results and amplifying impact.
- ACSH has created a strong sense of ownership among key institutional stakeholders through inclusive program design, alignment with national priorities, capacity building, and institutionalization of tools and methodologies.
- While ACSH faces strategic, operational, and financial risks, it has opportunities to strengthen its risk management strategies and diversify its funding sources.
- The recent funding commitments from Kazakhstan and South Korea demonstrate confidence in ACSH's relevance and effectiveness, but relying heavily on two donors also presents potential risks.

Cross-Cutting Themes

- ACSH has made efforts to promote gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive approaches, primarily through the engagement of women participants in its activities. However, their representation could be further improved, and there is a need for more dedicated focus on gender equality and mainstreaming.
- While ACSH does not explicitly frame its objectives in terms of human rights, its overall goal of promoting effective, transparent, and accountable governance contributes to fundamental human rights principles. The Hub could strengthen its human rights-based approach by making linkages more explicit, enabling greater participation of marginalized groups, and empowering citizens to claim their rights.
- ACSH is perceived as contributing moderately to disability inclusion through its capacity building, digital service enhancements, and peer exchanges. However, there is a need for more targeted training, accessible activities, and disability-disaggregated data.
- Through its broad spectrum of activities, ACSH has indirectly contributed to poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, crisis and disaster risk management, and conflict sensitivity and resolution.

Going Forward

While the continued funding and participation of the governments of Kazakhstan and South Korea are positive signs for ACSH's sustainability, it is important for the Hub's leadership and UNDP to start thinking strategically about its long-term future. This will require a gradual decoupling from UNDP, the development of new and innovative funding and operating models, and a clear vision and strategy for ACSH's role as an independent fixture in the regional and global landscape of public administration reform. By proactively addressing these challenges and opportunities, ACSH can position itself for lasting success and impact in the years to come.

To achieve this vision, ACSH should focus on several key priorities. First, it should continue to strengthen its partnerships and collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. These partnerships will be essential for expanding ACSH's reach and impact, as well as for identifying new opportunities for funding and support.

Second, ACSH should invest in building its own internal capacity and resources. This may involve developing new programs and services that can generate revenue, such as training and consulting services, as well as expanding its research and knowledge-sharing activities. By diversifying its funding sources and building its own expertise and capabilities, ACSH can position itself for long-term sustainability and independence.

Finally, ACSH should continue to demonstrate its value and impact to participating countries and other stakeholders. By consistently delivering high-quality programs, fostering innovation and collaboration, and contributing to the achievement of key development goals, ACSH can build a strong case for continued support and investment. This will be essential for securing the long-term commitment and ownership of participating countries and partners, even as it transitions to a more independent operating model.

By staying at the forefront of emerging trends and technologies in the public sector, and by leveraging partnerships with leading innovators and academics, ACSH can position itself as a valuable resource and thought leader in the field of public administration, helping its participants and partners to navigate the complex challenges of the 21st century and build more effective, responsive, and inclusive systems of governance.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a set of key recommendations derived on the basis of the main findings of the evaluation.

1. **Strategic Direction:**

   o Conduct an assessment of the benefits and trade-offs of expanding ACSH's geographical scope beyond the CIS region, while maintaining specialized expertise in core areas.

   o Identify a set of core thematic areas with significant potential for the upcoming years – such as digital transformation, data analytics, and innovative governance models – where ACSH can deepen its engagement and expertise.

   o Develop a matrix of expertise that maps ACSH's strengths and capabilities against the evolving needs and priorities of its members.

   o Develop a long-term vision and strategy for ACSH's transition towards becoming an independent entity, in close coordination with UNDP.

2. **Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement:**

   o Deepen engagement with non-traditional stakeholders, such as the private sector, startups, and academia, through joint initiatives and innovative approaches.

   o Strengthen collaboration with UNDP Country Offices, regional hubs, and UN agencies to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks.

   o Deepen engagement with marginalized and vulnerable groups – including their advocacy groups and organizations – to ensure more inclusive and equitable outcomes.

3. **Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:**

   o Conduct in-depth country-level analyses to better understand the specific challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors that shape public administration reform in each participating country.

   o Promote more actively peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange among countries facing similar challenges or operating in comparable contexts.

   o Try to engage more actively local experts and practitioners from participating countries in the design and delivery of ACSH's activities.

   o Develop more proactively targeted interventions on gender equality, disability inclusion, and human rights mainstreaming in public administration and civil service reform.

- o Seek to strengthen where possible the institutionalization of ACSH's learning resources within national civil service training systems and provide ongoing support for the application of learning.

- o Explore alternative and innovative knowledge dissemination channels, such as video and audio formats, to reach a wider audience and cater to diverse learning preferences.

4. **Research and Knowledge Creation:**

- o Deepen collaboration with academic institutions and think tanks to conduct joint research projects and develop the research capacities of participating countries.

- o Integrate gender, disability, and human rights perspectives more effectively into the content of ACSH's research and knowledge products.

5. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:**

- o Enhance the monitoring system to better capture outcomes and impacts and disaggregate data more effectively by key dimensions. Where feasible, also seek to collect disability-disaggregated data to monitor inclusion.

- o Conduct regular impact assessments and tracer studies to assess the long-term effects of ACSH's interventions on civil service performance and governance quality at the country level.

6. **Sustainability and Resource Mobilization:**

- o Seek to further diversify ACSH's funding sources by exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, fee-for-service models, and endowment funds.

7. **Cross-Cutting Themes:**

- o Seek to integrate human rights principles more explicitly into ACSH's objectives, activities, and results frameworks.

- o Further enhance the accessibility of ACSH's activities, events, and outputs for persons with disabilities.

ANNEX I: EVALUATION'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference International Expert on Thematic Evaluation: "Contribution of the UNDP Led Regional Platforms to the Regional Sustainable Development and Cooperation"

Type of Contract

UNDP Individual Contract

Duty Station

Home-based with 1 mission to Astana, Kazakhstan

Duration

October 2023 - January 2024 (up to 30 working days)

1. Background and context

As the United Nations lead agency on international development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. The organisation helps countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and to build resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Kazakhstan UNDP has been part of the country's development progress since the early independence (1993) having implemented more than 200 projects worth over US$200 million in a wide array of thematic areas, including prevention of gender-based violence, promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, access to justice, environmental governance, climate change adaptation and low-carbon development.

Kazakhstan, being an upper middle-income country (UMIC) and strategically located in Central Asia, plays a pivotal role in regional development and cooperation. The country has pursued a proactive agenda of promoting collaboration among its Central Asian neighbours, striving for economic integration, and addressing common challenges such as sustainable development, security, and good governance.

UNDP, recognising the importance of South-South cooperation and to support Kazakhstan's efforts and ambitions, is implementing a number of regional projects to facilitate knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, institutional and human capacity development, and collaboration in different areas. These platforms have brought together government officials, experts, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders from Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries to promote cross-pollination of best practices and lessons learnt.

Among the areas that UNDP currently focus on are (i) civil service and public administration and (ii) digitalization of public services. The efficiency and effectiveness of public

administration systems are central to achieving development goals and fostering good governance. Enhancing the capacity and quality of civil service is a priority for Kazakhstan and many other countries in the region. This involves not only strengthening the skills and competencies of civil servants but also modernising public administration through digitalisation. Digitalisation of public services is a global trend aimed at making government services more accessible, efficient, and transparent for citizens and businesses. In the context of Kazakhstan and its neighbouring countries, digital transformation in the public sector is a key strategy for improving service delivery, reducing corruption, and promoting innovation.

UNDP is currently implementing two initiatives in the above areas. Both are implemented through the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH). The ACSH is a multilateral institutional platform, created in 2013 by the Government of Kazakhstan and UNDP, aiming to stimulate civil service transformations through fostering partnerships, capacity building and peer-to-peer learning development activities, and by disseminating innovative approaches to civil service reform through evidence-based solutions, informed by a comprehensive research and policy agenda. Since its launch, the ACSH has grown into a global multilateral platform assisting governments of the Central Asia region and beyond to excel in their public service transformation. To this day the number of participating countries has increased from initial 25 to 43 and its institutional partners from 5 to 90. Since its establishment ACSH has been funded by the Government of Kazakhstan and currently, UNDP is implementing the third phase of this project.

Furthermore, in 2021, UNDP Kazakhstan, together with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea (MOIS) and the National Information Society Agency (NIA) of the Republic of Korea, decided to use the capacity of the ACSH as a multilateral knowledge exchange platform and capitalise on ACSH-developed P2P Alliances on "transformation and innovation in governance", "e-government development", and "public service delivery" to initiate a project promoting the adoption of good practices in governance innovation and introduction of differentiated modalities in public service delivery through digital channels. This project aims to build the capacity of civil servants in the participating countries from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) in the above mentioned areas.

