

UNPAN

UNPAN: A Portal of Public Administration and a Tool for Bridging the Digital Divide



The banner features a dark blue background with the United Nations logo in the center. Below the logo, the word "UNPAN" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Underneath "UNPAN" is the text "Global Online Network On Public Administration and Finance" in a smaller, white font. To the right of the logo, a curved line of seven small globe icons represents different regions: Africa, Middle East, Asia & Pacific, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, and North America. On the left side, a vertical list of services is displayed in white text: Discover UNPAN, Information Service, Training Service, Advisory Service, Conference Service, Worldwide Directory, What's New, and Contact Us. At the bottom of the banner, a blue bar contains the text "UNITED NATIONS ONLINE NETWORK IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE – UNPAN" in white, followed by the website address "www.unpan.org" in yellow.

Discover UNPAN
Information Service
Training Service
Advisory Service
Conference Service
Worldwide Directory
What's New
Contact Us

Africa
Middle East
Asia & Pacific
Europe
Latin America & Caribbean
North America

UNPAN
Global Online Network On Public Administration and Finance

UNITED NATIONS ONLINE NETWORK IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE –
UNPAN
www.unpan.org



United Nations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this day and age, information and communication technology is radically changing the way government and society function. This poses great challenges to all governments, but also provides excellent opportunities to many countries to leap-frog into a future of better governance and society. In response to these new challenges, the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, was entrusted by the General Assembly in late 1999 to develop an important programme entitled “**The United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN)**” for implementation.

UNPAN is, among many initiatives, designed to help countries concerned, especially developing countries and countries in economic transition, to seize the opportunity, respond to the challenge, and forge ahead for their development. The immediate objective of UNPAN is to establish an electronic platform linking the regional and national institutions devoted to public administration and finance online for information exchange, experience sharing and on-the-job training in the area of public sector policy and management. Its long-term objective is to build the capacity of these regional and national institutions to access, process and disseminate relevant information via up-to-date information and communication technologies (ICTs) for the promotion of better public administration. At present, these institutions cannot exert their full impact due to lack of necessary ICTs and financial as well as skilled human resources. It is expected, however, with the active engagement of these institutions in the UNPAN programme, that their above-mentioned capacities will be strengthened, and they will be better prepared to face the evolving needs of their respective member countries in public administration development.

In short, UNPAN's mission is to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices throughout the world in sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services, through capacity-building and cooperation among Member States to bridge the digital divide, with emphasis on south-south cooperation and a commitment to integrity and excellence.

UNPAN's immediate beneficiaries are public administration-related regional and national institutions. Its ultimate clients are the peoples of the world, government entities, the private sector, NGOs, and academic institutions.

With communication technologies advancing at a tremendous rate, electronic information centres, online research organizations, and specialized e-networks are becoming increasingly common and duplicative. UNPAN is different. Its substantive capacity and specialized services, combined to create a uniqueness, set UNPAN apart from conventional web-based information sources. It serves as a search engine or portal of public administration, which is the only one such network in the world today. In addition, it offers:

- Far-reaching access to regional experience in the practice of public policy development and management at the regional, national and local levels;
- Capacity-building and south-south cooperation in information and knowledge management;
- Easy access to worldwide information in all areas of public sector policy and management;
- A demand-driven and interactive two-way information and knowledge network.

Most significantly, UNPAN is a dynamic process, and not a static outcome, which aims at responding to the needs of its users and addresses their most critical areas of work. With a constituency as diverse as the membership of the United Nations, UNPAN's key advantage will be its ability to demonstrate insight, flexibility and reliability in order to ensure that the primary needs of its users are met.

UNPAN will provide 5 major online services:

- information services;
- training services;
- technical advisory services;
- conference services for exchange and dialogues among stakeholders; and
- worldwide directory services in public administration.

Its main focus themes will cover:

- public economic policy;
- governance and institutional building;
- civil service and public sector reform;
- management innovation and development; and
- public finance.

Within the above-mentioned thematic framework, an emphasis will be given to emerging issues, which are of concern to most countries.

