



## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

# EVALUATION REPORT

### **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM):**

*“DPADM’s successful promotion of e-Government and ICT, needs to be followed by the development of greater clarity regarding its other focus areas, attention to internal management and structural issues, as well as additional coordination with United Nations system development partners”*

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**1 June 2011**

Assignment No.: **IED-11-002**

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## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

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### FUNCTION

*“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organisation. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organisation;” (General Assembly [Resolution 48/218 B](#)).*

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**Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation  
of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management:**

*“DPADM’s successful promotion of e-Government and ICT, needs to be followed by the development of greater clarity regarding its other focus areas, attention to internal management and structural issues, as well as additional coordination with United Nations system development partners”*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The [Inspection and Evaluation Division \(IED\)](#) of the [Office of Internal Oversight Services \(OIOS\)](#) identified the [Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(DESA\)](#) as a priority programme for evaluation based on a strategic risk assessment carried out in 2008. This evaluation report on DESA’s [Division for Public Administration and Development Management](#) is one of eleven detailed assessments of DESA’s ten divisions and its Executive Direction and Management function. It will be issued to DESA as an internal management report.

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management is mid-sized when compared to the other Divisions and offices of DESA, with USD 36,662 thousand estimated expenditures (regular and extrabudgetary), including 51 staff posts for the 2010-2011 biennium.

In undertaking the evaluation, OIOS examined the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness (including impact) of the Division. It used a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, including a document review, staff and stakeholder interviews, staff and stakeholder surveys, field missions, direct observation of intergovernmental meetings, a bibliometric analysis of the usage of DESA publications and an expert panel review of the quality of a sample of key DESA publications. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the norms and standards for evaluation established by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

In recent years, DPADM has taken the initiative to re-evaluate its broad mandate and strategically re-think how and where it invests its limited resources. This exercise resulted in an articulation of the following three focus areas:

- 1) E-Government and ICT
- 2) Institutional and Human Resource Development
- 3) Development Management through Citizen Engagement.

DPADM has promoted ICT not just as part of its e-Government focus but also in the implementation of its other two focus areas listed above. In doing so, it has succeeded in creating a clear programmatic focus on the utilization of ICT to improve the public administration of government programmes. While there is evidence of accomplishments in the other two focus areas as well, there is a lack of clarity in these two focus areas

regarding DPADM's intended emphasis and priorities.

The evaluation results showed that DPADM has, in particular, successfully promoted e-Government as a tool to deliver government services more efficiently. DPADM's 2010 [United Nations E-Government Survey publication](#), as well as earlier versions, were recognized by stakeholders for their impact in raising general awareness of the benefits that governments can achieve by adapting e-Government strategies for service provision. Additionally, DPADM's e-Government survey is credited with raising awareness of specific national rankings intended to measure the relative success of governments' implementation of such approaches. The influence of DPADM's e-Government work spanned multiple continents, was well integrated with e-Government work being undertaken by "peer organizations," and, was serving as a credible benchmark in the development arena.

Also, in keeping with DPADM's emphasis on ICT as the cornerstone for effective governance and public administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, DPADM has developed web-based professional network and knowledge-sharing platforms. These too were recognized as having promoted enhanced global public administration capacity.

There remains a need for the Division to put greater attention on internal management and structural issues: 1) there was a lack of common understanding surrounding DPADM's work programme and priorities; 2) better alignment was needed between DPADM staff skills, including skill development and the Division's new focus areas; 3) open questions and confusion regarding DPADM's capacity development role needed attention; this included the need for further clarification of the transitional and future role of public administration expert advisors (known as Inter-Regional Advisors - IRAs); 4) DPADM's strategic framework and website information did not serve to clarify the current priorities of the DPADM work programme in a consistent manner; 5) DPADM was not sufficiently utilizing the expertise of the [Committee of Experts on Public Administration \(CEPA\)](#) to maximize the impact of its limited resources; 6) DPADM was not coordinating sufficiently with other United Nations system entities with regard to some of its capacity development work; and, 7) the Division did not have sufficient monitoring and self-evaluation mechanisms in place to measure the impact of its work.

Based on the results above, OIOS makes 4 recommendations to DESA-DPADM:

**Recommendation 1: DPADM should further clarify its strategic focus, work priorities and work methods; this should include clarifying priorities within the three focus areas and should be done with the goal of internal consensus building in mind.**

**Recommendation 2: DPADM should develop a framework to improve human resource management that includes a plan for further skill development of current staff, as well as future recruitment that will facilitate alignment between DPADM's identified work priorities and its human resource capacity.**

**Recommendation 3: DPADM should strengthen partnership with CEPA, in particular. Also, it should strengthen current work by identifying key opportunities to capitalize on the work being undertaken by other intergovernmental entities and United Nations system entities.**

**Recommendation 4: DPADM should improve results measurement mechanisms to better determine impact of its work. Including, for example, undertaking one or more impact assessment evaluations of key work programme projects or implementing a limited number of new monitoring mechanisms to measure results.**

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## I. Introduction

1. The [Inspection and Evaluation Division \(IED\)](#) of the [Office of Internal Oversight Services \(OIOS\)](#) identified the [Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(DESA\)](#) as a priority programme for evaluation based on a strategic risk assessment exercise carried out in 2008. The forty-ninth session of the [Committee for Programme and Coordination \(CPC\)](#) selected that evaluation to be presented for consideration at its fifty-first session.<sup>1</sup> The selection was formally mandated by the ensuing General Assembly [Resolution 64/229](#) on Programme Planning.

2. In conjunction with the DESA-wide programme evaluation, OIOS-IED prepared eleven subprogramme evaluations, one for each DESA Division or office and one for the executive direction and management function of the Department. The current report, on the [Division for Public Administration and Development Management \(DPADM\)](#), is based on data collection that OIOS-IED undertook from September 2010 through February 2011 and will be presented to the Division's management.

3. This final report incorporates revisions based on comments received through ongoing dialogue with DPADM during the drafting process. *The Division's final comments are appended in full, as per practice instituted further to General Assembly [resolution 64/263](#).* OIOS expresses its sincere appreciation for the collaboration and cooperation offered by DPADM and DESA management and staff in the undertaking of this evaluation.

## II. Methodology

4. In conducting this evaluation, OIOS used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing on data from the following sources:

- i. **A document analysis** of DPADM's strategic framework, programme and project documents, service delivery records, monitoring and reporting information from IMDIS, and other evaluations, studies and audits;<sup>2</sup>
- ii. **22 in-person interviews with DPADM staff, including all members of the DPADM management;**<sup>3</sup>
- iii. **10 in-person and telephone stakeholder interviews**, including Member State permanent representatives, national government officials, civil society organisations, academics, and staff and management from other United Nations System entities;
- iv. **Field missions** to Thailand, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [A/64/16](#), Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, July 2009; paragraph 41.

<sup>2</sup> This included a document content analysis undertaken by Syracuse University.

<sup>3</sup> Stratified random samples of all DESA staff were drawn to ensure representation of staff at all levels and across all divisions, and a confidence interval of 90 per cent.

<sup>4</sup> These countries were chosen for field missions based on a mapping of DESA's (including DPADM) stakeholders, capacity development and technical assistance projects, and division-level regional and country level engagement.

- v. **A web-based survey of all DPADM management and staff;**<sup>5</sup>
- vi. **A web-based survey of 111 subprogramme-level stakeholders;**<sup>6</sup>
- vii. **Observations of intergovernmental meetings serviced by DPADM;**
- viii. **An independent expert panel review of the quality of DESA's key publications;**<sup>7</sup>  
and,
- ix. **A bibliometric analysis on the usage of DESA publications.**<sup>8</sup>

5. The evaluation had four limitations. First, the low response rate achieved in the stakeholder surveys and the relatively low number of stakeholder interviews means that the results of these data collection efforts do not necessarily represent the views of DPADM's stakeholders as a whole. Second, due to the timing of the evaluation, OIOS observed the prior CEPA session as opposed to the most recent CEPA session. Third, the expert panel review included only two Division publications; although these were recommended by the Division as representing its key publications, the small sample size limits the extent to which findings of the review can be generalized to all Division publications. Lastly, the bibliometric analysis permitted only limited comparability of the bibliometric data from one type of publication to another and noted the inherent difficulties of capturing information about these types of publications through conventional index citation. To address these limitations, OIOS triangulated data from multiple sources to strengthen the results.