Thus, the purpose of this Thematic Evaluation (the Evaluation) is to provide an impartial review of the two UNDP led regional platforms' contribution to the regional development and cooperation (with a focus on Central Asia) in the area of civil service and public administration, including different aspects of public services digitalisation in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, overall performance, management and achievements.

More detailed information on these initiatives is provided below:

Institutional Support to Astana Civil Service Hub, Phase 3

In 2013, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in collaboration with UNDP, established the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH), which received support from 25

participating countries and five international development organizations. The ACSH serves as an institutional framework and a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of civil service and public administration development. Since its inception, the ACSH has exemplified multilateral cooperation and has acted as a networking platform promoting and supporting public service excellence. It achieves this by assisting the efforts of governments in its participating countries to enhance institutional and human capacity through three main pillars of activities: (i) partnerships and networking; (ii) capacity building and peer-to-peer learning; and (iii) research and knowledge management. All ACSH activities are guided by a flexible demand-driven agenda. The vision for the third phase of this project is to further contribute to the establishment of modern, effective, and sustainable governance, public administration, and civil service systems. These systems are designed to meet society's expectations for responsive, accountable, and transparent public institutions, both within its participating countries and beyond.

2. Evaluation purpose, scope, and objectives

The main purpose of this Thematic Evaluation (the Evaluation) is to provide an impartial review of UNDP-led regional platforms' (supported by the two projects listed above) contribution to regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration, including different aspects of public services digitalisation, in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, overall performance, management, and achievements. The information, findings, lessons learnt, and recommendations generated by the Evaluation will be used by the Project Boards, UNDP, donors and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen the following phases of these Projects (should they occur) and inform future programming.

The scope of the Evaluation will cover the results and impacts achieved by the two projects since their beginning (November 2021 and September 2021, respectively) and the likelihood of their full achievement by the end of the projects (December 2023). Government institutions of the participating countries, along with the Government of Kazakhstan and its appropriate departments and agencies, UNDP, ACSH and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea will be actively involved in the evaluation process.

The objectives of the Evaluation are to:

- Assess to what extent two UNDP-led regional platforms contributed to the regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration using substantive analysis of the effectiveness of the project approach and feedback from beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders.
- Capture innovations, sustainability and scale-up successful approaches that work in the implementation of the current initiatives and facilitate learning to inform current and future programming.
- Assess how the interventions strengthened the application of human rights-based approaches and mainstreaming gender in development efforts.

3. Thematic Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The Evaluation seeks to answer the key questions below that should cover the following key areas of evaluation criteria:

Relevance

1. Were the UNDP-led regional platforms' objectives relevant to the needs of their beneficiaries, having in mind the political, social, economic, legal and institutional context of the countries in the region, and what are the initiatives' potentials to adequately contribute to the development processes in the future?

2. To what extent are UNDP-led platforms relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in the Central Asia and Caucasus region as well as Country programme document for Kazakhstan (2021-2025) priorities?

3. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of UNDP-led regional platforms in facilitating regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration?

4. To what extent did UNDP-led regional platforms contribute to gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches?

Effectiveness

1. What have been the key results achieved by the UNDP-led regional platforms? Which are the ones with a notable scaling-up potential?

2. To what extent and how effectively have the initiatives' specific approach and actions contributed to their outputs and outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?

3. To what extent have UNDP-led regional platforms contributed to improving the capacities of national and regional partners to advocate for regional sustainable development and cooperation?

4. What are the main challenges or barriers faced by UNDP-led regional platforms in effectively contributing to regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration, and digitalisation of public services?

Efficiency

1. Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the planned results? Were the planned activities implemented as scheduled and with the planned financial resources?

2. To what extent have partners and other stakeholders taken an active role in implementing the projects? What modes of participation have taken place? How efficient have partner institutions been in supporting the initiatives' implementation?

3. To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?

4. To what extent did the governance arrangements and processes ensure efficient use of the donor funds?

Impact

1. To what extent the regional projects' development-oriented initiatives and activities have impacted their intended beneficiaries' civil service, public administration, and digitalisation of public services advancement?

2. What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the interventions under UNDP-led regional platforms?

Sustainability

1. To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the regional platforms' outputs achieved?

2. To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?

3. To what extent do partnerships exist with other regional and national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results?

4. To what extent have the capacities of relevant government institutions been strengthened to sustain the results of the projects? In this regard, what are the challenges to overcome or potentials to be unlocked in the future?

5. To what extent has UNDP managed to create ownership of the key institutional stakeholders?

Human rights

1. To what extent have disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups benefited from the regional programme interventions?

Gender equality

1. To what extent have gender equality and women empowerment been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the regional initiatives?

2. Is the gender marker data assigned to the relevant outputs representative of reality?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in initiatives' planning and implementation?

Future-looking concept and recommendations

1. What would be the directions to expand the positive effects of the regional platforms to support regional sustainable development and cooperation?

4. Methodology

Based on the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations and in consultations with the UNDP Kazakhstan Country Office, the Evaluation will be participatory, involving relevant stakeholders.

The Evaluation will be conducted by an independent international evaluator (the Evaluator), who will propose an evaluative methodology to implement the evaluation effectively, applying such data collection methods as extended desk review, stakeholder meetings and interviews, field visits and others. The methodology and a detailed plan for the Evaluation process will be proposed by the Evaluator and agreed as a part of the Evaluation Inception Report.

The proposed methodology should employ relevant quantitative, qualitative or combined methods to conduct the evaluation, with a focus on gender-sensitive data collecting and analytical methods and tools applicable in the concrete case. The Evaluator is expected to combine the standard and other evaluation tools and techniques to ensure maximum reliability of data and validity of the evaluation findings.

Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the Evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the proposed methodology. The Evaluator shall, to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

The Evaluator is expected to facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of these Terms of Reference.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, the Evaluator should ensure an evaluation design that does not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection or dissemination phase.

Standard UNDP evaluation methodology would suggest the following data collection methods:

- Desk review: The Evaluators will conduct a detailed review of the projects materials and deliverables including but not limited to the Project Documents and Addendums, theory of change and results framework, monitoring and Project quality assurance reports, annual
- workplans, consolidated progress reports etc. An extensive list of documents for desk review is provided in Annex 3.
- Key informant interviews: the Evaluators will interview representatives of UNDP, Government of Kazakhstan, other relevant stakeholders. UNDP will ensure interpretation for meetings and interviews as needed. Detailed list of main stakeholders that may be considered for meetings is provided in Annex 2.

- Other methodologies, as appropriate, such as case studies, statistical analysis, social network analysis, online interviews, mobile questionnaires, online surveys, collaboration platforms are recommended to be used to gather data. Stakeholders that are dealing with existing emergencies should be given advance notice.

The expected estimated duration of the assignment is approximately 30 workdays between October 2023 and January 2024. The timeline will be adjusted and concrete dates finalised during the inception process.

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

Following the initial briefing and a detailed desk review, the Evaluator will be responsible for performing the following tasks and delivering the following products and tasks:

- Inception Report (10-15 pages) will be presented before the evaluation starts, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by proposing methods, sources of data and data collection procedures. The Inception Report should contain an evaluation matrix (provided in Annex 4) and propose a schedule of tasks, activities and evaluation deliverables. The Evaluation Inception Report should follow the structure proposed in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, p. 26-27.
- Evaluation debriefing covering preliminary findings will be made immediately following an evaluation.
- Draft Evaluation Report (40-60 pages): Based on the findings generated through desk review and data collection process, the Evaluator will prepare and submit the Draft Evaluation Report to the UNDP team and key stakeholders for review. Structure of the Report is outlined in Annex 5.
- Evaluation review process (and eventual dispute settlement): Comments, questions, suggestions and requests for clarification on the evaluation draft will be submitted to the Evaluators and addressed in the agreed timeframe. The Evaluators should reply to the comments through the evaluation audit trail document (Annex 6). If there is disagreement in findings, these should be documented through the evaluation audit trail, while effort should be made to come to an agreement.
- Final Evaluation Report with an Executive Summary (maximum 50 pages of the main body) should be logically structured, contain data and evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations, and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Finally, based on the evaluation findings and in a distinct report section, the Evaluators will provide forward-looking actionable recommendations and suggestions for the potential way forward for the interventions, outlining key strategic priorities to be considered.
- Presentations to stakeholders and/or the evaluation reference group: a presentation briefing on the evaluation exercise and the main findings.