UNPAN is executed and managed by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (DPEPA), UNDESA, as UNPAN-NY in close partnership with a group of 15 international, regional and subregional institutions devoted to public administration and finance in the context of social and economic development. These institutions are titled UNPAN Online Regional Centres (ORCs) and UNPAN Online International Centres (OICs), which include:

3 in Africa:	African Civil Services Observatory (OFPA) African Training and Research Centre in Administration and Development (CAFRAD) African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)
1 in the Arab States:	Arab Administration Development Organization (ARADO)
2 in Asia/Pacific:	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) Regional Cooperation Office for City Informatization (RCOCI)
3 in Europe:	European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) UN Thessaloniki Centre for Public Service Professionalism (UNTC) Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee)
2 in Latin America/Caribbean:	Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD)
2 in North America:	American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC)
OICs:	International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) International Centre of Innovation and Exchange in Public Administration (ICIEPA)

The responsibilities of UNPAN are shared by UNPAN-NY and UNPAN-ORCs. UNPAN-NY provides overall coordination and guidelines for quality control, substantive, financial and technical support to ORCs

of developing countries, monitoring, assessing and managing the network and reporting to the UN-GA/ECOSOC, and inputs for the UNPAN services. The ORCs function as regional providers of the UNPAN services mentioned above.

Ever since the 1st UNPAN Interregional Consultative Meeting which adopted its Plan of Action, UNPAN members have been working to implement the plan in the following areas:

- 1) self-assessment conducted by the ORCs of the developing countries;
- 2) needs assessment jointly conducted by UNPAN-NY and these ORCs;
- 3) formalization of partnerships within and outside the UN system;
- 4) advisory assistance package development and execution for UNPAN-ORCs;
- 5) establishment of UNPAN information management guidelines and classification;
- 6) development and improvement of the UNPAN system and construction and improvement of the UNPAN web site;
- 7) development of UNPAN online contents at both the UNPAN-NY and the ORCs;
- 8) training UNPAN-ORCs on related information technologies and management;
- 9) development of the related specific IT and information management training programmes for UNPAN-ORCs;
- 10) running and upgrading the UNPAN online network;
- 11) help-desk service for UNPAN-ORCs and UNPAN users in all aspects of UNPAN activities; and
- 12) working with the private sector to seek further assistance for UNPAN continuous development.

As UNPAN progresses in its implementation, special attention has been given to conceptual and system designs and technical assistance packaging development based on the needs of the recipient institutions and end-users of UNPAN. Special attention has also been given to the capacity-building process of these ORCs and south-south and north-south cooperation.

The UNPAN online network at <http://www.unpan.org> serves as a portal for public administration and finance which is the only one such network in the world today. Since its launching online in March 2001, UNPAN has been accessed by thousands of interested users from all walks of life around the world. To remain faithful to its vision of maintaining a constant, dynamic process, UNPAN will continue to improve its services, respond to new challenges of countries, particularly developing countries, and make itself a useful tool for the promotion of capacity-building and south-south cooperation in the field of public sector policy and management, and will work to become an effective digital bridge for the development of all countries.

CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has opened new gateways to opportunities that only a decade ago seemed unimaginable. Seldom in history has the confluence of technology, resources and imagination so dramatically changed the way cultures interact and nations govern. Yet globalization is also creating a world where interdependence is becoming more complex. Countries are now linked by multiple and extensive economic, political and social relationships. New and difficult challenges have been created for both policy and decision makers, as public policy issues are becoming increasingly transitional in character.

A powerful force that is driving globalization is information. Information, when converted into knowledge, can empower a very small segment of a population, resulting in dynamic transformations, ultimately advancing the development of the larger civil society as a whole. Yet when information is ignored or misused, few members of the civil society benefit.

Despite being a remarkable agent of change, the information revolution has created three persistent problems that cannot be ignored. First, the amount of information is growing faster than any person (or organization) can fully absorb, potentially diminishing the effectiveness of the public policy formulation and decision-making processes. Second, the abundance of data in its unadulterated form, for the most part, has a very limited life span. What was the discovery of the millennium yesterday may be easily forgotten by tomorrow. Finally, there is the reality of knowledge gaps. In countries where resources are limited, full capacity to absorb, analyse and convert vast amounts of raw data to adaptable knowledge is not always present. Information problems are exacerbated, and existing knowledge gaps, now called the digital gaps, are widened both within and outside of a nation, a circumstance that is especially acute in developing countries.