### III. Background

6. The United Nations Programme on Public Administration has a long history within the Organization starting in 1948. The first activities that dominated the programme were concentrated on specific assistance to individual countries, including assistance in establishing and strengthening administrative institutions, major administrative reform, advisory services, training of civil servants and establishment of training institutions. As the programme developed, the focus turned toward linking public administration more directly with national development

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<sup>5</sup> There were 28 DPADM respondents to the DESA staff survey, a 52 per cent response rate for DESA-DPADM staff.

<sup>6</sup> The subprogramme stakeholder survey brought 27 responses, yielding a response rate of 12 per cent; because of this low response rate, this information was not used without sufficient triangulation from additional relevant data sources.

<sup>7</sup> The panel consisted of three senior academics, chosen on basis of regional exposure and, in particular, expertise in documentary peer review. The DPADM publications reviewed (as part of the larger DESA assessment) were: "United Nations e-Government Survey: Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis" (2010) and "Report of the 9th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration" ([E/2010/44 - E/C.16/2010/5](#)).

<sup>8</sup>The DPADM publications included in the bibliometric analysis were: "United Nations e-Government Survey: Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis" (2010) and "Report of the 9th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration" ([E/2010/44 - E/C.16/2010/5](#)).



and adopting a more comprehensive approach to public administration by adding research and analytical work.<sup>9</sup>

7. As many developing countries began acquiring administrative experience and expertise, they needed advice and assistance of a more sophisticated nature than in the past. In order to support these developments, in the 1970's the United Nations began to strengthen its regional and interregional projects by establishing public administration units in all regional economic commissions in developing areas, and extending the system of regional advisers in public administration, that had initially been established for Africa, to Asia and Latin-America.<sup>10</sup>

8. The General Assembly reaffirmed the role of public administration in their debate at the fiftieth resumed session in 1996, resulting in the subsequent resolution [A/RES/50/225](#). This resolution emphasized the importance of increased cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and its specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, directing the programme to focus on certain specific areas such as strengthening government capacity, civil service reform, human resource development and public administration training.<sup>11</sup>

9. For the 2010-2011 biennium, the overall objective of DPADM is “to promote effective, efficient, accountable, participatory and transparent public administration for the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences”.<sup>12</sup> The Division is headed by a Director who was appointed in February 2009, and is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. DPADM is further divided into three branches: 1) the Public Administration Capacity Branch (PACB); 2) the e-Government Branch (eGB); and 3) the Development Management Branch (DMB). Each branch is headed by a Chief who reports to the Director of DPADM.

10. The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) was established by the [Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) in its [resolution 2001/45](#) and is comprised of 24 members who meet annually at [United Nations](#) Headquarters in New York. CEPA provides policy advice to ECOSOC and annually reviews the work programme of DPADM.

11. DPADM's proposed total budget for 2010-2011 is \$36,661,600, comprised of United States dollars (USD) \$13,451,100 regular budgetary funds (RB) and USD \$23,210,500 of extra-budgetary (XB) resources. DPADM has a total of 49 regular budget and 2 extra-budgetary posts approved for the biennium 2010-2011. Compared to the 2008-2009 biennium, the total budget has decreased by approximately 10 per cent (USD \$ 3,674,000) and one extra-budgetary post was lost. This decline in financing has been attributed, by some DESA managers, to current

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<sup>9</sup> A 60-Year History of UN Program of the Contribution of the United Nations to the Improvement on Public Administration, pages 41 and 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, page 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, page 44 and [A/RES/50/225](#), 1 May 1996.

<sup>12</sup> [A/64/6 \(Sect.9\)](#) DESA Budget, Subprogramme 8.

funding constraints faced by the Department’s traditional donor base as a result of the recent financial crisis and on-going market instability.<sup>13</sup> See Table 1 below.

**Table 1: DPADM Resources**

Category	Resources (thousands of United States dollars)		Posts	
	2008-2009	2010-2011 (before recosting)	2008-2009	2010-2011
Regular budget				
Post	12 669.9	12 669.9	49	49
Non-post	791.4	781.2	—	—
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13 461.3</b>	<b>13 451.1</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
Extrabudgetary	26 884.5	23 210.5	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 345.8</b>	<b>36 661.6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>

Source – Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, Subprogramme 8, Department of Public Administration and Development Management, [A/64/6 \(Sect.9\)](#)

## IV. Results

### A. DPADM has, in particular, successfully promoted e-Government and Information Communication Technologies as tools to support governments in their efforts to deliver services more efficiently

12. In recent years, DPADM has taken the initiative to re-evaluate its broad mandate and strategically re-think how and where it invests its limited resources. It has undergone a reform exercise resulting in a focus on three areas listed below:<sup>14</sup>

1. E-Government and Information Communication Technologies
2. Institutional and Human Resource Development
3. Development Management Through Citizen Engagement

This reform exercise also resulted in articulation of a DPADM niche -- Member States -- and factored in DPADM’s capacity, as it related to available resources. The results of the reform exercise were approved by the Under-Secretary General of DESA and endorsed by the [Committee of Experts on Public Administration \(CEPA\)](#) in its 9th session in April 2010. DPADM management estimates that, starting in 2009 and continuing to the present time frame, the Division’s resources have been equally distributed across all three focus areas.<sup>15</sup>

13. There is evidence of DPADM accomplishments in each focus area. In the area of “institutional and human resource development” two examples of accomplishments were the 2010 Work Public Sector Report with the theme “Restructuring Public Administration after Conflict” and the annual United Nations Public Service Awards Ceremony, which recognized

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> As summarized in 13 April 2011 DPADM management informal comments to OIOS.

<sup>15</sup> Information provided to OIOS from DPADM in correspondence dated 18 May 2011.

good practices at the country level and facilitated lessons learning. In the focus area of “development management through citizen engagement” one example of a DPADM accomplishment was the design and conduct of online training, as well as a toolkit for citizen engagement in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. Additionally, DPADM partnered with African governments to support the implementation of projects that strengthen citizens’ engagement in governance and public administration; related work included at least one development account project, as well as the implementation of technical cooperation activities in Gabon, Mali and Togo.<sup>16</sup>

14. While there is evidence of DPADM recent accomplishments in all three of these areas, DPADM has succeeded in creating the clearest focus in the area of “E-Government and information communication technologies with external stakeholders.” Among stakeholders familiar with DPADM’s work, the majority of Member State and other social and economic development partner entities interviewed and surveyed by OIOS recognized DPADM as the United Nations entity that was effectively focusing attention on the utilization of ICT to improve the public administration of government programmes.<sup>17</sup>

#### ***The E-Government Survey has received high marks from external users***

15. Through its e-Government work, DPADM has drawn wide attention to opportunities for national governments to improve services.<sup>18</sup> The 2010 United Nations E-Government Survey, as well as earlier versions, have been recognized by stakeholders both for their impact in raising general awareness of benefits that governments can achieve by adapting e-Government strategies for service provision, as well as for raising awareness of specific national rankings intended to measure the relative success of governments’ implementation of such approaches. DPADM indicates that, between 2008 and 2011, it assisted 22 countries with e-Government capacity development. Also, 5 government delegations took the initiative to officially visit DPADM in the New York Headquarters office to work with DPADM on various aspects of their countries’ e-Government development activities.<sup>19</sup>

16. The first part of DPADM’s most recent e-Government publication discussed ways in which e-Government can be leveraged to mitigate the effects of the financial and economic crisis on development. The second part provided results of DPADM’s most recent global survey, which assessed national online services, telecommunication infrastructure and human capital of national governments. This publication’s e-Government development index (EGDI) is a comprehensive scoring of the willingness and capacity of national administrations to use online and mobile technology in the execution of government functions. It is based on a multi-dimensional survey of the online presence of all 192 Member States. All Member States were invited to supply the addresses of their own top-level national and ministerial websites to be used as a starting point by the DPADM survey team. Approximately 30 per cent of Member States

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<sup>16</sup> This information is primarily based on DPADM information provided to OIOS during the informal comment period - 18 May 2011.