ANNEX II: RESULTS FRAMEWORK

MOIS Project

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSDCF/Country Programme Results and Resource Framework:
By 2025, state institutions at all levels effectively design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services in an inclusive, transparent, and accountable manner (2.2).
Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:
Institutions and systems enabled to develop and implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and regional levels (2.2); Triangular development initiatives are in place to support the positioning of the participating countries, with a focus on empowerment of women (2.4).
Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development (2).
Project title and Atlas Project Number: Capacity Building for Innovation in Governance and Digitalisation of Public Services / 00137296

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS[11]	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (cumulative)			Achievement of Results
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Output 1 Capacity Building of government officials and executives of central and local government agencies, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers in innovation policy and practices and in digitalisation of public services and their delivery.	1.1 Feasibility study completed identifying the essential areas, which the project activities will concentrate on during its implementation.	Information collected from the participating countries	0	2020	1	0	0	1
	1.2 Number of government officials, executives, experts, and policy makers of central and local government agencies, etc attending regional conference to discuss findings of the feasibility study and decide on the topics the project will concentrate on with the participation of ACSH P2P Alliances on innovation, digitalisation, and e-governance members among others	Regional Conference's lists of participants. Event report	0	2020	60			**50**
	1.3 Number of government officials, executives, experts, and policy makers of central and local government agencies, etc attending seminars introducing the concept of innovation and its potential uses in government and governance practices and in utilising differentiated channels of public service delivery through digitalisation – including the Korean experience.	Seminars' lists of participants; Events reports	0	2020	50	50	50	**308**
	1.4 Number of government officials, executives, experts, and policy makers of central and local government agencies, etc attending workshops that elaborate on policy design to create an environment conducive to innovative	Workshops' lists of participants; Events reports	0	2020	0	100	100	

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[11] It is recommended that projects use output indicators from the Strategic Plan IRRF, as relevant, in addition to project-specific results indicators. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex or for other targeted groups where relevant.

			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	FINAL	
	practices, as well as uses of innovative practices employed by the Government of Korea.								
	1.5 Number of methodological guides produced on how to introduce innovative practices in government and on what steps to follow in digitalising public services.	Publication records	0	2020	NA	NA	NA		**0**
	1.6 Number of knowledge products prepared and published on methodologies to introduce innovation in government and case studies of successful implementation of innovation practices in government and introducing differentiated channels of public service delivery through digitalisation of public services.	Publication records	0	2020	0	1	1		**2**
Output 2 Government officials, executives of central and local governments, special bodies and institutions, experts and policy makers are exposed to innovation practices through study visits to Korea.	**2.1** Number of government officials, executives, experts, and policy makers of central and local government agencies, etc. exposed to innovation practices in governance and the provision of public services through differentiated channels of delivery through study tours to witness the Korean experience.	Study visits lists of participants	0	2020	20	20	20		**39**

Hub Project

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSCDCF Results and Resource Framework:
By 2025, state institutions at all levels effectively design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services in an inclusive, transparent, and accountable manner (2.2).
Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme [or Global/Regional] Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:
Outcome: Institutions and systems enabled to develop and implement institutional reforms towards more effective, transparent, and inclusive governance and service provision at the national and regional levels (2.2); Outcome: triangular development initiatives are in place to support the positioning of the participating countries, with a focus on empowerment of women (2.4).
Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development (2).
Project title and Atlas Project Number: Institutional Support to the Astana Civil Service Hub Phase 3 / 000123513

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)				Achievement
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	FINAL	

Output 1 - Research and Knowledge Management ACSH participating countries are better informed about civil service and public service delivery latest developments and trends	1.1 – Number of public administration and civil service development related books published and disseminated	Publishing records	1	2020	1		1	3	**2**
	1.2 – Number of demand-driven and evidence-based research papers, comparative analyses and case studies published and disseminated		17	2020	2	2	2	23	**38**
	1.3 – Number of demand-driven and evidence-based position papers and policy briefs developed and disseminated		2	2020	1	1	1	5	**7**
	1.4 – Number of the International Journal of civil service editions prepared, published, and disseminated		14	2020	2	2	2	20	**19**
Output 2 - Capacity Building and peer learning Civil service and public service delivery related institutions in ACSH participating countries are enabled to apply gained knowledge, experience, and skills to advance their public administrations	2.1 - Number of capacity development events - conferences, workshops, seminars, trainings, and study visits - coordinated by ACSH to support civil service modernisation and innovation in government in ACSH participating countries	Event reports	140	2020	12	12	12	176	**165**
	2.2 – Number of capacity development events – conferences, workshops, seminars, trainings, and study visits - coordinated by ACSH to support public service delivery, and digitalisation of public services in ACSH countries		>10	2020	1	2	2	15	**16**
	2.3 – Number of participants in capacity development events - conferences, workshops, seminars, trainings, study visits, etc, disaggregated by gender	Participants' statistical information	7,300 50% women	2020	1,000 50% women	1,000 50% women	1,000 50% women	10,300 50% women	**10,205 45% women**
	2.4 – Number of scholarships granted to civil servants of the ACSH participating countries to study at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan	APA attendance records	10	2020	3	10	2	25	**25**
	2.5 - Number of P2P Learning Alliances created and functioning within ACSH activities taking place in the framework of the P2P Learning Alliances	Events reports Information and records of Mass Media	4	2020	1	1	1	7	**4[12]**
	2.6 - Number of activities taking place within the framework of the P2P Learning Alliances		11	2020	2	2	2	17	**15**
Output 3 - Partnerships and Networking	3.1 – Number of triangular cooperation exchanges including South-South, East-East, Europe-Asia, East-West and others are taking place involving ACSH participating countries	Events reports Information in and records of Mass Media, bilateral and	40	2020	5	5	5	55	**57**

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[12] Considering the demand and successful experience, the ACSH is currently working on creating of two new Alliances with a specific emphasis on AI and New Technologies, as well as on Project Management in Governance as priority directions for 2024-2026.

ACSH participating countries benefit from peer-to-peer learning and TrC exchanges and adapting innovations in civil service and public service delivery		multilateral agreements							
	3.2 – Number of ACSH countries participating for exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of civil service excellence and public administration development	Events reports, information in and records of Mass Media, project records,	42	2020		1	0	43	**43**
	3.3 - Number of experts in ACSH roster who provide expert advice to civil servants of the participating countries	ACSH Roster of experts	130	2020	3	3	4	140	**138**

ANNEX III: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions Suggested by UNDP
Relevance	• Were the UNDP-led regional platforms' objectives relevant to the needs of their beneficiaries, having in mind the political, social, economic, legal and institutional context of the countries in the region, and what are the initiatives' potentials to adequately contribute to the development processes in the future? • To what extent are UNDP-led platforms relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in the Central Asia and Caucasus region as well as Country programme document for Kazakhstan (2021-2025) priorities? • What are the key strengths and weaknesses of UNDP-led regional platforms in facilitating regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration? • To what extent did UNDP-led regional platforms contribute to gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches?
Effectiveness	• What have been the key results achieved by the UNDP-led regional platforms? Which are the ones with a notable scaling-up potential? • To what extent and how effectively have the initiatives' specific approach and actions contributed to their outputs and outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not? • To what extent have UNDP-led regional platforms contributed to improving the capacities of national and regional partners to advocate for regional sustainable development and cooperation? • What are the main challenges or barriers faced by UNDP-led regional platforms in effectively contributing to regional development and cooperation in the area of civil service and public administration, and digitalisation of public services?
Efficiency	• Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the planned results? Were the planned activities implemented as scheduled and with the planned financial resources? • To what extent have partners and other stakeholders taken an active role in implementing the projects? What modes of participation have taken place? How efficient have partner institutions been in supporting the initiatives' implementation? • To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly? • To what extent did the governance arrangements and processes ensure efficient use of the donor funds?

Sustainability	• To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the regional platforms' outputs achieved? • To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)? • To what extent do partnerships exist with other regional and national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results? • To what extent have the capacities of relevant government institutions been strengthened to sustain the results of the projects? In this regard, what are the challenges to overcome or potentials to be unlocked in the future? • To what extent has UNDP managed to create ownership of the key institutional stakeholders?
Impact	• To what extent the regional projects' development-oriented initiatives and activities have impacted their intended beneficiaries' civil service, public administration, and digitalisation of public services advancement? • What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the interventions under UNDP-led regional platforms?
Cross-cutting	• To what extent have disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups benefited from the regional programme interventions? • To what extent have gender equality and women empowerment been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the regional initiatives? • Is the gender marker data assigned to the relevant outputs representative of reality? • Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in initiatives' planning and implementation?