Policy and decision makers are now faced with an exacting challenge of prospecting through enormous volumes of information, extracting the most useful and relevant data, analysing it and ultimately converting it to knowledge that can be adapted to suit their policy and country's needs. Strategies and activities directed toward the effective acquisition, communication and management of information and knowledge have taken on a greater sense of urgency and are now at the top of most national policy agendas.

The United Nations General Assembly has entrusted the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration with the task to develop a pragmatic response to address these issues and ensure that nations can maximize their public policy and public sector management resources: the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN). As an Internet-linked network of institutions, UNPAN will provide governments and organizations with information and knowledge on critical aspects of public sector policies and management to facilitate effective decision-making and promote sound knowledge management. Connecting the present with the future, UNPAN is linking those who need to know with those who indeed know.

MISSION STATEMENT

UNPAN's mission is to promote the sharing of knowledge and experiences throughout the world in sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services, through capacity-building and cooperation among Member States to bridge the digital divide for development, with emphasis on south-south cooperation and a commitment to integrity and excellence.

WHAT IS UNPAN?

The aim of capacity-building as a process or activity by an international, regional, or national organization, or by any one country, is to help those in another country improve their ability to carry out specific functions or achieve certain objectives. UNPAN has been established for just such a purpose. Through the substantive and technical capacities of the regional and national centres, developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition will now have a vital tool for strengthening and enhancing their public sector policy formulation and management capabilities. As a global online information and knowledge network, UNPAN is uniquely structured to facilitate capacity-building, foster dialogues among stakeholders at the national level, and expand collaboration among the Member States, especially in developing countries.

UNPAN provides ongoing access to the most innovative research, training practices, methodologies and technical assistance. Through its multiple role as an electronic research centre, think tank, consulting firm and library, the capacity of the regional and national centres will be continuously strengthened so they may effectively function as dynamic sources of information and knowledge and address existing and emerging issues in public sector policy and management. To ensure this, UNPAN is designed to reinforce the necessary capacities of the regional and national centres.

REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING UNPAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MANDATES

General Assembly Resolution 50/225, which was the result of the Resumed 50th Session of the General Assembly on Public Administration in April 1996, reinforced previous legislative mandates that defined and reinforced the UN Programme in Public Administration and Finance. It also mandated a central role for the UN as a repository of information and best practices and to utilize the latest technology and resources in disseminating knowledge. Resolution 50/225 stated specifically that the United Nations Programme should carry out its activities through pooling and facilitating access to information in public administration, promoting training and research at all levels, advocacy and exchange of experiences, advisory services, technical assistance, capacity-building and human resources development. Resolution 50/225 further charged the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration with the overall management, coordination and substantive development of the Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REFORMS

In 1997, Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched a programme of reform and renewal for the United Nations. Among the principal goals were the organization-wide practice of enhanced coordination,

and the elimination of duplication and overlapping of responsibilities within the UN system. In a 1999 address before NGOs, Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the creative use of the Internet and *global policy networks* as a medium of research, communication and exchange. "The biggest gap between North and South", he said, "is the knowledge gap. There is no better way to bridge that gap than by fostering truly cooperative networks." UNPAN is an example of what the Secretary-General is referring to, as it simplifies the coordination, management, and dissemination of information and knowledge produced by the UN system in the field of public sector policy and management. The UNPAN project fully realizes the substance of the Secretary-General's intentions in the reforming of UN development activities by creating a cohesive capacity-building programme in information and knowledge management at the regional and country levels.

THE UN PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Implemented by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, the UN Programme in Public Administration and Finance has for over 50 years been assisting Member States, particularly developing countries, in improving their administrative and financial management systems. UNPAN builds on the strengths of this legacy by combining a deep institutional history with a current substantive and technological dimension that will provide a solid foundation for all network services.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Although information generated from developed countries, aid organizations and academia is proven to facilitate the growth of the developing countries, it is the information that is created within developing countries themselves that is commonly the most useful. Policies, reform programmes and well-conceived projects are a valuable source of knowledge. Knowing *how* a development initiative succeeds or fails can in fact be more beneficial than knowing *whether* the initiative succeeds or fails. Learning from others, assimilating that knowledge and adapting it to local circumstances offers the opportunity to make rapid advances without repeating others' mistakes. National knowledge and experience and its transfer from country to country have the potential to transform any national development agenda.

