Best Practices and Challenges in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals
(A Case Study of Egypt)

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■ **Abstract:**

This paper explores the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Egypt, highlighting the strategies adopted, challenges faced, and governance structures established. The study is significant for informing policymakers about effective practices and barriers in achieving sustainable development in a developing context. Key research questions focus on Egypt's progress in implementing the SDGs and the applicability of the Center of Government and Delivery Unit approaches.

A comprehensive analysis of Egypt's governance framework and international best practices reveals notable progress, with Egypt ranked 83rd out of 167 countries in the Sustainable Development Report 2024. While there are opportunities for further growth, such as strengthening institutional frameworks and improving data systems, the country has significant potential to build on its achievements. Recommendations to drive this progress include enhancing the Center of Government concept, applying the Delivery Unit approach, improving inter-institutional coordination, investing in robust data systems, and adopting integrated governance strategies. By focusing on these areas, Egypt is well-positioned to further improve public administration and make significant strides toward achieving the SDGs, fostering sustainable and equitable development.

Keywords

Sustainable Development Goals – Center of Government – Delivery Unit – Public Sector – Egypt

1.   Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, aimed at addressing urgent global challenges and promoting sustainability, equity, and peace by 2030. These goals are a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by all UN member states.

Indeed, the adoption of the SDGs has catalyzed a significant transformation within public institutions, directing them towards a macro-development focus that highlights the necessity for integrated and coherent policy frameworks to address complex societal challenges. This transition reflects an increasing recognition that sustainable development cannot be pursued in isolation; it demands a comprehensive approach that encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions. As a result, public institutions are increasingly tasked with the responsibility of aligning their strategies and operations with the SDGs, thereby fostering inter-institutional coordination and enhancing policy coherence. This shift is further underscored by the imperative not only to implement the SDGs but also to leverage them as a catalyst for transformative change within governance structures. By prioritizing the SDGs, public institutions can enhance their capacity to deliver effective public services, promote transparency, and actively engage citizens in the development process, ultimately contributing to more equitable and sustainable outcomes (Allen & Malekpour, 2023).

The SDGs follow-up system indicates that key obstacles to achieving the goals include limited institutional capacity, inadequate data systems, and persistent governance issues such as a lack of transparency and accountability. Many institutions struggle to foster cross-sector collaboration, which is essential for addressing the SDGs' complexity. Political agendas often prioritize familiar objectives over innovative strategies, undermining the transformative potential of the SDGs. Strengthening institutional frameworks and fostering a culture of inclusivity and accountability are crucial to overcoming these challenges. Egypt faces similar barriers in its pursuit of the SDGs. The 2024 report also highlights global challenges like the impacts of COVID-19, ongoing conflicts, the climate crisis, a $4 trillion investment gap, and inequities in the global financial system. These issues, along with data gaps and growing inequalities, stress the need for coordinated global action to achieve the SDGs (United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2023; United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2024).

In response to the various challenges confronting the public sector, including internal inefficiencies and external pressures, it is essential for governmental institutions to redefine their vision, roles, and functions to remain effective and relevant. The evolving governance landscape requires a shift towards innovative and responsive practices, where bureaucracies embrace entrepreneurial principles and collaborate

with the community and private sector. By fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability, public sector entities can enhance service delivery, build public trust, and better meet the diverse needs of citizens. This transformation is vital for ensuring that government institutions not only survive but thrive in contemporary challenges (Afrijal et al., 2024).

The public sector is the largest service provider globally, meaning that even small improvements in public services can significantly benefit millions of people (PWC Public Sector Research Centre, 2007). According to the latest estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO), public sector employment constitutes just over 11 percent of global employment, with significant regional variations that correlate with national income levels. The public sector encompasses a range of economic activities that include the provision of essential services such as education, healthcare, transportation, social services, and public safety. These activities are primarily aimed at serving the public good rather than generating profit (Sodergren & Gammarano, 2024).

However, governments face mounting pressure to enhance these services and drive economic growth (Daly, Riese, & Singham, 2015, p. 2). This pressure arises from increased citizen awareness of rights, budget constraints, the demand for value for money, the need for greater accountability and transparency, competition for investment, and the challenges posed by aging populations requiring care (PWC Public Sector Research Centre, 2007, pp. 9-12). Consequently, governments must explore innovative approaches to develop and organize the public sector to create public value (European Commission Directorate-General for Communications Networks, 2013, p. 2).

Governments, whether in developing or developed nations, must reassess their implementation strategies to enhance their capacity for coherent design and efficient execution of public policy (Volcker, January 2003, p. x). In the future, it is anticipated that governments will become interconnected and fully integrated, facilitating interactions among themselves and with other sectors. This evolution will lead to more personalized services, enabling users to actively participate in the design and creation of these services. Such advancements are likely to occur within an open and participatory governance framework, where both governmental entities and third parties collaborate and share responsibilities in service production and delivery, adhering to the principles of subsidiarity (European Commission Directorate-General for Communications Networks, 2013, p. 13). However, it is crucial to recognize that country specific factors including the legislative framework, political environment, and governmental decision-making structures, significantly influence innovations in service delivery (PWC Public Sector Research Centre, 2007, p. 42).