ANNEX IV: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Sub-Questions	Indicators/Success Standard	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods/Tools
Relevance	Were the UNDP-led regional platforms' objectives relevant to the needs of their beneficiaries, considering the context of the countries in the region, and their potential future contribution?	How do the objectives align with beneficiary needs? What regional contexts influence relevance? What are the potential future contributions?	Alignment between objectives and needs; Evidence of adaptability; Identified areas for future contribution.	Beneficiary feedback; Policy documents; Regional analysis reports.	KIIs with beneficiaries and stakeholders; Document Review; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
	To what extent are UNDP-led platforms relevant to the SDGs in the region and Kazakhstan's priorities?	How do activities align with targeted SDGs and Kazakhstan's priorities? What gaps exist in SDG and priority alignment?	Alignment with SDGs and national priorities; Identification of alignment gaps.	ACSH reports; Kazakhstan's Country Programme Document; Platform activity reports.	Document Review; Questionnaire with ACSH staff; KIIs with UNDP officials and stakeholders.
	What are the strengths and weaknesses of UNDP-led platforms in regional development and cooperation in civil service and public administration?	What achievements and obstacles exist in promoting development? How are weaknesses addressed?	Achievements and obstacles identified; Analysis of responses to weaknesses.	Project monitoring reports; Stakeholder interviews; Cooperation agreements.	KIIs with regional bodies; Online Survey with National Stakeholders; Document Review.
	To what extent did UNDP-led platforms contribute to gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches?	How are these approaches integrated into activities? What impact do these approaches have? What challenges exist, and how are they overcome?	Integration and impact of approaches; Challenges and resolutions identified.	Project reports on gender and human rights; Beneficiary feedback; Policy documents.	Document Review; KIIs with experts; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
Effectiveness	What have been the key results achieved by the UNDP-led regional platforms? Which are the	What specific results have been achieved? Which	List of achieved results; Criteria for scaling-up potential identified.	Project reports; Evaluations;	Document Review; KIIs with project staff and partners; Online

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	ones with a notable scaling-up potential?	results have scaling-up potential and why?		Stakeholder feedback.	Survey with National Stakeholders.
	To what extent and how effectively have the initiatives' specific approach and actions contributed to their outputs and outcomes?	How do the approach and actions align with outputs and outcomes? What factors contributed to or hindered this effectiveness?	Degree of alignment between approach/actions and outputs/outcomes; Factors influencing effectiveness.	ACSH documentation; Outcome evaluations; Beneficiary feedback.	KIIs with project implementers; Document Review; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
	To what extent have UNDP-led regional platforms contributed to improving the capacities of national and regional partners to advocate for regional sustainable development and cooperation?	How has partner capacity been enhanced? In what areas of advocacy has improvement been noted?	Enhanced capacity indicators; Areas of improved advocacy.	Training records; Partner assessments; ACSH materials.	KIIs with partners; Online Survey with National Stakeholders; Document Review.
	What are the main challenges or barriers faced by UNDP-led regional platforms in effectively contributing to regional development and cooperation in civil service and public administration, and digitalisation of public services?	What specific challenges or barriers have been encountered? How have these impacted effectiveness?	Identified challenges and barriers; Impact on platform effectiveness.	Project reviews; Stakeholder interviews; ACSH reports.	KIIs with project staff and beneficiaries; Document Review; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
Efficiency	Have resources been allocated strategically to achieve the planned results? Were the planned activities implemented as scheduled and with the planned financial resources?	How were resources allocated and utilized? Were activities on schedule and within budget?	Resource utilization rates; Activity completion rates within budget and schedule.	Budget reports; Project timelines; ACSH reports.	Document Review; KIIs with financial and project managers; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
	To what extent have partners and other stakeholders taken an active role in implementing the projects? What modes of participation have taken place? How efficient have partner institutions been in	What roles have partners played? What participation modes were used? How effective was partner support?	Partner participation levels; Effectiveness of partner support.	Partner agreements; Meeting minutes; Stakeholder feedback.	Online Survey with National Stakeholders; KIIs with partners; Document Review.

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	supporting the initiatives' implementation?				
	To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?	How effective were monitoring systems in providing actionable data? What adjustments were made based on monitoring data?	Effectiveness of monitoring systems; Examples of data-driven adjustments.	Monitoring reports; ACSH reports; Management reviews.	Document Review; KIIs with project managers; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
	To what extent did the governance arrangements and processes ensure efficient use of the donor funds?	How were governance arrangements structured to ensure fund efficiency? What processes were in place for this purpose?	Efficiency in fund use; Governance effectiveness.	Financial audits; ACSH policies; ACSH reports.	Document Review; KIIs with governance bodies; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
Sustainability	To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the regional platforms' outputs achieved?	What mechanisms have been established? How effective are these mechanisms in ensuring sustainability?	Existence and effectiveness of sustainability mechanisms.	ACSH documentation; Sustainability plans; Evaluation reports.	Document Review; KIIs with UNDP project managers; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
	To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?	What types of support have partners committed to? How reliable is this commitment?	Types of committed support; Reliability and extent of partner commitments.	Partnership agreements; Letters of commitment; Stakeholder interviews.	KIIs with partners; Document Review; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
	To what extent do partnerships exist with other institutions to sustain the attained results?	Which partnerships have been formed? How do these partnerships contribute to sustainability?	Number and nature of partnerships; Contribution of partnerships to sustainability.	Partnership agreements; MOUs; ACSH reports.	Document Review; KIIs with partners and stakeholders; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
	To what extent have the capacities of relevant government institutions been strengthened?	What capacities have been strengthened? What challenges or potentials exist?	Strengthened capacities; Identified challenges and potentials.	Capacity assessment reports; Training records; Government feedback.	KIIs with government officials; Document Review; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.

	To what extent has UNDP managed to create ownership of the key institutional stakeholders?	What evidence is there of stakeholder ownership? How was this ownership developed?	Evidence of ownership; Mechanisms for developing ownership.	Stakeholder feedback; Ownership strategies; ACSH reports.	KIIs with institutional stakeholders; Document Review; Online Survey with National Stakeholders.
Impact	To what extent the regional projects' development-oriented initiatives and activities have impacted their intended beneficiaries' civil service, public administration, and digitalisation of public services advancement?	How have initiatives affected the advancement of civil service and public administration? How has digitalization of public services been influenced?	Measures of advancement in civil service, public administration, and digitalization; Beneficiary impact stories.	Beneficiary surveys; ACSH reports; Digitalization metrics.	Online Survey with National Stakeholders; KIIs with project beneficiaries; Document Review.
	What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the interventions under UNDP-led regional platforms?	What specific positive changes have been observed? What negative or unintended consequences have occurred?	Catalogue of changes; Analysis of cause and effect; Beneficiary testimonials.	ACSH reports; Stakeholder feedback; Case studies.	Document Review; KIIs with stakeholders and experts; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
Cross-cutting	To what extent have disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups benefited from the regional programme interventions?	Which specific interventions were targeted at these groups? How have these groups benefited?	Number and type of targeted interventions; Beneficiary feedback; Improvements in access, rights, and services for these groups.	Beneficiary surveys; ACSH reports; Case studies.	Online Survey with National Stakeholders; KIIs with beneficiaries and community leaders; Document Review.
	To what extent have gender equality and women empowerment been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the regional initiatives?	How were gender equality and women empowerment integrated into the project cycle? What measures were taken to monitor and evaluate their impact?	Gender integration strategies; Monitoring and evaluation findings on gender equality and women empowerment.	Project design documents; Gender analysis reports; Monitoring reports.	Document Review; KIIs with project managers and gender experts; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.
	Is the gender marker data assigned to the relevant outputs representative of reality?	How accurately does the gender marker data reflect the actual benefits to women and men? What discrepancies, if any, exist	Consistency between gender marker data and observed benefits; Identified discrepancies.	Gender marker data; Beneficiary feedback; ACSH studies.	Document Review; Online Survey with National Stakeholders; KIIs with monitoring experts.

				between reported and observed benefits?			
	Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in initiatives' planning and implementation?	How were persons with disabilities involved in the project phases? What mechanisms were in place to ensure their meaningful participation?	Evidence of consultation and involvement; Mechanisms for participation; Adjustments made to accommodate persons with disabilities.	Meeting minutes; Project design and implementation reports; Feedback from organizations representing persons with disabilities.	KIIs with staff and representatives of persons with disabilities; Document Review; Questionnaire with ACSH staff.