UNIQUENESS

With communication technologies advancing at a tremendous rate, electronic information centres, online research organizations, and specialized e-networks are becoming increasingly common and duplicative. UNPAN is different. Its *substantive* capacity and specialized *service* combine to create a uniqueness that sets UNPAN apart from conventional web-based information sources. The one feature that is perhaps most unique about UNPAN is its universality and unequivocal clarity as an online public sector policy and management information and knowledge network.

SUBSTANTIVE UNIQUENESS:

- Far-reaching access to regional experience in the practice of public policy development and management at the regional, national and local levels.
- Capacity-building and south-south cooperation in information and knowledge management.

SERVICE UNIQUENESS:

- Easy access to the UN's work in all areas of public sector policy and management.

- Interactive two-way information and knowledge network.
- Demand-driven provider of information and knowledge.

Most significantly, UNPAN is a dynamic process, and not a static outcome, which aims at responding to the needs of its users, and addresses their most critical areas of work. With a constituency as diverse as the membership of the United Nations, UNPAN's key advantage will be its ability to demonstrate insight, flexibility and reliability in order to ensure that the primary needs of its users are met.

SUBSTANTIVE SCOPE

CORE THEMATIC AREAS

A nation's civil service is the heart of its administrative system. It is the bridge between those charged with the vast responsibility of governing and the civil society. Public administration as an entity, therefore, does not operate in isolation but rather in a series of distinct institutional relationships. As a global online information network, UNPAN has the advantage of drawing upon a large and diverse pool of knowledge in the most relevant areas of public sector policy and management. With new challenges facing the role of the State, particularly regarding its level of involvement in the national economy, UNPAN monitors existing public sector management processes and practices in critical areas such as:

Public Economic Policies

UNPAN focuses closely on state-market relations; regulatory policies; competition policies; institutional issues of economic governance; public expenditure management; tax policy management and administration.

Governance Systems and Institutions

Through the Network, users can access the most current practices and policies in areas such as legislative systems improvement, executive branch reinforcement, local governance, citizen participation and civil society building.

Civil Service and Public Sector Reform

UNPAN addresses issues such as: administrative and civil service reform; public sector capacity-building and training; ethics and professionalism; civil service performance assessment and human resource management; and public service delivery to the civil society.

Management Innovation and Development

Information and knowledge on management innovation and trends for project, programme and policy formulation and implementation; local government election administration; disaster management; benchmarking for the purpose of organizational performance and monitoring are a few of the issues which are fundamental to efficient institutional performance and can be easily accessed through the Network.

Public Finance

UNPAN's services provide users with mobilization of external resources for development; efficient, effective and transparent public financial management; and financial and fiscal decentralization.

SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

What sets UNPAN apart from other information providers is its capacity to deliver a specialized and substantively customized set of services and products that are easily accessed and readily available for its users. The services include:

ONLINE INFORMATION SERVICES

As an international focal point of information and knowledge on public sector policy and management issues, UNPAN collects, disseminates and manages relevant information, and guides users in accessing and navigating the vast resources that comprise the Network, at the global, regional and national levels.

Users have access to information such as:

- Legislation
- Case studies
- Country profiles
- Analytical reports
- Technical project highlights
- Statistical databases
- Major developments and trends
- Serials
- Calendar of events
- Searchable thematic web links

ONLINE TRAINING SERVICES

Long-distance learning is gradually emerging as a valuable and cost effective tool. UNPAN continuously identifies and monitors trends, and works to improve training methods and procedures that would enhance the administrative, managerial and analytical capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. UNPAN provides training programme information, and develops and implements online/offline training materials based on its capacity and resources. UNPAN online training programmes can be developed in cooperation with international, regional and national institutions that specialize in training. Users will be able to interact in "real time" or "relative time" with guest lecturers, specialists and public sector policy, management and finance experts.

ONLINE ADVISORY SERVICES

UNPAN is in a process of developing an international and regional online advisory services network which will present readily accessible information from the available database of UNPAN advisers, experts and consultants in public sector policy and management.

