



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



## **Kick-off meeting for the project on expediting the use of technology and innovation for enhanced operations in Arab public institutions (ENACT)**

Webinar, Monday 20 March 2023, 10 am – 12.30 pm (Beirut time)

### **Preliminary Information Note**

#### **Background**

Worldwide countries, including Arab States, have been moving towards digital government in the public sector, however, COVID-19 changed the dynamic and left many countries scrambling to implement solutions to ensure access to and delivery of government services. The pandemic and the spread of emerging technologies pushed digital transformation of government to the forefront, forever highlighting its importance. Digital transformation is an important approach used to enhance government effectiveness and inclusiveness, to ensure citizen-centric service delivery governance and trust and to foster innovation in processes, planning and initiatives.

Even with the need for digital transformation highlighted during COVID-19, the success of e-government programmes and digital national strategies continues to vary between Arab countries. Even now, most countries have not yet exploited the full potential of digital technologies in public institutions. Indicators of the e-government, e-participation, and digital accessibility indexes, as well as selected ICT indicators, show that the inclusiveness, trust and availability and use of digital services require development in many Arab countries. Furthermore, the appropriate exploitation of digital technologies for the effective implementation of digital strategies requires innovative mechanisms and improved capabilities in many Arab countries.

The use of technology and innovation to improve the public sector cannot continue as reactions to specific situations and immediate needs. The effective and efficient use and deployment of both technology and innovation will require addressing the challenges posed by the changing demands of citizens and governments. The new ESCWA project on expediting the use of technology and innovation for enhanced operations in Arab public institutions (ENACT) focuses on strategic and innovative use and deployment of emerging technologies for the implementation of the national digital strategies.

The aim of the "ENACT" project is to provide member states with set of recommendations to accelerate the implementation of adopted strategies/plans in the public sector and facilitate the use of digital and emerging technologies and innovation for the advancement of the public sectors services and back-office operations. The focus of this project will fall on realizing critical aspects of the 2030 Agenda namely inclusiveness, trust and the responsiveness. More specifically, it also addresses target 16.6 (develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and target 17.7 (promoting the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies). The kick-off webinar is organized to launch the ENACT project in the region.

## Objective

The webinar presents the ENACT project, its goals and activities, and to discuss the priorities of member states, the focus areas and methodology to be adopted for the realization of this project. The collection of case studies on the use of technology and innovation will be launched during the meeting.

## Format

This kick-off meeting (webinar) for the project on "expediting the use of technology and innovation for enhanced operations in Arab public institutions (ENACT)" will be held online, via Zoom, and run for about 2 to 3 hours on 20 March 2023, starting at 10:00 am. It will be conducted in both Arabic and English languages and interpretation will be provided.

## Expected Results

The main outcome of the event is garner support for the ENACT project by familiarizing member States with the project and strengthen the collaboration between ESCWA and member States to obtain their insights, and input for best practices as well as their ideas for moving forward in the implementation of this project.

## Participation

The webinar will involve the participation of various stakeholders, including public officials and experts working in the areas of information and communication technology, digital government and administrative development. Participants will also include experts from the United Nations, international and regional organizations, academia and non-governmental organizations.

## Discussion topics

During the webinar the following topics will be discussed:

- Introduction to the project "expediting the use of technology and innovation for enhanced operations in Arab public institutions," including its purpose and activities.
- Priorities of member States and focus areas.
- Roles of member States and potential regional partners in the project.
- Briefing on the best practices for the [Arab Open and Innovative Government Portal](#).
- Launching a call for good practices in the use of technology and innovation in the public sector in member states.

## Event page and contacts

The event page is <https://www.unescwa.org/events/enact-project-kicks> and registration is through the [link](#).

Correspondences can be sent to Dr. Nibal Idlebi, Chief of Innovation Section and Project Manager, United Nations Economic Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), e-mail: [idlebi@un.org](mailto:idlebi@un.org). Administrative inquiries can be sent to Ms. Khadija Mansour, Administrative Assistant, ESCWA, e-mail: [mansour10@un.org](mailto:mansour10@un.org).