ANNEX V: INTERVIEWED STAKEHOLDERS

1. Mr. Bahram Khalilov - Deputy Chairman, State Examination Center of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2. Ms. Mariami Bregadze - Head, International Relations Unit, Ministry of Justice (MoJ) of Georgia
3. Ms. Ana Tsuladze - Chief Specialist, Public International Law Department, Public Service Development Agency under the MoJ
4. Ms. Bermet Omurkanova - Project specialist, Regional Representation of Hanns Seidel Foundation in Central Asia
5. Ms. Samra Ljuca - Assistant Director, Department for Vocational Training and Civil Service Development of Civil Service Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina
6. Mr. Semral Aliyev - Head, Public Service Design and İnnovation Department, State Agency for Public Services and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAPSSI)
7. Ms. Assel Mussabayeva - Chief Administrative Officer Graduate School of Public Policy, Nazarbayev University
8. Ms. Araks Avetyan - Head, Project Management Department, E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (EKENG) CJSC, Armenia
9. Mr. Leonid Avetisyan - Director, E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (EKENG) CJSC, Armenia
10. Mr. Abubakr Pirov - Head, New Technologies Department, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan
11. Mr. Levan Gelashvili - Deputy Chairman, Digital Governance Agency of Georgia
12. Mr. Almazbek Akmataliev - Rector, Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic
13. Mr. Rex Facer - President, Facer Management Consulting
14. Ms. Maia Dvalishvili - Civil Service Bureau of Georgia
15. Mr. Arshak Kerobyan - Head, Digitalization Department, Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia
16. Mr. Dilshod Mirzaev - Head, e-Government Services Development Department, Ministry of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan
17. Ms. Nazik Shatmanova - Head, International Cooperation, Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic
18. Mr. Jeyhun Hajiyev - Senior Advisor on Strategy, Innovation, and Digitalisation, Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan
19. Mr. Azizbek Khudaev - Deputy Director, State Institution "Electronic Government Project Management Center", Uzbekistan
20. Ms. Asel Kenenbaeva - Director, "Infocom" State Enterprise under the MDD, Kyrgyzstan
21. Ms. Gulmira Raissova - Chairperson of Coordination Council
22. Dr. Alex Brillantes - Secretary General, Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EOPA)
23. Dr. William P. Shields Jr. - Executive Director, American Society of Public Administration (ASPA)

24. Bakyt Zhexembay - Project Manager, Head of Operations
25. Maxut Uteshev - Advisor to the Chairman of Steering committee
26. Alikhan Baimenov – Chairman of the Astana Civil Service Hub
27. Panos Liverakos – Research and Knowledge International Consultant

ANNEX VI: ACSH EVENTS IN THE AREA OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND PEER LEARNING

ACSH Events in 2024

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
1	World Government Summit. Ministerial Round Table "Empowering A.I. for Emerging Nations"	in person	13.02.2024, Dubai, UAE	1	26	5	8	23	4
2	Seminar on "Emergency and Crisis Management in the Public Sector"	in person	12-13 March 2024, GSPP, Astana	1	31	7	5	3	1
3	ACSH Panel Session on "Digital Transformation in Civil Service HRM: Challenges and Best Practices in the ACSH participating countries", ASPA Annual Conference 2024	in person	13.04.2023, Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA	1	10	2	6	5	2

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
4	23rd Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration - ACSH Side event "Progress, Challenges, and Prospects of E-Government: Experience and Cases of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan"	in person	17th April 2024, New York, USA	1	21	5	4	3	4

ACSH Events in 2023

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
1	World Governments Summit 2023. Ministerial roundtable	In person	14.02.2023, Dubai, UAE	1 day	15	1	4	5	3

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
2	Open Lecture "Current Model of Public Administration in Georgia and Professional Development System for Civil Servants in Georgia" by Mrs. Maia Dvalishvili, as part of a series of joint online conferences on "Worldwide Public Administration and Civil Service"	online-offline	01 March 2023	1 day	51	29	7	4	1

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#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
3	The ACSH panel session "Public Administration in the New Reality" within a virtual ASPA Annual Conference on "Protecting Democracy for the Next Generation: The Role and Responsibility of Public Administration"	online	24 March 2023	1 day	21	7	10	8	2
4	Open Lecture "The Public Administration System in Azerbaijan: strengths and weaknesses" by Mr. Bahram Khalilov, Azerbaijan as	online	12 April 2023	1 day	39	19	8	4	1

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#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	part of a series of joint online conferences on "Worldwide Public Administration and Civil Service"								
5	Conference on "Open Government and New Culture of Governance: Hear, Understand, and Act".	In person	27-28 April. Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	50	23	7	3	2
6	Seminar for civil servants in SMM and media management	In person	15-16 May 2023, Kostanay. Kazakhstan	2 days	21	8	15	2	0
7	The ACSH Annual Conference on "Meritocracy.	In person	17-19 May 2023, Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	293	135	95	32	8

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Integrity. Innovation								
8	Workshop on "Change Management for Digital Transformation". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH	In person	17-18 May. Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	28	13	11	9	2
9	Online lecture on: "Peculiarities of Development and the Role of the Civil Service in Kazakhstan". The guest	online-offline	24 May 2023	1 day	43	24	8	4	3

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#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	lecturer is Mr. Ali Komekbaev								
10	The Capacity Development Workshop on "Public Administration and New Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities" in the framework of the 31st NISPAcee Annual Conference	In person	25-27 May 2023, Belgrade. Serbia	2 days	16	10	5	13	4
11	Study trip on «Civil Service and Integrity: BIH and EI process» for delegation of the Republic of	In person	29–30 May. Sarajevo. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 days	2	0	2	1	1

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Kazakhstan and Republic of Azerbaijan.								
12	FORUM on strengthening the principles of impeccable reputation in the public service	In person	15-16 June 2023, Burabay. Kazakhstan	1 day	65	23	22	3	2
13	Online lecture on: "The Development of Local Government in the Kyrgyz Republic: what has changed by May 2023?". The guest lecturer was a scientist and politician, Mr. Aaly Karashev.	online	12 July .2023	1 day	40	25	29	2	1

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#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
14	Workshop "e-Government Development in Azerbaijan: Challenges, Partnership and Prospects"	In person	25.07.2023, Baku, Azerbaijan	1 day	50	28	12	4	5
15	Study visit to Korea "Best practices of the Republic of Korea". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH)	In person	11-13 September. Republic of Korea.	3 days	21	5	16	8	1
16	Open online lecture on the topic "Communication channels for the public and government	online	28 Sept 2023	1 day	39	14	9	4	1

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	agencies in Kazakhstan."								
17	Open online lecture on the topic "Project thinking in the context of the new model of public administration in Kazakhstan - "People First". Guest lecturer – Gulnara Issenova,	online	23 Nov 2023	1 day	50	28	12	2	2
18	Workshop on "Merit-based civil service HRM in the 21st century". Event was a jointly organized by the UN International	In person	27-30 Nov, New York, USA	4 days	35	13	25	7	4

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#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and ACSH.								
19	Study visit for students of the National School of Public Policy of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.	In person	01 Dec 2024	1 day	19	7	2	1	1
20	Workshop "Standards Frameworks for Digital Transformation ". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the	In person	6-7 December. Almaty. Kazakhstan	2 days	21	4	13	10	2

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH								
21	Online webinar «A Cross-Country Comparison of Electronic Human Resource Management Systems: Selected Cases of Three Central Asia Countries and the Republic of Korea».	online	15 December.	1 day	45	24	8	5	3
22	Round table "Digital government of civil servants. Execution of laws within the parliamentary		21 December. Astana. Kazakhstan	1 day	35	16	5	3	2

#	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	form and methods of control. Constitutional reform and optimization".								

ACSH Events in 2022

No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
1	Round table: Results of the research conducted in the field of civil service	in person	9 February, Astana. Kazakhstan	1 day	102	61	68	2	2
2	Online seminar: Transparency and Prevention of Corruption	Online	10 February, Astana. Kazakhstan	1 day	92	43	18	3	3

No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
3	The online lecture on "Classical Management and Public Administration as a Science. Model of Public Administration in North Macedonia" by Prof. Tetov University, former State Secretary of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration of North Macedonia, Dr. Jaahi Jaahia as part of a series of the joint online conferences "Public Administration and Civil Service Worldwide	Online	9 March	1 day	80	35	5	3	0

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
4	Panel session within ASPA Annual Conference: "Public Administration Transformation in Post-Soviet countries: Diversity in New Reality"	in person	20 March, Jacksonville, Florida, USA	1 day	64	20	16	6	5
5	ACSH official launching its latest publication, the book "Public Service Evolution in post-Soviet countries: Diversity in Transformation". This event was organised with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations	in person	March, NY, USA	1 day	15	5	3	2	3

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
6	Ministerial Roundtable at the World Government Summit "Shaping Future Governments"	in person	April, Dubai, UAE	1 day	10	0	5	3	1
7	Regional conference on digitalization: 1. Appraisal of the Needs-Assessment Survey Results on Digitalization 2. Transformation in Action: Digital partnership to enhance technological leadership	in person	14-15 April, Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	71	31	23	10	7
8	Seminar for press services of central government agencies: "Social networks - an effective platform for interaction between government	in person	19-20 April, Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	30	19	6	2	3

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	agencies and the public"								
9	Workshop in the framework of NISPAcee Anniversary Conference: "Innovations and E-government to Built Resilient Public Administration"	in person	2- 4 June / Bucharest, Romania	3 days	40	20	7	9	3
10	Panel session in the framework of NU GSPP Annual Conference: "Toward a People-centred Governance: Countries' Perspectives"	in person	7 June, Astana. Kazakhstan	1 day	50	24	10	4	4
11	Panel session within Turkestan International Human Capital	in person	8 June, Turkestan, Kazakhstan	1 day	155	73	40	5	7