This includes:

- An interactive bulletin board;
- UNPAN advisory services; and
- An international and regional technical expert and consultant referral service.

ONLINE CONFERENCE SERVICES

Online conference services combine a traditional form of information and knowledge exchange with contemporary technology. It provides meeting programme information and e-fora for UNPAN members and users. Online conferences will present new possibilities in capacity-building by enhancing teamwork and partnerships.

Conferences can be held in:

- Real Time -- in which the timing will be synchronized with the participants' locations; and
- Relative Time -- in which the participants will interact via instant messaging and bulletin boards at their convenience.

LANGUAGES

Although primary information may initially be made available in a regional or national language, UNPAN members are endeavouring to offer site navigation and abstracts in the official languages of the United Nations.

BENEFICIARIES

IMMEDIATE BENEFICIARIES

- **Regional Centres** in public policies and management
- **National Centres** in public policies and management

ULTIMATE BENEFICIARIES

UNPAN's service is available to anyone with access to the online Network. Its ultimate beneficiaries include:

- **Policy and decision makers**, such as government officials responsible for public policies on economic development, reforms and modernization of public administration and management, public sector financial management, tax reform, etc.;
- **Experts, researchers and students** in universities, academic and research institutes, and other relevant institutions, who are interested in the practice of administrative science, government systems, public management innovations, and other relevant issues;
- **The Civil Society**, including non-governmental organizations, interest groups and private citizens;

- *The Private Sector*, including the business and industrial community, investment analysts and economic development specialists; and
- *The Donor Community*, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, donor countries, and development and investment agencies.

IMPACTS AND BENEFITS

Impacts made and to be made on the UNPAN ultimate beneficiaries include:

- To increase the awareness of countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, of the importance of information technology and management for development;
- To build and to further strengthen the capacity of international, regional and national institutions in public administration and finance to better access, process and disseminate relevant information via up-to-date information communication technologies;
- To facilitate south-south cooperation in the area of public administration and the utilization of IT for development at the international, regional and national levels; and
- To promote e-fora and easy access to information exchange and experience sharing among countries.

In addition, benefits received and to be received by UNPAN immediate beneficiaries include:

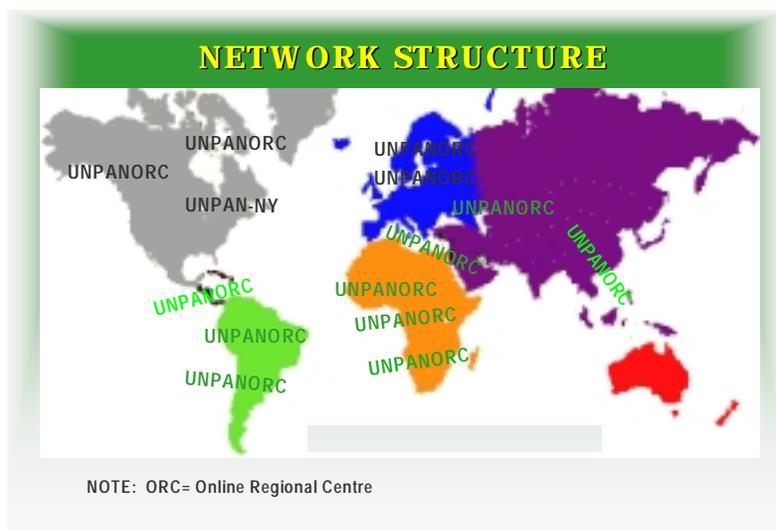
- Technical assistance on IT facilities (hardware and software);
- Technical assistance on improving the IT connectivities;
- Technical assistance on human resource development;
- E-information management training; and
- Help-desk services in e-information management.

MANAGEMENT

As a dynamic online network, UNPAN is being developed so its users can best utilize and benefit from the regional and national centres' intrinsic capacity and expertise. The flexibility of UNPAN's structure, combined with the technological advances, allow each autonomous regional centre to customize its specific needs to best address the issues endemic to its region and participating countries. The Network is structured in such a way as to fully utilize the substantive, technical and human resource capabilities of each centre, either regional or national, and to build capacity in areas where needed. This component is one of the inherent strengths of UNPAN.