<sup>17</sup> DPADM in its informal comment dialogue with OIOS noted that it has promoted ICT not just as part of its E-government focus but also in the implementation of its other two focus areas.

<sup>18</sup> Most recent edition was: DESA- United Nations E-Government Survey 2010: Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/131.

<sup>19</sup> DPADM information provided to OIOS during the informal comment period - 18 May 2011.

responded to this survey invitation. In cases where no response was received, the survey team used a variety of search engines to locate countries' most relevant web sites and pertinent information. The most recent e-Government publication ultimately contained information on all 192 Member States.

17. The e-Government survey publication was widely seen by stakeholders as both credible and useful and was in high demand, as demonstrated by the fact that a variety of stakeholders cited it as a key DPADM achievement. This group included government ministry officials, leaders in other United Nations programmes and the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration-- a DPADM stakeholder with influence that spans the majority of continents. Specifically, when asked a series of over arching interview questions, 8 of 24 DPADM stakeholders volunteered specific positive feedback on the United Nations E-Government survey; many specified that they have used information in the survey in their work. Furthermore, DPADM management and staff indicated that, as a result of this survey, they see governments working to move up in the rankings and, in some instances, as referenced in para 15, requesting assistance from DPADM to develop their e-Governance capacity.

18. Furthermore, DPADM's e-Government survey work appeared to be well integrated with e-Government work being undertaken by "peer organizations" and was seen as a credible benchmark. DESA-DPADM was part of an international task force that was engaged in developing consensus on a set of e-Government indicators to serve as the basis for collection of ICT statistics that would be comparable at the international level. At present, this evolving list is made up of approximately 50 ICT indicators agreed upon by 270 delegates from 85 countries.<sup>20</sup> With regard to DPADM's work serving as a benchmark, both the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) and World Global Economic Forum publications and web sites reference DPADM's United Nations E-Government surveys (and/or DPADM's specific numerical indicators). Also, amongst "peer organizations" that have e-Government information repositories, none appeared to be more prominently referenced than the United Nations E-Government Survey. OIOS's bibliometrical analysis found that, according to the Office of Communication and Information Management Service (UN CIMS), the E-Government Survey has been visited 12,699 times through DPADM's UNPAN link; 412,467 publication downloads have occurred.<sup>21</sup>

19. The expert panel convened by OIOS to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of a sample of DESA publications, rated the United Nations E-Government survey highly overall.<sup>22</sup> See details in Table 2.

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<sup>20</sup> 2010 United Nations E-Government Survey, page 94.

<sup>21</sup> UNPAN link: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN-DPADM/UNPAN038853.pdf>. The difference between downloads and visits is often very large because most publications can be found through search engines and links from other websites. This would count as download, but not as a visit.

<sup>22</sup> Expert Panel Review Final Report- Evaluation of Publications of UNDESA for OIOS, 25 December 2010. The panel consisted of three senior academics, chosen on basis of regional exposure and, in particular, expertise in documentary peer review. One of the DPADM publications reviewed (as part of the larger DESA assessment) was: "United Nations e-Government Survey: Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis" (2010).

**Table 2:  
Expert Panel Positive Findings on United Nations E-Government Survey:  
Leveraging E-Government at a time of financial and economic crisis (2010)**

<b>Assessment Criteria:</b>			
<b>Research Planning/ Relevance of report</b>	<b>Research Process</b>	<b>Interpretation and Analysis</b>	<b>Promoting Research Findings</b>
- Compelling argument for leveraging e-Government	- Data is validated by second-level quality assurance group	-Contains relevant and sophisticated data	- Excellent use of charts, tables, boxes and graphs to illustrate data, trends and comparisons
-Report sensitive to extreme unevenness in access to e-Government services/ supporting technology	- Current quantitative formula results in wider range of point distributions, better reflecting differences in e-Government development	- Based on survey of the online presence of 192 Member States, UN e-Government index (EGDI) is comprehensive scoring of willingness/ capacity of national administrations to use online/ mobile technology in the execution of government functions	- Clear that purpose is to make recommendations; for example, suggestions are made on participatory practices and identification of citizens' needs in the design of e-Government services and allocation of resources
			- Deals with delivery of e-services as an instrument to achieve the MDGs-- reporting the newest/ most advanced technological applications in problem-areas such as employment services for poverty eradication, ...
			-UN Committee of Experts in Public Administration recognized that other international organizations, such as OECD, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum are currently used these indicators in their own reports
			- Adopts a pro-active role, calling for a global agreement on consistent framework for measuring development in e-Government

Source: Independent expert panel review of the quality of DESA's key publications, see methodology footnote.

20. Finally, in addition to being seen as useful by a variety of stakeholders and recognized as containing leading indicators, DPADM reports that its E-Government Survey has contributed to the promotion of citizen trust in national governments. DPADM reports that its e-Government work is providing a vehicle that is being used by governments to enhance transparency through the free sharing of government data. Specifically, DPADM argues that, to the extent that e-Government indicators are based on common and open standards applied across national governments, citizen power to question the actions of regulators in their own countries and bring systemic issues to the forefront is potentially increased.

### **B. DPADM has developed a web-based professional network and knowledge-sharing platforms to promote enhanced global public administration capacity**

21. In keeping with the Division's new emphasis on providing concrete tools to its constituents, DPADM has developed significant online resources. This orientation, like its focus on e-Government, represents not only the Division's commitment to a "toolkit" approach but also its belief in ICT as the cornerstone for effective governance and public administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

22. By gathering public administration documents in one place, UNPAN and UNPACS have increased the transparency of governance issues and challenges coming out of various countries across the globe. Stakeholders expressed appreciation for this dedication to promoting the free exchange of information and indicated that they would see value in expanding the types of documents and other data available. This included an endorsement by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration who indicated that UNPACS was useful and relevant and encouraged DPADM to go further to use this tool in even more innovative ways that would increase its value beyond its current repository-type benefits.

23. A primary audience is the community of public administration professionals around the world, including national government managers. Specifically, one key audience for these resources are members of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), a web-based group of regional and national public administration institutions and the individuals that lead them. The UNPAN network now encompasses 29 relevant international and regional institutions and United Nations related agencies, which contribute regularly with valuable content, news and discussions. The UNPAN network itself was initiated in 1999 in response to a General Assembly request. The website (<http://www.unpan.org/>) and associated resources have been growing since that time. They now include academic and journalistic articles, discussion boards, photo and video clip libraries, member directories, copies of various professional standards and codes of conduct, links to relevant sites, and an online training centre offering a dozen or more electronic courses. The online training centre delivered 21 online capacity-building courses on public administration during 2010, free of charge to participants around the globe. In particular, a new course --"Introduction to Citizen Engagement in Public Governance for the Realization of the MDGs"-- was developed by DPADM in 2010. The UNPAN site also presents an online, searchable version of the e-Government survey. Stakeholders interviewed, including several in the developing world, expressed a high level of

satisfaction with the quality of the resources provided through the UNPAN website. Based on an OIOS review of the site, overall, the articles, tools, and courses it offered were clear and easy to navigate.

24. In addition to the UNPAN resources, DPADM staff have been developing the United Nations Public Administration Country Studies (UNPACS), an online knowledge management platform containing reports, articles, data bases, and other content on the following four topic areas<sup>23</sup>:

- Institution and Human Resources Management
- Electronic and Mobile Government
- Citizen Engagement in Managing Development Programme
- Open Government Data

25. The intended audience is the public at large. Entries to the UNPACS website are publicly available documents representing research originating from the countries the research addresses and include original research or analysis by DPADM staff. DPADM also adds value through its consolidation and presentation of the documents in a centralized and accessible manner. The documents themselves tend to feature the public administration experiences of various developed and developing countries, with an emphasis on lessons learned.

26. Overall, the focus on e-Government and ICT knowledge management has had benefits; stakeholders reported that DPADM's current work brings an important value added in the arena of knowledge management development.

### **C. More effort was needed by DPADM to further clarify strategic focus and work priorities**

27. While many external stakeholders expressed appreciation for, in particular, DPADM's focus on e-Government and ICT to support public administration capacity building, within DPADM internal work remained to clarify and adapt to the three new DPADM strategic focus areas.