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Forum: "Human Capital of Civil Service"								
12	Turkestan International Human Capital Forum "Integration Code 2022"	in person	8-10 June, Turkestan, Kazakhstan	3 days	254	124	75	12	3
13	International meeting: "Cooperation and Capacity Development in Digital Government". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH	in person	20-21 June, Tbilisi, Georgia	2 days	83	30	28	9	3

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
14	Seminar II for press service of local executive bodies: "Social networks - an effective platform for interaction between government agencies and the public"	in person	27-28 June, Astana, Kazakhstan	2 days	35	7	4	2	1
15	International online conference: "Digital Innovation in Civil Service Management: Global Trends and Best Practices"organized jointly by the ACSH, the Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea, the Agency of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs and HR	Online	29 June / Online	1 day	100	42	18	13	2

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
	Association Qazaqstan								
16	Training on "Techniques to Conduct an Interview" for civil servants. The training was conducted by: Ms. Gulmira Raissova, Chairman, Coordinating Council, HR Association Qazaqstan, partner of the Empower people, SCP SHRM.	in person	15-16 September. Astana, Kazakhstan	2 days	80	45	5	1	1

No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
17	Study visit: "Provision of public services using the latest digital technologies". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH	in person	19-21 September / Seoul, Republic of Korea	3 days	41	12	15	8	2
18	Capacity Building Workshop: "Digital Government Policy Frameworks". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH	in person	25-26 October / Samarkand, Uzbekistan	2 days	59	14	13	10	3

No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
19	A guest lecture by Doctor of the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw (Poland), expert of the ACSH, Ms. Jovanka Yakubek-Lalik on the topic: "Populism, authoritarianism and administrative law - reflections in the context of Central and Eastern Europe" at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic named after Zhusup Abdrakhmanov	in person	1-2 November. Bishkek. The Kyrgyz Republic	2 days	70	45	2	2	0

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
20	Webinar on "Training of civil servants and fostering of innovations in the Republic of Korea" by the ACSH, Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea, and the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs.	Online	25 November.	1 day	93	46	14	27	1
21	Seminar "Futures Thinking And Scenario Planning For Policymakers" by the the Graduate School of Public Policy of Nazarbayev University jointly with the ACSH.	in person	30 November - 2 December. Astana. Kazakhstan.	3 days	27	16	5	15	2

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
22	Capacity development workshop on "Open Data Policies, Practices, and Cases". This event is part of a joint project of the Gov of the Republic of Korea (MOIS, NIA) and UNDP, and ACSH	in person	1-2 December. Bishkek. The Kyrgyz Republic.	2 days	50	23	17	9	2
23	Seminar on "Why deal with open data and what are the benefits" by the ACSH, the Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan, and the Graduate School of Public Policy of Nazarbayev University.	in person	6-7 December. Astana. Kazakhstan	2 days	70	35	11	24	1

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
24	HR forum "HR in civil service: transition to strategic HRM" by the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs, the ACSH, and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan.	in person	9 December. Astana. Kazakhstan.	1 day	124	65	42	27	6
25	Seminar "Effective communications" for heads of government agencies, by the ACSH, the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs, and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan.	in person	10-11. December. Astana. Kazakhstan.	2 days	28	16	8	12	1

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No.	Title of Workshop, Seminar, Conference or Study Visit	Format (online/in person)	Date/ Country where event took place	No. of Days	Number of Individual Participants who completed the event	Number of Women	Number of Organizations Represented in Event	Number of Countries Represented in Event	Number of CSOs Participating in Event
26	Workshop on "Merit-based civil service HRM in the XXI century" by the ACSH, International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the State Examination Center of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SEC).	in person	20-21 December. Baku. Azerbaijan.	2 days	56	30	23	14	3

ANNEX VII: ACSH'S KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
1	e-HRM Systems for the Civil Service in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Korea	This publication is the result of a cross-country comparative study exploring the development of electronic personnel management systems. Conducted jointly by the Astana Civil Service Hub and the Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea, the study focused on three Central Asia countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan) and the Republic of Korea, with the latter serving as a	HR	Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan	2024	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea, government organisations responsible for civil service affairs in the Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan	government organisations responsible for civil service affairs	English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		benchmark case for an electronic human resource management system (e-HRMS).							
2	Standards Frameworks for digital transformation	This knowledge product covers areas such as effective utilisation of information technologies, cybersecurity, data privacy protection, cloud computing, infrastructure, etc that can contribute to the digital transformation of the participating countries' public sectors.	Digitalisation	Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) and the National Information Society Agency (NIA) of the Republic of Korea.	government organisations responsible digitalisation	Russian, English, Korean

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
3	Improving the prosperity of citizens and effectiveness of the state apparatus: Kazakhstan's experience in implementing project management	Amidst global economic challenges, countries are prioritizing flexibility and efficiency, with many adopting a project-oriented approach to governance. Kazakhstan's shift from traditional bureaucratic models to a National Project Management System (NPMS) is driven by President Tokayev's vision of a "listening state" and "human-centricity." The NPMS, developed through three stages, offers valuable lessons for international audiences seeking efficient reforms. The study,	Project management	CIS and beyond	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Executive Office of the President, Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan	government organisations	Kazakh

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		commissioned by the Astana Civil Service Hub, provides practical recommendations for NPMS improvement, highlighting its role in strategic vision, organizational change, and effective policy implementation.							
4	Behavioural Public Policy: New Opportunities and Challenges for Kazakhstan and the Eurasia Region	This study on Behavioural Public Policy is based on insights from behavioural economics and psychology intending to transform people's behaviour into desirable behaviour by using 'nudges' and correcting cognitive bias.	Behavioural economy	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian, English

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		While many countries around the world have actively embraced behavioural insights into public policies, this topic remains a relatively new field for the governments in the post-Soviet Eurasia region, including Kazakhstan. The study attempts to fill the gap and facilitate the understanding of behavioural public policy in the region.							
5	Fifth Needs Assessment Survey of the ACSH Participating Countries	The findings of the Survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in public administration and civil service	Survay results	Astana Civil Service Hub	2023	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	English

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		development and in public service delivery							
6	Analysis of communication channels of state bodies with the population	This study is an analysis of 15 channels of communication between state bodies and citizens with the identification of actors, the sequence of steps (operations), the rules of their work, the effectiveness in achieving the desired result on the part of the population, and comparison with international practice.	Communications	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
7	Application of Competency Frameworks in HRM: the Case of Montenegro	This case study illuminates good practices adopted by the public human resource management system of Montenegro, using a competency framework for the selection and recruitment of senior management staff in the state administration and for the heads of public authorities. In doing this, it also describes the transitioning of the public human resource system of Montenegro towards competency-based employment processes and competency-based performance evaluation cycles.	HR	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Admir Sahmanovic, HRM expert from Montenegro	government organisations	English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
8	Public Management in the 21st Century	This publication is a review of public management practices, highlighting the different systems that influenced public administration organisation and structure over the past decades. It starts with the traditional model of public administration, the dominant system for the first eight decades of the 20th Century.	Public administrations	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Professor or Public Administration at the University of Tetovo in North Macedonia, Jahi Jahija	government organisations	English
9	Compensation Practices in the U.S. Governments: A Review of Federal, State, and Local Government Practices	This report reviews compensation practices at the federal, state, and local levels of the United States governmental institutions that play a variety of roles, and which are mostly staffed	HR	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Dr Rex L Facer II - a human resource management consultant, a retired Associate Professor of Public Finance and Management at Brigham Young University	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		by public servants.1 For example, the federal government provides some educational oversight and resource assistance, but the vast majority of education spending and employment is at the local school district, generally, a single, special-purpose form of local government.							
10	Stewardship and Public Service: An Introduction	The concept of stewardship encapsulates the perennial mission of the public service; the preservation of the long-term capability of state institutions to act for the greater public good, including the responsible care of	Public administrations	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Max Everest Phillips, former Head of the Global Centre for Public Service Excellence	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		public resources. It neatly summarises the fundamental purpose of the public service and public servants: striving to address the long-term concerns for their fellow citizens and for their country, by nurturing the inherited legacy of the past, and by clarifying different alternatives, adopting the best possible options for the coming years.							
11	Public Sector Compensation: A Comparative Review	Contemporary public sector remuneration systems have been mostly developed in a very different era and they have not practically changed much over the past five or six decades. They are	HR	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Professor James L. Perry of Indiana University, and Wojciech Zielinski, a Governance Specialist and Lech Marcinkowski, Senior Policy Adviser, both at OECD/SIGMA	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		all very similar in many ways as they are based on similar principles, however considerable differences also exist across systems, as the mix and balance of the elements included in the total compensation package vary from country to country.							
12	Securing Talent for Civil Service: Contemporary HRM Practices for Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion	Human resource management and personnel administration are undoubtedly vital components of public administration entities, as they are necessary for engaging the appropriate individuals. Hence, securing appropriate talent is a primary goal of	HR	Global	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Pan Suk Kim, Professor Emeritus, Department of Global Public Administration, College of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Yonsei University, Mirae Campus, Republic of Korea. W	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		public administrations' human resources management and personnel administration organisations.							
13	Description of the local self-government system in Georgia	This descriptive research delves into the aspects of Georgia's local self-government, consisting of municipalities and self-governing cities. Local self-government system aims to promote democracy, accountability, and efficiency by bringing decision-making closer to the people affected by those decisions. The research provides valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and	Public administrations	Whole world	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Ms. Maya Tskitishvili	government organisations	Russian, English