NETWORK STRUCTURE

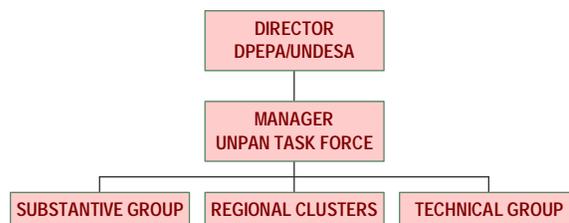
The regional and national centres are among institutions geographically balanced representing developing and developed countries, as well as countries in economic transition. Since UNPAN is a United Nations initiative funded through the Development Dividend under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, overall coordination of the Network is the responsibility of UN Headquarters in New York.



UNPAN-NY

One way to describe UNPAN-NY would be as a coordinator of substantive centres. A task force manager who reports directly to the Director of the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs heads UNPAN-NY. The task force manager works with a team composed of substantive, technical and administrative staff. The team also works closely with the regional and national centres. This includes the development of operational guidelines to ensure network integrity, substantive clarity and that each centre's specific needs are met.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



UNPAN-NY'S MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

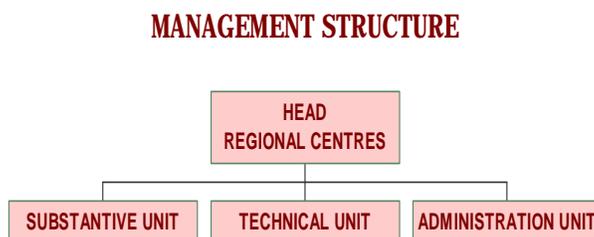
- Overall coordination and guidance;
- Substantive and technical support in all areas;
- Monitoring, assessing and analysing the performance of the Network in order to report directly to the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council upon their request; and

- Providing an information clearing house, advisory services, online training programmes and online conferences.

UNPAN-NY works closely with each regional centre through the intervention of corresponding regional clusters. The regional clusters' primary responsibility is to ensure continuity in the flow of information and communication between the regional centres and UNPAN-NY.

UNPAN-ORCs

Selected for their prominence as public sector policy and management institutions, the ORCs are responsible for information and knowledge management within their own geographic areas. Substantively, the ORCs collect, analyse and communicate information and knowledge on public administration, public economics and finance issues endemic to countries in their geographic sphere. Since the collection, analysis and communication of information and knowledge are the lifeblood of the Network, how the ORCs perform these tasks is critical. A team consisting of a project manager, information/policy specialist and a technical expert provides the essential core of a basic management structure within the ORC.



THE ORCs ALSO FUNCTION AS:

- Regional information clearing houses
- Regional online training programme developers
- Regional online conference organizers

CRITERIA FOR ONLINE REGIONAL CENTRES (ORCs)

The ORCs of the UNPAN system play a critical role in the successful implementation of the online Network. It is expected that they provide data, information and knowledge resources unique to their regions and have the basic facilities for promoting online activities. It is further expected that their existence as an institution devoted to public administration be unchallenged and their commitment to UNPAN be unequivocal. Therefore, the selected ORCs need to maintain the following:

- A regional institution devoted to public policies and public administration;
- A well-functioning and committed administrative and management system;
- Adequate financial resources;
- An extensive and well-recognized relationship with other relevant institutions and/or governments in their country or region;
- Stable data/information sources and an established and operational database(s);
- Information and knowledge validation capacity;
- An established web site; and
- Technical professionals for computer applications and information system development.

A needs assessment of the regional centres was conducted by each member organization with the assistance of UNPAN-NY (DPEPA), particularly with respect to: national telecommunications capacity; information and validation capacity; technical capacity; human resource capacity; and access to information.

Detailed arrangements and responsibilities are outlined in an official Memorandum of Understanding between each ORC and the United Nations.

THE CHALLENGE

For all institutions committed to the practice of effective information and knowledge management, the real challenge is in the authentication or selection of content. UNPAN members must establish their own information and knowledge bases, authenticate, interpret what is meaningful and customize a knowledge management programme that meets their needs. Based on the consensus of all UNPAN members, the general Guidelines on UNPAN Information Management and the UNPAN thematic classification have been established. In accordance with the above, UNPAN-NY will work to ensure that the collection, analysis, and communication of information and knowledge remain a dynamic process and not a static outcome. UNPAN will realize its full potential only if its members take an active role in building and sustaining the Network.