28. DPADM's overall objective outlined in its Strategic Framework is broad and open to interpretation. In the previous biennium, DPADM's work programme came under question as a result of the perception that it was engaged in numerous technical cooperation projects, not all of which had clear terms of reference and objectives. Furthermore, the cost-benefit equation and achievement of results associated with some of these earlier projects was questioned. To address these risks, the current management of DPADM took initiative to re-evaluate its mandate and strategically re-think how it invests its resources. The development of a more explicitly focused

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<sup>23</sup> The topical areas listed in the text have been updated based on DPADM's formal comments on the OIOS draft report. At the time of OIOS' original data collection the topical areas were: [Electronic and Mobile Government](#); [Institution and HR Development](#); [Citizen Engagement](#); [Knowledge Management in Government](#); and, [ICTs for Millennium Development Goals](#).

DPADM work programme with more concrete outputs became the priority. DPADM is currently in a transitional phase with regard to achieving staff buy-in, adapting individual work plans and efficiently matching its human resource capacity to its new strategic focus areas, including its focus on e-Government and ICT to support public administration capacity building.

***DPADM’s Strategic Framework and website information do not provide a clear picture of the current priorities of the DPADM work programme***

29. Like its Strategic Framework overall objective, the three DPADM expected accomplishments outlined in the current 2010-2011 DPADM Strategic Framework, are unexpectedly broad when considered in the context of the three targeted areas DPADM has committed to focus on (see para. 12 for three DPADM focus areas). See Table 3 below for an overview of DPADM’s Strategic Framework objective and expected accomplishments.

<b>Table 3: Summary Overview of DPADM Strategic Framework<sup>24</sup></b>	
<b>Overall Objective</b>	To promote effective, efficient, accountable, participatory and transparent public administration...
<b>Expected Accomplishment A:</b>	Enriched dialogue on improved understanding of the issues related to public administration, participatory governance, capacity building and promotion of professionalism...
<b>Expected Accomplishment B:</b>	Enhanced knowledge and improved exchange of innovations and good practices in the area of public administration, participatory governance and knowledge.
<b>Expected Accomplishment C:</b>	Increased capacity of national governments to strengthen participatory governance, professionalism and accountability in the public sector for improved performance...

Source – Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011, 14 March 2008, Subprogramme 8, Department of Public Administration and Development Management, A/63/6 (Prog.7)

30. In addition, the activities that DPADM management and staff engaged in do not align clearly with the expected accomplishments in the Division’s Strategic Framework. Many staff reported being heavily engaged in what they perceived as narrowly focused e-Government and ICT activities, resulting in a perceived contrast between the broadly focused Strategic Framework and staff activities being undertaken. In interviews many staff reported a lack of clarity on the linkages between the day to day work the Division was performing and achievement of these expected accomplishments.

<sup>24</sup> [A/63/6 \(Prog. 7\)](#) 14 March 2008 Proposed Strategic Framework 2011-2012.



31. DPADM's website contributes additional pertinent information on the current strategic focus and activities of DPADM, while at the same time showing evidence of unresolved tensions.<sup>25</sup> It describes the Division's "mission statement" fairly narrowly, as follows: "DPADM assists the Member States of the United Nations in fostering efficient, effective, transparent, accountable and citizen-centric public administrations and public services through innovation and technology". Then, subsequently, under the heading of "What We Do," the DPADM website provides a long and broadly constructed list that includes four groupings: i) support for intergovernmental processes, ii) comparative policy research and analysis, iii) information sharing and training programmes; and, iv) advisory services. Each of these four groupings implies a large range of potential activities, many of which seem to carry with them the risk of pulling the Division away from the "innovation and technology niche" that its website mission statement outlines. A related risk- the potential for resource investment in ill-defined projects that overlap with entities such as UNDP or the United Nations Secretariat Department of Peacekeeping- is also evident. For example, reference is made to the general availability of "upon request DPADM advisory services" to "help strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition" and to provide "assessments and policy proposals concerning governance systems".<sup>26</sup> Information on how DPADM's contributions align with any development work of other United Nations entities appeared to be lacking.

32. As will be discussed further in Result E of this evaluation report, CEPA experts also identified problems associated with an unclear DPADM mission. They raised the question of how DPADM is defining its "development management" objective. They further indicated that the lack of clarity surrounding this issue adversely affected CEPA experts' ability to add value in support of relevant DPADM activities. They indicated that, in simplistic terms, if the CEPA members were not clear on what DPADM was seeking to do, they did not see how they could effectively support relevant efforts. (See Result E para. 48 to 53 for further details.) DPADM has noted that the Division conducted its reform exercise after it defined its Strategic Framework for the 2010-2011 biennium and that the 2012- 2013 proposed Strategic Framework Expected Accomplishments have been "refined with a sharper focus."<sup>27</sup>

***Internally, there was a lack of common understanding surrounding DPADM's work programme and priorities***

33. Shared vision and cohesion within the subprogramme itself was incomplete. At the time of data collection, DPADM management and staff lacked a common understanding on the appropriate priorities for the Division. For example, they reported a lack of common agreement on whether the Division should be narrowly focused on e-Government, or whether it should focus more broadly on other aspects of its mandate. Additionally, a lack of understanding and agreement existed in a number of substantive areas regarding both work project goals and method utilization.

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<sup>25</sup> In conversations after the formal OIOS data collection period, DPADM management indicated its intention to update the website, which may clarify issues related to some OIOS results outlined in this paragraph.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/Home/WhatWeDo/tabid/555/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

<sup>27</sup> 6 May 2011 Comments by DPADM on the Draft Evaluation Report of OIOS on DPADM/UNDESA page 1.

34. For example, as indicated above, DPADM was entrusted by the United Nations General Assembly in late 1999 to bring public administration into cyberspace by developing the United Nations Administration Network (UNPAN).<sup>28</sup> However, among DPADM staff, there were negative perceptions about the amount of time and work invested in the related UNPACS initiative. One representative staff quote was: “*there is a misuse of staff expertise, [with] too much energy put into the UNPACS; not all staff should have to be involved*”. It was also noted by another DPADM staff member that “*as the focus on UNPACS grew, many other [relevant] issues were no longer discussed.*” According to DPADM staff and managers interviewed, as well as an analysis of DPADM work planning documents, significant staff resources have been dedicated to building up the content of UNPACS, with staff at multiple levels and across branches participating in finding and uploading articles as part of their responsibilities. The extensive integration of UNPACS into the work of many Division staff has received mixed reviews from the staff involved.

35. Also, the majority of management interviewees (9 of 14) made comments similar to the following: “we are narrowly focused on e-Government. A few staff in key positions shared perceptions similar to the following one: “*The branch priorities are only one and that is hurting us because we would like to do more. Now, we are assisting Member States to develop transparency mechanisms and citizen engagement, [with this e-Government focus] but our [actual] mandate is broadly focused on development management in general. Stakeholders and the OUSG want more...*”

***DPADM staff skills and skill development were not yet aligned with the new focus***

36. Related to a lack of clarity on the specific parameters of DPADM’s current focus, a number of staff and management interviewees indicated that DPADM had not yet succeeded in adapting the skill sets of its staff to the Division’s new targeted focus areas. Specifically, some management interviewees commented that skills in the area of “research and analysis” were lacking. These management interviewees indicated that staff were still oriented to technical cooperation, project management and organization of meetings in contrast to the research and analysis tasks that e-Government work necessitates. On the staff member side, almost 40 per cent (8 of 21) of staff member interviewees volunteered statements indicating that their skills did not match the job description and functions they were expected to perform. In addition, some current staff were hired for their regional knowledge and remain oriented to a regional approach which does not, in some regards, align with the Division’s new focus. These factors, combined, create a risk that the quality of results that DPADM has the capacity to achieve will be negatively affected by a mismatch between skills needed and those possessed by staff. In addition, staff interviewees reported a related perception that management had not provided sufficient support for the achievement of a productive working atmosphere as staff tasks evolved and that this had led to some decreased staff morale -- 38 per cent of DPADM staff survey respondents reported that morale was excellent or very good, 19 per cent reported fair morale and the remaining 43 per cent reported poor or very poor staff morale. See illustrative staff and management interview perceptions in the following box.

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<sup>28</sup> [A/RES/50/225](#).