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		researchers interested in understanding the functioning of the local self-government system.							
14	Analysis and Evaluation of Educational Programs of Universities of Kazakhstan on "Public and Local Administration"	The publication in a consistent, structured form sets out the main approaches to the analysis and evaluation of educational programs of universities in Kazakhstan. A holistic view of the content of educational programs and what components they consist of is given, including the ratio of Soft and Hard Skills in teaching	Education	Kazakhstan	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Doctor of Economics, Associate Professor Sh.A.Yesimova	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		public administration, as well as an analysis of methods and technologies.							
15	Open [Government] Data Policies and Practices: Select Country Cases	Open [government] data denotes the information generated by public organisations, and which can be freely used, re-used, and distributed by anyone. As such, open government data are considered key contributors to good governance, digital innovation, and economic development for a variety of reasons. Open data policies and practices increase	Digitalisation	Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) and the National Information Society Agency (NIA) of the Republic of Korea.	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		transparency of government and enhance citizens' right to access to public information and their potential participation and interaction in the policy decision making domain. Equally, open data policies and practices foster accountability for providing information to citizens about what their governments are doing.							
16	The results of monitoring and analysis on the issues of debureaucratization of the state apparatus, including the study of internal administrative procedures	Bureaucratization of processes reduces the efficiency of state administration and undermines the trust of citizens. Among the many factors affecting the level of bureaucracy, it is possible to note the	Public administrations	Kazakhstan	2023	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, R.J. Bekkuzhiny, ST. Zhusupov, B.S. Uakpaev, A.T. Bekperov	government organisations	Russian, Kazakh

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		imbalance of powers, responsibilities and resources, centralization of decision-making and control, blurring of powers, chaotic information flows, problems of corporate culture.							
17	The study of human resource management processes in the public sector of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan	The report contains brief summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the results of a study of the level of maturity of HR processes, the readiness of the HR system for crises and the level of digital culture in the state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, the influence of factors on the efficiency of the organization	HR	Global	2023	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		and its attractiveness as an employer was analyzed. The main results are important strategic information for making managerial decisions to improve the personnel management of public service bodies.							
18	Conclusion on the analytical work on the issues of de-bureaucratization of the activities of the state apparatus in the field of labor, social protection, and migration of the population	Analytical work on the issues of de-bureaucratization of the activities of the state apparatus in the field of labor, social protection, and migration of the population	Public administrations	Global	2023	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, A.T. Bekperov	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
19	The results of the analytical work on the issues of de-bureaucratization of the activities of the state apparatus in the field of education	Analysis on issues of debureaucratization of activity of the state apparatus in the field of education, carried out by the joint efforts of the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Public Service Affairs, authorized state bodies in the field of education, their subordinate organizations, educational institutions, expert community and with the support of UNDP in Kazakhstan and the Astana Center of State Service performs the mission of facilitating and accelerating the process reduction	Public administrations	Global	2023	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, ST. Zhusupov	government organisations	Russian

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		of bureaucracy in the educational sphere.							
20	Final report on the results of the analysis carried out on the issues of de-bureaucratization of the state apparatus in the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its departments, and subordinate organizations	Analysis on issues of debureaucratization of activity of the state apparatus in the field of healthcare	Public administrations	Global	2023	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, B.S. Vakpaev	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
21	Feasibility (Needs-Assessment) Survey Results Report	The results of this study allow for a clearer understanding how far a country has advanced with the digitalisation process of government operations and public service delivery, as well as how it has adopted international standards and practices in the operationalisation of its digital environment.	Public administrations	Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian, English
22	Public Service Evolution in the 15 Post-Soviet Countries: Diversity in Transformation	The first full-scale in-depth study of the transformation of public administration in all fifteen countries, which also includes a comparative analysis of public administration reforms and	Public administrations	Astana Civil Service Hub	2022	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		development indicators. The book is the result of a two-year collaboration of 25 scholars and practitioners from 15 countries with direct experience in public administration and civil service reforms.							
23	Post-socialist countries preventing and fighting corruption	Corruption places a heavy burden on countries and nations, undermining moral principles and trust, reducing the quality of public administration, leading to illicit enrichment for some and poverty for others, and threatening sustainable development and security. In their efforts to	Public administrations	Global	2022	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Mr. Drago Kosh	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographic al Coverage	Year of Producti on	Formal (Printed/Electron ic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Langua ge
		fight corruption, governments rely both on their own experience and peculiarities of the country defined by the unique socio-economic, cultural and historical context, and on global trends and best practices.							
24	Communication solutions as a way to enhance trust in the police. The Case of Georgia	Countries in which people trust each other more often have more effective democratic institutions, an open economy and economic growth, as well as a low level of crime and corruption (Rothstein, 2013). In the early 2000s, the socio-economic and criminal situation in Georgia was difficult. People	Communicatio ns	Global	2022	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Aizhan Koshkenova, Irakli Tabliashvili	governmen t organisatio ns	Russian

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		have little trust in corrupt government bodies, including the police, which is considered the most corrupt power structure in the world.							
25	Analysis of the practice of the institution of contract civil servants	The purpose of the research is determined by the analysis of the practice of the institute of contract civil servants, and the object is the system of labor contracts in the civil service.	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian
26	Development of a set of measures to introduce strategic personnel planning into the civil service system	The study "Development of a complex of measures for the introduction of strategic personnel planning in the system of the state service" is logically	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		interconnected with the study "Improving the status of the service of personnel management of state bodies"							
27	Evaluation of the performance of civil servants	Evaluation of the activity of civil servants has a formal character due to the fact that individual development plans, key target indicators are filled out formally; It is a common practice to set unrealistic key target indicators in individual development plans, rather than what can be achieved concretely. This means that there is a need to change the culture of evaluation, the attitude of civil	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		servants to evaluation.							
28	Raising the status of the personnel management service of state bodies	Analysis of the current practical work of the personnel service of the personnel service of the Ministry of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan acted as a government body for the purposes of the investigation	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian
29	Talent management system for civil servants	Analysis of the talent management system of the state body	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
30	Improving the competitive selection system. Strengthening the principle of meritocracy in the selection and promotion of civil servants	The purpose of the study: development of a new mechanism of competitive selection for public service with an emphasis on identifying professional and personal competencies of candidates	HR	Global	2022	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, HR Assosiation	government organisations	Russian
31	Fourth Needs Assessment Survey of the ACSH Participating Countries	The findings of the Survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in public administration and civil service development and in public service delivery	Survay results	Astana Civil Service Hub	2021	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
32	Development of systematic measures to prevent conflicts of interest	Development of action framework for Conflicts of Interests prevention as a preventative tool for corruption level reduction. Object of the Research – Conflicts of Interests in the public service and legal regulations, targeted at Conflicts of Interests prevention (in accordance with TS).	Anti-Corruption	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Rysbekova Zh.K	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh
33	Government agencies communication strategies in the context of crisis and reforms	Communication strategies, communication channels, crisis communications, communication strategy effectiveness, availability and efficiency of obtaining	Communications	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, M.B. Kadyrova	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		information, the COVID-19 pandemic, and public information satisfaction. The purpose of the project: based on the study and assessment of the effectiveness of the communication strategy of government agencies, the development of a methodological guide on modern methods and tools of crisis communications.							
34	The study of the role and status of modern HR in Kazakhstani organizations of the private, quasi-state and public sectors	The study on the level of maturity of HR processes in Kazakhstan was conducted in accordance to a, HR management, professional HR standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan, HR	HR	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Raissova G.B., Nurbek K.Kh.	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		challenges during the coronavirus pandemic, factors of work motivation, the effectiveness of the personnel management policy and human capital development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.							
35	Public Administration During a Pandemic	The aim of the project: to formulate the «Agenda» for Kazakhstan in the sphere of public administration in the crisis and post-crisis recovery period.	Public administrations	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Marian Abisheva and Raushan Dulambayeva	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh
36	Improving management in government	Establishing effective regulatory, methodological and organizational measures aimed at improving the quality of labor	Public administrations	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, G.K. Issenova	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		organization and management in the government institutions of Kazakhstan.							
37	Improving the system for assessing the effectiveness of the activities of administrative civil servants and state bodies	Evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies, achievement of goals, interaction of the state body with individuals and legal entities, organizational development, evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of administrative civil servants.	Public administrations	Global	2021	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Zeinelgabdin A.B., Junusbekova G.A.	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh
38	Methodological recommendations on conducting interviews with candidates for the posts in the civil service	The methodological recommendations contain a MODEL OF BASIC AND DIFFERENTIATING COMPETENCIES FOR	HR	Kazakhstan	2019	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL SERVANT CORPS A" and "B" of the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - MODEL). Competence interviews should be based on this MODEL. "							
39	Benchmarking Civil Service Reform in Kazakhstan	Joint study of the ACSH and the OECD Public Government Directorate comparing Kazakhstan's strategic HRM practicies against those in OECD countries	HR	Global	2018	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, OECD	government organisations	English, Kazakh