INFRASTRUCTURE

NETWORK SYSTEM

As an electronic network, the operating platform for UNPAN is the World Wide Web. It has its own independent server. The Network has established its own domain: www.unpan.org. With an independent server, UNPAN's web performance is considered very efficient.

HOW UNPAN FUNCTIONS

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Information is the essence of UNPAN. Accordingly, its management is one of the critical functions of the Network. In order to make relevant information and knowledge easily available to the users of UNPAN, large amounts of data at the UN Headquarters and the regional centres need to be collected, analysed and ultimately processed for dissemination and uploading on to the web. To ensure network effectiveness, basic guidelines for information/data collecting and quality control are developed in consultation with UNPAN-ORCs which reflect their capacities to perform the basic information management activities.

UNPAN has a document management system (DMS) which allows its members to manage and share their documents online respectively. Its features include:

- A criteria-based search engine which allows the user to find documents easily by using keywords and other variables;
- Automatic archiving to track documents;
- Revision control, also called "check-in/check-out"; and
- Security provisions, i.e. passwords, etc.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Functioning like a general database, the UNPAN database manages all types of data through their entire life cycle. This includes:

- Processing data as records, tables, or objects;
- Providing query languages (SQL) for searching, sorting, reporting, and other "decision support" activities that help users to correlate data by topics; and
- Providing multi-user access to data, along with security features.

NETWORK MANAGEMENT

The regional and national centres are a critical component of UNPAN and play a key role in the successful implementation of the online Network. With the assistance provided by UNPAN-NY, the centres have begun to build the capacity to perform the expected role of information collecting, analysing and disseminating. This also includes the basic resources and capacity for conducting online activities (i.e., their own URL/web site).

Necessary telecommunication bandwidth is important to ensure the quality of services to be provided by UNPAN. Lower bandwidths could compromise performance by delaying or hindering specific online activities. The telecommunication bandwidth available at the ORCs generally depends on the capacity of the national telecommunications and information infrastructure. The ORCs, with the assistance provided by UNPAN-NY, have been exploring the possibilities of acquiring the best facilities available.

DIRECTORY MANAGEMENT

UNPAN provides quick and easy access to 5 worldwide directories, including: a) PA contact directory; b) PA web-link directory; c) PA training institution web-link directory; d) PA advisory directory; and e) PA media directory. UNPAN is meant to make full use of the Internet for information exchange and knowledge sharing.

In short, the UNPAN system maintains a central library management function to enable the system manager to monitor all document transactions across the Network. The DMS of UNPAN is web-based so as to be consistent with the current trend of document management, i.e., utilizing web technologies.

UNPAN makes full use of the Internet technology and other current information technologies to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency. The existing computer and telecommunication facilities within the Division and the UN, and the regional and national institutions selected, will be fully utilized for cost effectiveness. In cases where appropriate, the UN is assisting in upgrading the regional centre's hardware and software components.

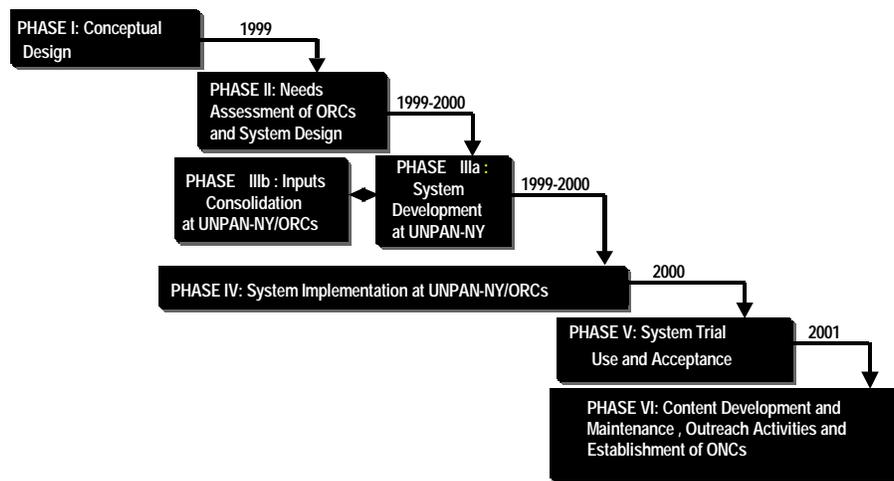
As far as the technical aspects of all UNPAN-ORCs are concerned, emphasis is placed on making full use of existing computer and communication facilities. Any upgrading of equipment with UN assistance will take place only if the need presents itself.