*“Staff don’t have the skills they need to fulfil their functions”*

*“Their [staff] profiles reflect the history of the organization and not the future needs. They don’t have the right skills for the new challenges”*

*“Management needs to (...) make sure the staff have the skills that are required to do the job”*

*“If the office is not motivated, it doesn’t work – this is a key problem.”*

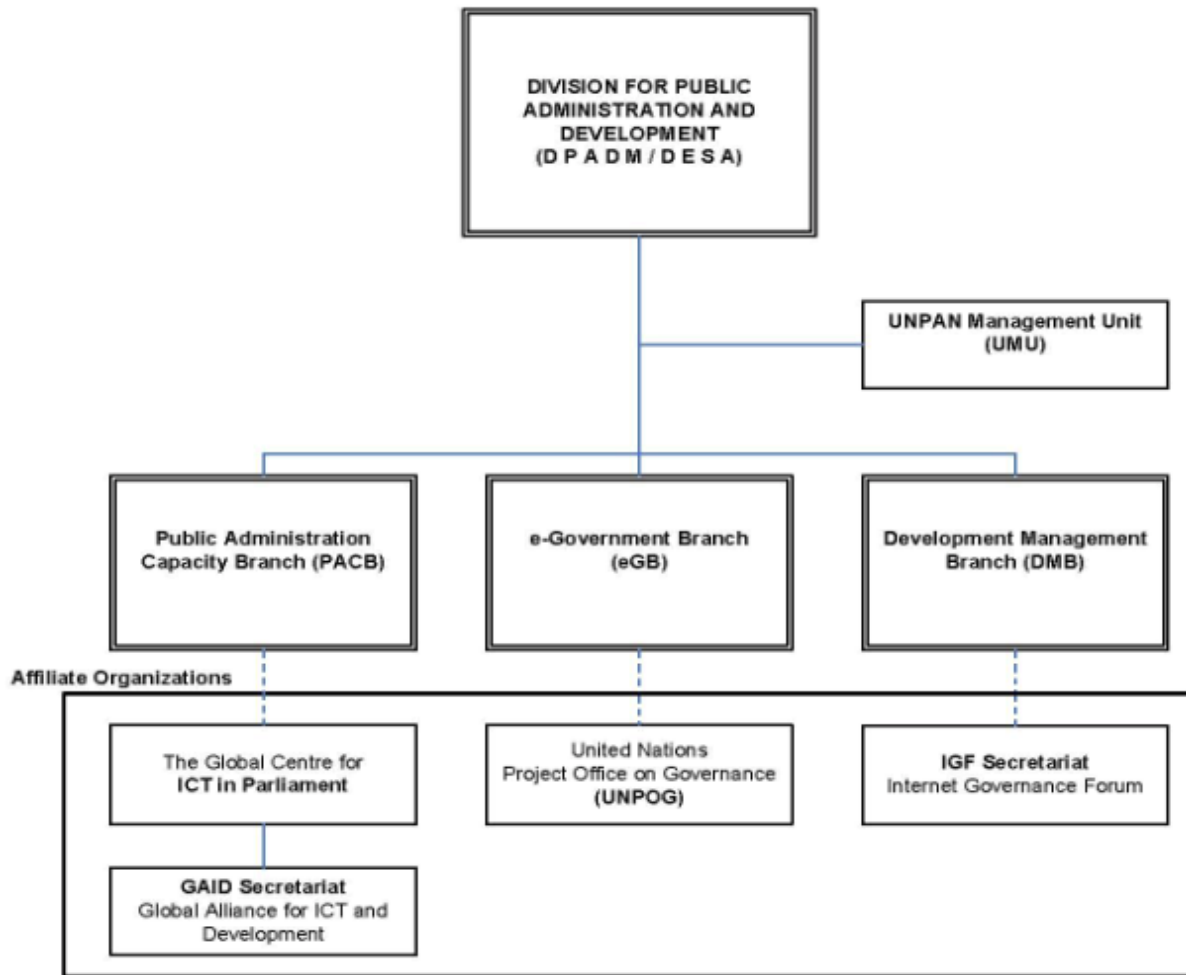
***Questions also existed on the distinction of roles associated with the different branches of DPADM***

37. According to the DPADM website, the thematic focus of the three branches within the Division is divided as follows:

- a. Public administration capacity, including e-Governance, managed by the Public Administration Capacity Branch;
- b. E-Government managed by the e-Government Branch; and,
- c. Development management and citizen engagement, particularly through the use of ICTs to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the MDG’s, managed by the Development Management Branch.

This DPADM structure is reflected in Chart A.

**Chart A: DPADM Organizational Structure**



Source: DESA- DPADM, April 2011

38. There is a lack of clarity on how the organizational structure of DPADM aligned with the Division’s overall goals and work approaches. Based on interviews with DPADM management and staff and an analysis of the DPADM website, it was not clear how the current organizational structure supported implementation of the three focus areas DPADM has established. It remains unclear how the work of the branches is distinctly different, as well as how coordination and coherence between branches is achieved. Additionally, DPADM’s organizational structure does not seem to be aligned with its Strategic Framework.

39. The descriptions provided of the different thematic focus areas related to the three DPADM branches did not seem to be thematically different and distinct. As an example, according to the DPADM website, the Public Administration Capacity Branch is responsible for “e-Governance” while “e-Government” is managed by the e-Government branch. In interviews, several staff members stated that inter-branch cooperation and coordination could be improved noting a lack of shared knowledge on work processes, mission reports and analytical reports. Furthermore, DPADM managers referred to the same objectives and thematic areas -- e-

Governance, improving citizen participation and how to use technology-- without distinguishing how the work of the branches was distinct, how it is was interrelated or how a coordinated approach was being implemented. DPADM staff raised their own questions about the relevance and status of work being performed. For example, questions were raised about both the Secretariat- Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) and the Secretariat- Internet Governance Forum (IGF) portions of the DPADM's organizational structure. Some staff were not clear on their mandates and Director-level interviewees acknowledged that GAID and IGF represented "challenges" for DPADM, indicating that these initiatives did not come with additional financial or human resources. The logic of the current organizational structure is not self-evident. *DPADM management has commented that with "today's understanding of public administration, e-Governance (but not e-Government) and information communication technology are cross-cutting themes which support the work of public administration and development management."*<sup>29</sup>

40. Another recurring topic in interviews with DPADM staff and managers was the lack of cooperation across DESA Divisions. Despite attempts by senior management in DESA to improve coherence and collaboration within the Department, such as forming the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) and the Capacity Development Office (CDO), opportunities for collaboration and complementarities between DPADM and other DESA Divisions were not sufficiently developed.

**D. DPADM's role with regard to capacity development work was also unclear, both within the Division and to some partner entities**

41. Historically, DPADM has been one of the key DESA subprogrammes with capacity development responsibilities (formerly technical cooperation). As such, its current work suffers from challenges related to a lack of clarity on the Department's current capacity development role. One of DESA's challenges is that it does not have a field presence similar to that of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies that are part of the operational activities for development and Resident Coordinator system. In part to address related challenges, DESA established a Capacity Development Office (CDO) in February 2009 and has a Department-wide Capacity Development Steering Committee which includes all DESA Division directors. The goal of these entities is to spearhead development and implementation of a coherent DESA-wide strategy for capacity development activities. (The Department's draft development strategy statement includes "Public administration and ICT for development, including e-Government" as one of its five thematic priority areas for capacity development work.)

42. Comments from DPADM staff interviewees and DPADM stakeholders alike were not yet consistent with the framework laid out in DESA's draft capacity development document. Capacity development was not mentioned by DPADM staff, management or stakeholders when discussing DPADM's current strengths or comparative advantage. Although DPADM management estimates that current resources are split equally among the three DPADM focus areas, many DPADM interviewees perceived that more and more DPADM resources each year are being dedicated to producing the E-Government Survey and performing related work with

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<sup>29</sup> 6 May 2011 Comments by DPADM on the Draft Evaluation Report of OIOS on DPADM/UNDESA page 1.

governments after its publication.<sup>30</sup> This work was not viewed by many DPADM staff as sufficiently fulfilling DPADM's capacity development mandate. One DPADM manager stated "...how to do capacity development is what DPADM could provide [to governments]; we are losing good opportunities here", while one key stakeholder told OIOS that "It would be welcomed and helpful if DPADM would be able to work more closely with the government on the ground level." There were a total of four DPADM development account projects for the period 2007-2011. The budget for these projects ranged from 249,700 US dollars to 670,800 US dollars.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, only 15 per cent (4 of 27) DPADM stakeholder survey respondents indicated that DPADM provided capacity development assistance to their entity.