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
40	Motivation of Public Servants in Kazakhstan	This research is one of the first steps in the region to study the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of civil servants. We sincerely hope that this study will contribute to better tailor reform interventions within the civil service in the areas of human resources management, training and capacity building, and that policymakers and practitioners will benefit from the ideas elaborated in this work to arrive to more informed decisions.	HR	Global	2018	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, UNDP in Pakistan and UNDP Global Center for Public Service Excellence in Singapore	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
41	Motivation of Public Servants in Pakistan	This research is one of the first steps in the region to study the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of civil servants. We sincerely hope that this study will contribute to better tailor reform interventions within the civil service in the areas of human resources management, training and capacity building, and that policymakers and practitioners will benefit from the ideas elaborated in this work to arrive to more informed decisions.	HR	Global	2018	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, UNDP in Pakistan and UNDP Global Center for Public Service Excellence in Singapore	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
42	Comparing the Motivation of Public Servants in Kazakhstan and Pakistan	This research is one of the first steps in the region to study the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of civil servants. We sincerely hope that this study will contribute to better tailor reform interventions within the civil service in the areas of human resources management, training and capacity building, and that policymakers and practitioners will benefit from the ideas elaborated in this work to arrive to more informed decisions.	HR	Global	2018	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, UNDP in Pakistan and UNDP Global Center for Public Service Excellence in Singapore	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
43	Smart Government: Case of Azerbaijan	This case study has been prepared as a result of the second Peer-to-Peer Learning Alliance launched by the Astana Civil Service Hub in 2018. The Alliance is devoted to e-Government development and comprises of experts from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and OECD.	Digitalisation	Global	2018	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Mr. Semral Aliyev – Senior Advisor of E-Government and Digital Innovations Department of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan	government organisations	Russian, English
44	Third Needs Assessment Survey of the ACSH Participating Countries	The findings of the Survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in public administration and civil service	Survay results	Astana Civil Service Hub	2018	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	English

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		development and in public service delivery							
45	Global and Regional Trends in Civil Service Development (Executive Summary)	Over the recent decades, despite commonalities inherent to many reform processes, it is possible to distinguish two important trends in public management reform, at least in the industrially developed countries. Borrowing the phraseology and rationale provided by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2002), we can refer to the New Public Management and the New Weberian State as major reform trends	Public administrations	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Max Everest-Phillips Director of the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence	government organisations	Russian, English, Kazakh

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		(Argyriades & Timsit, 2013). According to these authors, adherents of the New Weberian Model give priority to the modernisation of the Weberian tradition, while New Public Management proponents largely reject this tradition and promote approaches used in the private sector.							
46	Traditions of Administrative Reform: Mixed Messages and Epistemic Communities in Eurasia. The Q Methodological Analysis of the Norms, Beliefs and Values of Hub Participants	Traditions of Administrative Reform: Mixed Messages and Epistemic Communities in Eurasia. The Q Methodological Analysis of the Norms, Beliefs and Values of Hub Participants	Communications	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Dr. Karl O'Connor, Institute for Research in Social Sciences, Ulster University, UK	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
47	One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery Model: the Case of Georgia	This case study was commissioned under the initiative of the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana as a result of its Peer learning alliance on public service delivery among practitioners of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan. It describes the public service delivery reform in Georgia and is the outcome of several months of research in public administration reform in Georgia.	Digitalisation	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, The Deputy Head of the National Agency of Public Registry of Georgia Mr. Chachkhunashvili	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
48	One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery Model: the Case of Kazakhstan	This case study describes the implementation of One Stop Shop (OSS) policy for public service delivery in Kazakhstan. The case provides an analysis of the political and socio-economic conditions of the country in which public service reform has been implemented, and analysis of the measures taken by the Government of Kazakhstan to create One Stop Shops.	Digitalisation	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Saltanat Janenova	government organisations	Russian, English
49	One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery Model: the Case of Azerbaijan	This case study was commissioned under the initiative of the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana as a result of its Peer learning	Digitalisation	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		alliance on public service delivery among practitioners of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan.							
50	Regulatory Impact Assessment: Kazakhstan and World Practices	The present publication has been prepared as a result of the Innovative Solutions Scheme, organised by the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana in 2015 to identify, disseminate and assist in replicating the most successful innovative solutions in public administration and disseminate this knowledge among participating countries of the Hub.	Public administrations	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
51	Quality of Life Framework for Public Services in the Hub Participating Countries	The present publication has been prepared as a result of the Innovative Solutions Scheme (hereinafter – Scheme), organised by the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana in 2015 to identify, disseminate and assist in replicating the most successful innovative solutions in public administration, civil service and disseminate this knowledge among participating countries of the Hub.	Public administrations	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Colin Knox, Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, AOE "Nazarbayev University"	government organisations	Russian, English

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No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
52	Assessment of Human Resource Management Performance in Government Bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan	The present publication has been prepared as a result of the Innovative Solutions Scheme (hereinafter – Scheme), organised by the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana in 2015 to identify, disseminate and assist in replicating the most successful innovative solutions in public administration, civil service and disseminate this knowledge among participating countries of the Hub	HR	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Saule Aliyeva, State Body Efficiency Evaluation Center under «Economic Research Institute» JSC of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan	government organisations	Russian, English
53	Civil Service Country Profiles: Select Caucasus and CIS Countries	The country profiles are a result of a collective and collaborative effort between the Regional	HR	Global	2017	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		Hub's Research Team together with representatives of the authorities responsible for human resources management in their respective countries.							
54	Country Profile Azerbaijan	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
55	Country Profile Kazakhstan	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
56	Country Profile Georgia	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
57	Country Profile Belarus	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
58	Country Profile Kyrgyzstan	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
59	Country Profile Moldova	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
60	Country Profile Ukraine	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
61	Country Profile Tajikistan	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
62	Country Profile Armenia	COUNTRY PROFILE	Public administrations	Global	2016	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	government organisations	English
63	Anti-Corruption Drive in Georgia: The Case of the Georgian Police System	Civil service reform is a key component of the Georgian Government's reform policy agenda. The Civil Service Reform Concept Note, approved by the Government, sets fort the main directions of the civil service reform strategy. The	Anti-Corruption	Global	2015	Printed and Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub, Professor Paata Turava of the School of Law of the Grigol Robakidze University	government organisations	Russian, English

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		strategy aims to establish a governance system free of nepotism and corruption and an effective civil service system capable of delivering quality and impartial public services to the citizens of Georgia.							
64	Second Baseline Study Results Report (long version)	The findings of the Survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in public administration and civil service development and in public service delivery	Survay results	Astana Civil Service Hub	2015	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	English
65	Performance appraisal	Evaluation of the activity of public servants in context anti-corruption: the	Public administrations	Whole world	2014	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub	government organisations	Russian

No.	Knowledge Product Title	Brief Description of the Product	Thematic Area	Geographical Coverage	Year of Production	Formal (Printed/Electronic)	Partners Involved	Target Audience	Language
		experience of the regional hub							
66	First baseline study	The findings of the Survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in public administration and civil service development and in public service delivery	Survay results	Astana Civil Service Hub	2013	Electronic	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	Astana Civil Service Hub participating countries	English

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ANNEX VII: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This EVALUATION was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for EVALUATION'. The consultant has safeguarded the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant has also ensured security of collected information before and after the EVALUATION and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the EVALUATION process is solely used for the EVALUATION and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

ANNEX VIII: CODE OF CONDUCT

United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System Evaluation Consultants Agreement

Form to be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System Name of Consultant:

_____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (place) on (date) Signature: 29/5/2024

ANNEX IX: Evaluation Report clearance form

Thematic Evaluation: Contribution of the UNDP-Led Regional Platforms to Regional Sustainable Development and Cooperation

Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Name: Dosbol Tursumuratov

Signature: _____ Date: 29-май-2024

Head of Governance Unit

Name: Ainur Baimyrza

Signature: _____ Date: 29-May-2024

Deputy Resident Representative

Name: Sukhrob Khojimatov

Signature: _____ Date: 29-May-2024