At these stages of development, the effective collection, processing and management of information is more critical than simply reinforcing the technical platform for UNPAN operation.

IMPLEMENTATION

There are six phases in the establishment of UNPAN: (I) conceptual system design; (II) needs assessment and detailed system design; (III) system development, data/information consolidation; (IV)

system implementation; (V) system trial use and acceptance; and (VI) establishment of national centres and stimulation of publicity.



Phase I: Conceptual Design

The main task of this phase was to achieve a common understanding within DPEPA on the basic concepts of UNPAN, such as the objectives and goals (where are we going?), the main contents and business of UNPAN (what are we doing?), and the implementation strategies of the UNPAN project (how are we going there?). This conceptual system design report provided a framework for the staff of the Division to discuss, comment and make suggestions on these important issues of UNPAN in order to reach consensus among UNPAN members and to be adopted as a plan of action (about two months).

Phase II: Needs Assessment of Regional Centres and Detailed System Design

This phase aimed at understanding the needs of regional institutions in order to develop UNPAN, and, accordingly, accomplish a detailed system design of UNPAN – a blueprint of UNPAN. Another important task was to receive recognition as to the importance and mandate of UNPAN and receive the full support and cooperation of the regional institutions through the efforts of this phase (about 5 months).

Phase IIIa: System Design and Development at Headquarters

A set of software systems for the UNPAN-ORCs, including a database system, document management system, Web site, and various online functions, etc. were designed and developed in this phase. Coordination with UN/ITSD on the domain name of the UNPAN Web site, IP address, and other UNPAN network management arrangements were carried out (about 7 months).

Phase IIIb: Data/Information Consolidation at the UNPAN-NY and ORCs

During this phase, data/information with respect to public administration and finance were indexed and categorized. The existing data/information were cleaned, consolidated and computerized, and prepared to be entered into the UNPAN-DMS. These jobs were very time-consuming and needed sedulousness and perseverance. Data/information consolidation was carried out both at the UNPAN-NY and the ORCs (ongoing).

Phase IV: System Implementation at the UNPAN-NY and ORCs

This phase was designed to implement all the functions of UNPAN. In particular, all the data and document management system were established and prepared for users to access. Other functions, such as online training and online advisory services, are being worked on and will be materialized step by step (ongoing).

Phase V: System Trial Use and Launching to the Public

All the functions of UNPAN were put on trial use in this phase in order to find out if there were any "bugs" in the system, any problems in operation, and any room for improvement. In the mean time, the workflow of the Division for the smooth operation of UNPAN was designed and implemented. The operational processes of the Division were also re-engineered accordingly. Operational and maintenance manuals and corresponding rules and regulations were developed and established at both UNPAN-NY and the ORCs, as all these activities are very necessary to ensure the smooth operation and sustainability of UNPAN. In March 2001, the Network was launched to the public after the trial use and review.

Phase VI: Establishment of the National Centres and Outreach Activities

The purpose of this phase is to extend the coverage of UNPAN as broadly as possible. A standard package, including hardware and software, for the establishment of the national node of UNPAN will be developed and distributed to selected least developed countries under the support of the UNPAN project. Every effort will be made in this phase to stimulate the publicity of UNPAN and try to attract as many users as possible.

Although the entire period of the project to establish UNPAN spans about two years, maintaining, upgrading, further developing and sustaining this Network to better serve its users is UNPAN's long-term objective. UNPAN will double its efforts in responding to new challenges of countries, especially developing countries, and in making itself a useful tool for the promotion of capacity-building and north-south and south-south cooperation in the field of public sector policy and management, to become an effective digital bridge for the development of all countries.



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