43. DESA and DPADM level discussions on the future role of inter-regional advisors (IRAs) is emblematic of the transitional growing pains that DPADM is experiencing with regard to its capacity development role. The evolving role of DESA within the larger capacity development arena has resulted in a lack of shared internal vision on DPADM's current role, including the appropriate work methods and number of IRAs. (In each of the last three years DPADM has had either 5 or 6 IRAs).<sup>32</sup> A recent DPADM publication included the following description:

*Historically, the public administration expert advisors (IRA's) and professional staff provided technical assistance at the country, regional and international level. However, as administrative systems and national capacity at country level began to mature and improve, there was less demand for outside experts. Although the programme continues to provide advisory services requested by specific countries, this is today done at a more reduced level than in the past. Further, while the project-based long-term advisory services and short-term consultancies have declined significantly, the advisory services that are provided today by DPADM have transitioned to more specialized advice in areas such as information technology. As an example, the Division has been providing online advisory services since 2001 through the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN).*

44. The Capacity Development Office (CDO) provides related context, indicating that "the number of IRAs was historically much higher than today largely because the key role of DESA predecessor departments was to perform as an Executing Agency in providing technical assistance to countries (portfolio ranged between 100-200 million USD). Therefore, the number of advisers needed to support that portfolio was high..." At the same time, CDO notes that it expects increased funding for DESA's capacity development projects going forward.<sup>33</sup>

45. Some DPADM managers and staff provided OIOS with views that differed somewhat with the information outlined in the paras above, thus indicating a lack of shared vision on DESA and DPADM's evolving capacity development role. These interviewees emphasized perceptions that DPADM's current capacity development role should be more closely tied to the "historic" technical cooperation model and raised concerns about "unmet technical cooperation

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<sup>30</sup>Resource split Information provided to OIOS from DPADM in correspondence dated 18 May 2011.

<sup>31</sup>Information provided to OIOS from DPADM in correspondence dated 18 May 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Information provided to OIOS from DPADM in correspondence dated 18 May 2011--2009-5 IRAs; 2010-6 IRAs; 2011- 5 IRAs.

<sup>33</sup> Information in this para. is based on DESA management email response (28 February 2011) to OIOS request for information on the current number of IRA posts in DESA.

demands” and “high IRA vacancy rates.” Their perspectives seemed more orientated to DPADM’s past work programme.

46. Interviewee comments also pointed to a number of important open questions for which a cohesive DESA-DPADM vision did not appear to exist yet. There appeared to be a lack of mutual understanding with regard to how capacity development demands would be identified within the context of the new capacity development strategy, and what the role of IRAs would be going forward. Some DPADM staff and managers reported the role of the IRAs being shifted to analytical tasks which they did not perceive to be related to capacity development. They further perceived that the operational experience of the IRAs is not being integrated into the new focus of DPADM. In one DPADM interview with OIOS it was stated that *“It started in the 60s with the idea that the Secretariat should have direct impact in the field. In the 70s ...150 advisers... now down to 18. No, DESA cannot have this impact in the technical assistance and capacity development area anymore. There is discussion on what can we do with this small group of IRAs... the CDO and the Divisions have different ideas about the roles of the IRAs. Divisions see IRAs just as normal staff members; IRAs should not be asked just to contribute to the data bases”*. DESA-wide and DPADM steps are in progress to address the lack of shared vision. As part of the Department’s overall capacity development strategy, the IRA job profile has been updated and DPADM has recently documented a Division-specific strategy for “Capacity Development and Use of Inter-Regional Advisors (IRAs)”.<sup>34</sup>

47. Based on OIOS field mission interviews and other data, additional strategic thinking and DESA-wide buy-in is also needed to clearly determine how the work of DESA-DPADM can be structured to complement the capacity development work of the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and other United Nations system field based entities. For example, DPADM’s public administration/capacity development work potentially overlaps with work being performed within the context of UNDP’s good governance programme. Many field mission interviewees and United Nations system entity head interviewees told OIOS that they thought DESA needed to improve coordination with UNDP and the country teams in the area of capacity development work. Specifically, a few of these interviewees indicated that DESA needed to take additional measures to improve clarity with regard to its intended role and also needed to work further to reduce overlap with other United Nations development entities such as UNDP and UNIDO. A few high-level entity head interviewees further specified that “DESA has a niche in the Secretariat, not as a development agency, but as a potential coordinator” and that “when they coordinate and disseminate normative information, we benefit from it.” OIOS interviews and survey responses showed only limited evidence of collaborative work in this regard. Additionally, CEPA members raised the need for further coordination between DPADM with other United Nations development entities as a suggestion for improvement at the 2010 annual CEPA meeting.

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<sup>34</sup> An excerpt from the current DPADM formulated strategy (based on the version provided to OIOS 18 May 2011) follows: ... “IRAs are central and critical to the work of DPADM in Public Administration Capacity Development and provision of technical advisory services, normative work and analytical research of the Division. IRAs identify and assess the capacity development needs from the field and feed them into the normative documents that DPADM prepares either for the CEPA, ECOSOC and/or the General Assembly deliberations. Vice versa, IRAs are informed by the analytical research that DPADM conducts and they feed these findings into the advice they provide to the Member States in the field. ...”

**E. DPADM has not sufficiently utilized the Committee of Public Administration Experts to increase its impact**

48. Since its conversion from a group into a full-fledged Committee of 24 international public administration experts in 2001, CEPA has been meeting annually to provide guidelines on public administration issues related to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

***DPADM has not sufficiently utilized the expertise of CEPA members***

49. As indicated earlier, DPADM has the opportunity to utilize guidance from CEPA, whose intergovernmental mandate is to provide policy advice to ECOSOC on matters pertaining to public administration and implementation of internationally agreed development goals. Some evidence indicates that DPADM has not sufficiently utilized CEPA expertise.

50. OIOS interviewed several of the CEPA Committee members and, although most praised DPADM for its service to the global community with emphasis on responsible governing, e-Governance, improving civic engagement and promoting the United Nations public administration award, all 5 CEPA member interviewees raised some concerns as well. CEPA Committee experts raised questions on whether DPADM is making sufficient use of the group's expertise, with a number of those interviewed volunteering that the group is "*ready and willing to contribute*" in ways that have not been tapped into. Several shared their perception that, in particular, DPADM should maintain more consistent interactions with CEPA throughout the year. They indicated that this would promote the usefulness of the Committee and increase the impact the CEPA expert group can have, as compared against the current situation where most contact occurs during the week long annual meeting in New York. CEPA expert interviewees also reported a need for clarification by DPADM on its expectations for members, including the role Committee members should play to support DPADM's work to promote better governance through improved public administration.

51. OIOS's observation and analysis of the information exchanged during the 2010 CEPA annual meeting in New York provided further evidence that DPADM is missing some opportunities to enhance the Division's capacity to provide governments with public administration expertise from this group of international experts. During the annual meeting, it was revealed there was a need to clarify expectations, as well as the roles and responsibilities associated with the DPADM-CEPA working relationship. For example, the Chair of CEPA requested a definition of "development management" from the Chief of the relevant DPADM branch, specifying that having a better understanding of this, particularly within the context of the varying levels of development across Member States, would better enable CEPA experts to contribute effectively. Another CEPA expert raised the issue that, regardless of the level of DPADM internal resources, it was clear that the branch needed to leverage the expertise available through the CEPA Committee to maximize resources. And, the CEPA Committee Chair commented that, in order for DPADM to be effective in its work, there was an outstanding need for it to clarify its comparative advantages over other entities working on similar issues in the development arena.



52. CEPA expert interviewees expressed their perspective that another way in which DPADM could be more proactive would be to utilize them with a more regional and national focus. Committee members pointed out that it is important for them to be able to interact with other experts and relevant stakeholders in a given country. Therefore, it would be helpful for DPADM to outline guidelines to facilitate this and to assist in developing arrangements for CEPA Committee Members to pursue these kinds of interactions on behalf of the United Nations Secretariat. Committee members made proposals for CEPA experts to host relevant sessions at the regional and national level under the umbrella of the United Nations. At present, a lack of agreement appears to exist, with DPADM management indicating that “CEPA Members are appointed in their personal capacity and there is, therefore, limited provision for CEPA Members to represent the United Nations Secretariat in this context.”<sup>35</sup> The 2010 CEPA Committee meeting also included suggestions for a “more results oriented” approach to future Committee meetings and other interactions, as well as more utilization of CEPA expert input to enhance the quality of DPADM publications.

53. Finally, CEPA experts suggested that the Division concentrate on leveraging its minimal resources through collaborations with other entities within the United Nations (for example, UNDP, ILO, World Bank, ADB, OECD). They suggested that DPADM engage more actively in discussions with these entities to improve the quality of discussions and debates on public administration issues as they relate to development. CEPA experts further suggested that there was potential for DPADM to utilize CEPA experts in this regard. While some budget constraints exist and further collaborative work continued during the recent 2011 CEPA annual meeting, room for improvement continues to exist.

#### **F. Better results monitoring and increased promotion of DPADM’s work were needed to increase its impact**

##### ***Open questions exist on whether DPADM is sufficiently monitoring the impact of its projects***

54. DPADM’s work in support of international development goals has included supporting Member States’ development agendas by enhancing public administration capacity and supporting ITC capacity (MDG 8F) in the context of e-Government work. Measuring the impact of the work that can be attributed to DPADM in the public administration arena is challenging, especially with regard to the achievement of more broadly defined internationally agreed development goals. Although several interviewees referred to the indirect contribution DPADM has had through its work to facilitate improvement of the public services, a representative staff member commented that “*the direct achievements toward MDG’s are done by countries, we can only support the countries*”.

55. Overall, DPADM staff/management and stakeholder interviewees indicated that they were not convinced that DPADM was doing enough to effectively measure the results of its work. DPADM was not unique in this regard, as referenced in the OIOS DESA-wide companion report; this was an area for improvement DESA-wide. Some of the comments OIOS received are referenced in the following box:

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<sup>35</sup>6 May 2011 Comments by DPADM on the Draft Evaluation Report of OIOS on DPADM/UNDESA page 2.

*“We should undertake impact assessment, impact evaluation. There hasn’t been enough of this, even at the project level....and no sharing of lessons learned.”*

*“I’m unclear on what is the end result of the data bases. I don’t fully understand what the benefit is for the beneficiaries.”*

*“We will show that we 100 per cent achieved the objectives, but will this mean that we had an impact on improving public administration in some countries? We won’t be able to measure this”*

***Some stakeholders cite missed opportunities for promotion of DPADM work that affect DPADM’s impact in the development arena***

56. A lack of promotion of DPADM’s work, including some of its publications, is seen by some stakeholders as adversely affecting DPADM accomplishments. Although the E-Government Survey scored high in quality and has become a well known product, several stakeholder interviewees commented that, overall, the work of DPADM would be used more if awareness of it were raised further. These stakeholders suggested a more proactive approach with, for instance, an e-newsletter and more use of e-mail alerts publicizing new DPADM publications available online. As one stakeholder commented, *“In my view, DPADM does really important work but I am less sure that the resources [it can provide] are actually known and that the impact of their work is well enough promoted”*. High-level and field mission interviewee comments also indicated that, if DPADM’s work were promoted more strategically, external partners would be more aware of its work, thus increasing their receptivity to partner with DPADM.

***DPADM does have evidence that it is mainstreaming gender and human rights perspectives into the work of Division***

57. The majority of DPADM staff survey respondents (23 of 29) reported that they perceived the Division to be somewhat or very effective at mainstreaming a gender perspective into its work, while 10 of 14 management interviewees and 6 of 8 staff interviewees also reported success in this area. A number of interviewees credited some of this success to the fact that DPADM had an active gender focal point within the Division.

58. DPADM staff survey respondents, as well as staff and management interviewees provided evidence that DPADM is mainstreaming gender and human rights perspectives into the Division’s work. Staff interviewees pointed out that a number of DPADM reports have sections devoted to the study of disability and gender issues. Specific examples include the following: the E-Government survey has one of its three theme areas dedicated to “inclusiveness, including the inclusion of women and those who are disabled”; DPADM and the United Nations Development Fund for Women – UNIFEM/UN Women signed an agreement in 2011 to collaborate and jointly manage a new United Nations Public Service Award on “Promoting

gender responsive delivery of public services”; and, DPADM produced an ECOSOC Note by the Secretariat on “ICT and Gender Equality: New Opportunities and Challenges for Public Administration to Implement the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs.” Also, DPADM has done training on the gender aspects of public administration, including a module on citizen engagement that encompassed consideration of gender equality for the achievement of MDGs. Finally, the Division highlights countries where national constitutions give equal rights to women.

## V. Conclusion

59. Over the last few biennium, DPADM has done much good work to identify a relevant public administration development niche and strategically focus its efforts accordingly. By doing so, it has successfully achieved a number of positive external impacts. In particular, the Division’s E-Government Survey publication is widely recognized by stakeholders as both credible and useful. This publication and related work is actively adding value to the body of work that United Nations system entities contribute to Member States’ development efforts, including the achievement of the MDGs such as MDG 8F—a global partnership for development with ... benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.

60. Given the breath of the issues that DESA subprogrammes cover and the number of entities operating in the economic and social arena, each DESA subprogramme’s willingness to take an explicit look at how they can best contribute is likely to be closely correlated with that subprogrammes’ achievement of impact. DPADM’s e-Government and other ICT work demonstrate the successful implementation of just such an explicit effort to identify a unique area and methods by which to add value. DPADM deserves significant credit for this accomplishment. The Division also should be acknowledged for its identification of two other targeted focus areas—“Institutional and Human Resource Development” and “Development Management Through Citizen Engagement”.

61. In order for DPADM to continue to add value, the Division needs to further consider a number of more internally focused issues and take needed actions. Within the context of DESA’s department-wide and evolving strategic thinking, the focus and boundaries of DPADM’s capacity development role needs more thought, definition and specificity. Also, in order for its capacity development work to be operationalized effectively, a higher degree of shared vision must be achieved, on multiple levels—within DPADM, between DPADM and other DESA offices, between DPADM and CEPA, and between DESA and its Regional Commission and other United Nations key partners. At the present time, colleagues are approaching capacity development work with a variety of contrasting assumptions and frameworks, resulting in inefficiencies and contributing to morale problems. As a primary example, agreement on the future role of IRAs, including the type of capacity development work they will perform and the work methods that will be utilized, needs priority attention.

62. DPADM also needs to consider how to further utilize the unique strengths associated with its status as a DESA subprogramme in a manner that increases its impact. One of DESA’s

comparative advantages is its involvement in the parliamentary processes of the United Nations at the highest levels. DPADM should further tap into these opportunities to advance its work. Such an effort would logically begin with better utilization of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and continue with additional consideration of ways to align its work with that of ECOSOC and other parliamentary processes. Further work also needs to be done to clarify DPADM's role with other United Nations system entities and to pursue the feasibility of well targeted development work partnerships.

63. The current lack of clarity on DPADM's other two focus areas and the mismatch between DPADM's focus on e-Government development work and the skill sets and orientation of some of its staff, is, in some ways, most instructive of what DPADM management should do next. Addressing these internal challenges that the Division now faces needs to take top priority. While external successes have been accomplished through the Division's new narrower three prong strategic focus, unresolved issues now threaten the foundation that these accomplishments rest on. Without more cross Divisional buy-in; attention to staff skill development; further specification on how DPADM defines its capacity development role; and, internal agreement on work methods, DPADM's capacity to achieve future results is at risk. For example, a significant lack of consensus is likely to result in inefficiencies that negatively affect productivity. And, DPADM's ability to tap into the advantages of collaboration with other United Nations system entity partners will also be at risk, if the Division cannot be positioned on the stable foundation that internal consensus promotes.

## **VI. Recommendations**

64. Based on the results above, OIOS makes the following 4 recommendations to DESA-DPADM:

### **Recommendation 1: Further clarify DPADM strategic focus, work priorities and work methods**

(See Result B and C, paras. 21-40)

65. DPADM should build upon the strategic work it has done to target the focus of the Division's work. This should include clarifying priorities and the boundaries within which DPADM projects will operate. This should be done with the goal of internal consensus building in mind.

66. In doing so DESA-DPADM should consider:

- A. Further evaluate the subprogramme's current Strategic Framework with the goal of more closely aligning expected accomplishments with targeted work to be undertaken;
- B. Updating information on the DPADM's website to improve alignment with specific activities being undertaken;

- C. Clarifying the specific role that DPADM will undertake with regard to its capacity development work, especially addressing questions such as:
- How will DPADM capacity development work be identified within the context of DPADM's work priorities and the new DESA-wide capacity development strategy?
  - What will be the role and work methods of the DPADM IRAs be going forward?
- D. Evaluating the Division's current organizational structure with consideration of the following:
- Consider changes to the structure that will support the work programme DPADM intends to carry out;
  - Clarify the work objectives of the branches, including clarifying the distinctiveness of each branch;
  - Identify how Divisional staff within each branch will coordinate their work to: maximize efficiencies and complementarities; reduce duplication and overlap; and, improve knowledge sharing and lesson learning.

**Recommendation 2: Develop a framework to improve human resource management that includes a plan for further skill development of current staff, as well as future recruitment that will facilitate alignment between DPADM's identified work priorities and its human resource capacity.**

(See Result C, para. 36)

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen partnership with CEPA, in particular. Also, strengthen current work by identifying key opportunities to capitalize on the work being undertaken by other intergovernmental entities and United Nations system entities such as UNDP and the Regional Commissions.**

(See Result E, paras. 48-53)

67. In doing so DESA-DPADM should consider:

A. With regard to its joint work with CEPA, DPADM:

- Clarifying the expectations DPADM has of CEPA, including the role CEPA should play to support DPADM's objective to promote improved governance through public administration;

- Strengthening interaction and coordination with CEPA, including creating mechanisms to maintain a more consistent interaction with CEPA throughout the year; and,
- Creating more opportunities for collaborative linkages between CEPA and other entities, possibly to include the promotion of regionally and nationally focused opportunities.

**Recommendation 4: Improve results measurement mechanisms to better determine impact of DPADM's work.**

(See Result F, paras. 54-56)

68. In doing so DESA-DPADM should consider:

- Undertaking one or more impact assessment evaluations of its key work programme projects;
  - Further revising its Strategic Framework expected accomplishments to capture, at a lower level of detail, the accomplishments resulting from DPADM's work programme; and/or,
  - Implementing a limited number of new monitoring mechanisms.
-

## **Annex A**

In this Annex, OIOS presents the full text of comments received from DPADM-DESA on the draft evaluation report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM). This practice has been instituted as per General Assembly [resolution 54/263](#) following the recommendation of the [Independent Audit Advisory Committee \(IAAC\)](#). Overall, DPADM concurred with our results and conclusions. The comments from DPADM on the draft OIOS report have been incorporated as appropriate into this final report.

### **Comments from DPADM on the draft report:**

TO: Mr. Yee Woo Guo  
A: Acting Director  
Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 27 May 2011

REFERENCE: DESA-11/00895

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

  
FROM: Juwang Zhu  
DE: Chief  
Office of the Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

SUBJECT: Draft report of OIOS on the Division for Public Administration and Development  
OBJET: Management

1. I refer to your memo of 20 May 2011 addressed to Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, transmitting the final draft report of OIOS on the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and inviting comments on the final draft.
2. DPADM expresses its appreciation for the evaluation and has requested the Office of Under-Secretary-General to transmit its comments (attached herewith) on the final draft.
3. On behalf of Mr. Sha Zukang, I would like to take this opportunity to thank IED/OIOS colleagues for your evaluation of DPADM/DESA.
4. We will follow up on the results of the evaluation and the recommendations.

Thank you.

cc: Ms. Carman L. Lapointe  
Mr. Byung-Kun Min  
Ms. Ellen Vinkey  
Ms. Haiyan Qian  
Mr. John-Mary Kauzya  
Mr. Wai Min Kwok  
Ms. Ursula Germann



## Comments by DPADM on the Evaluation Report of OIOS on DPADM/UNDESA

Date: 6 May 2011

### **Para. 24 (Page 15)**

The topical areas of the United Nations Public Administration Country Studies (UNPACS) have been updated since the audit period as follows:

- Institution and Human Resources Management
- Electronic and Mobile Government
- Citizen Engagement in Managing Development Programme
- Open Government Data

### **Para. 29 – 32 (Page 16 - 17)**

The three expected accomplishments (EAs) outlined in the current Strategic Framework 2010 – 2011 of DPADM were defined in 2008 before the reform exercise was conducted by the Division.

These EAs have been redefined with a sharper focus for the Strategic Framework 2012 – 2013.

### **Para. 33 - 40 (Page 17 - 20)**

As indicated in the report, there are three (3) focus areas in DPADM, with one for each of the 3 Executive Branches of the Division. Other than **e-Government development**, the other 2 work focus areas are: **(1) institutional and human resource development, and (2) citizen engagement in managing development programmes**. With the understanding of today's public administration, e-Governance (but not e-Government) and information communications technology (ICT) are cross-cutting themes which support the work of public administration and development management. Therefore, having ICT and e-Governance as part of the work focus for each Branch is not a contradiction to DPADM's overall work. It should be noted that e-Government is one specific focus under e-Governance and the work of e-Government is only carried out by the e-Government Branch.

Similarly, UNPACS, one of the major Divisional outputs in research and analysis, reflects the work of the entire Division, and should not be mistaken for focusing only on e-Government. For example, in terms of its fulfillment in developing the UNPACS, the Public Administration Capacity Branch (PACB) focused on human resource management starting with research on codes of conduct and legal frameworks governing the conduct of public servants in different countries. Based on the findings the Branch launched a programme on developing professionalism in the public service in the Africa region. It is clear that the Branch's involvement in developing UNPACS does not constitute a focus on e-Government. It is possible that such a misunderstanding still exists in DPADM and it is subject to intensive sustained communication to ensure a shared understanding.

DPADM was still in the transitional phase during the audit exercise, which may have led to the findings that not all staff members have reached the same level of understanding of the reform exercise. One other factor is that some staff members, at various levels, are new (less than a year of experience in DPADM at time of interview conducted by OIOS). These staff members may not have attained a full understanding of the vision and mission of DPADM.

**Para. 41-47 (Page 20-23)**

One can view and interpret that the entirety of DPADM's work is capacity building in the areas of public administration and development management. Integrating normative work, analytical research, advocacy, training and advisory services, DPADM leverages the synergy whereby its analytical research findings are invaluable inputs into the work of United Nations deliberative and legislative bodies as well as in policy and strategy decisions of the Member States who request for and benefit from technical advice at regional, national and local levels. As part of the Department's overall strategy, DPADM has formulated a strategy that guides capacity development and the use of its Interregional Advisors.

The following is an extract of this strategy: “**The strategy** highlights three important aspects to be considered: (i) IRAs are critical to the work of the Division in capacity-building and provision of advisory services to the Member States who request for support to strengthen various elements of their governance and public administration; (ii) the work of IRAs is crucial in integrating and creating synergies between the DPADM's work of advisory services, technical cooperation, analytical research and normative work”; (iii): The demand for Advisory services from the IRAs is fuelled by the impact of DPADM's past performance in helping strengthen governance and public administration capacities in various Member States.”

**Para. 48 - 53 (Page 23 - 24)**

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) provides policy advice to the ECOSOC and annually reviews the work programme of DPADM, thus providing programmatic guidance to DPADM.

DPADM has strategically worked with CEPA to go beyond this mandate and currently CEPA members are engaged in the programmatic and technical work of the Division, but this is limited due to constraints of budget and other resources.

However, contrary to the proposal for “CEPA experts to host relevant sessions at the regional and national level under the umbrella of the United Nations” (Para. 52), CEPA Members are appointed in their personal capacity and there is, therefore, limited provision for CEPA Members to represent the United Nations Secretariat in this context.