This paper examines the implementation of SDGs in Egypt through four key sections: SDGs Implementation in Egypt; pathways to achieve the SDGs through policy implementation; The role of the Center of Government in advancing SDG Achievement; and public sector readiness to apply Center of Government and Delivery Units in managing SDGs Implementation.

1.1. Research problem statement

Despite global commitment to SDGs, developing countries, including Egypt, face significant challenges in effectively implementing these policies. Complex governance structures, coupled with limited financial and human resources, hinder progress toward achieving the SDGs. Additionally, varying levels of stakeholder engagement complicate the process, often resulting in policies that lack both applicability and effectiveness. In the context of Egypt, there is a need to investigate the specific barriers that impede policy implementation. This analysis should consider international best practices to extract valuable lessons that can inform strategies aimed at enhancing governance frameworks. Such improvements are essential to ensure that the SDGs are translated into meaningful outcomes that benefit all segments of society.

This paper argues that, although Egypt has made commendable progress in implementing the SDGs compared to the regional average, there remains a pressing need for proactive and innovative approaches. These approaches could significantly advance the results of the SDGs and positively impact the socio–economic situation, particularly in light of the internal and external challenges Egypt currently faces amid an unstable regional context and ongoing financial crises.

1.2. Research questions

This paper addresses the following research questions:

– To what extent has Egypt progressed in implementing the SDGs and achieving related outcomes?

– How can the Center of Government and Delivery Approach be effectively applied in Egypt, drawing on international best practices?

– What is the readiness of Egypt's public institutions to adopt Center of Government and Delivery Approach concepts, and what challenges and opportunities may arise?

2. SDGs implementation in Egypt

Egypt's Vision 2030 represents a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring a high quality of life for its citizens while aligning with global sustainable development objectives. Launched in February 2016, this strategy is intricately linked to the

17 SDGs and the African Agenda 2063, positioning sustainable development as a cornerstone for growth and prosperity. The formulation of Vision 2030 involved a participatory approach that engaged a wide array of stakeholders, including government bodies, private sector, civil society, and academic institutions. This collaborative effort has fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among various sectors, ensuring that the implementation of the strategy is a collective endeavor (The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt's Voluntary National Report, 2021).

In light of the significant global, regional, and national shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has undertaken a comprehensive revision of Egypt's Vision 2030. This updated framework has been crafted through a participatory process that engages a wide range of stakeholders. It emphasizes the need for integration across economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, ensuring alignment with both the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063. The revised Vision prioritizes the implementation of monitoring reforms to effectively tackle emerging challenges, with a focus on high-productivity sectors and equitable distribution of resources. Additionally, it addresses pressing issues such as population growth, climate change, and water scarcity, thereby enhancing Egypt's capacity to respond to global challenges. The focus on resilience and adaptability is intended to elevate the quality of life for all Egyptians, fostering inclusive development that ensures no demographic group is overlooked (The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, The National Agenda for Sustainable Development Egypt's Updated Vision 2030, 2023).

The updated Vision 2030 is anchored by four fundamental principles that prioritize citizens in the development process, highlighting equity, resilience, and sustainability. These principles form the basis for six National Strategic Goals designed to improve the quality of life for Egyptians, advance social justice, and cultivate a competitive and diversified economy. To realize these objectives, various ministries have formulated their own medium- and long-term strategies that align with the overarching vision, focusing on critical areas such as family development, artificial intelligence, and tourism. This coordinated approach not only reflects Egypt's dedication to sustainable development but also emphasizes the necessity of collaborative efforts across different sectors to achieve the intended outcomes by 2030. Through these initiatives, Egypt aspires to build a more resilient and prosperous future for its citizens while contributing to the global sustainable development agenda (The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2021).

2.1.   Egypt's progress in achieving the SDGs

Egypt has made notable progress in achieving the SDGs, as evidenced by various international and national indices and reports. The Sustainable Development Report

2024 highlights that Egypt ranks 83rd out of 167 countries, reflecting its relative position in the global landscape of sustainable development (Sachs, Lafortune, & Fuller, 2024, pp. 186−187). The country has attained an overall score of 69.1 on the SDG Index, which is slightly above the regional average of 65.6 for the Middle East and North Africa, indicating progress across various SDG targets "Figure 1".

In terms of performance distribution, the report reveals that there are no targets showing a decline in performance, while eight targets are stagnating without significant progress. Conversely, nine targets are moderately improving, suggesting that while advancements have been made, challenges remain.
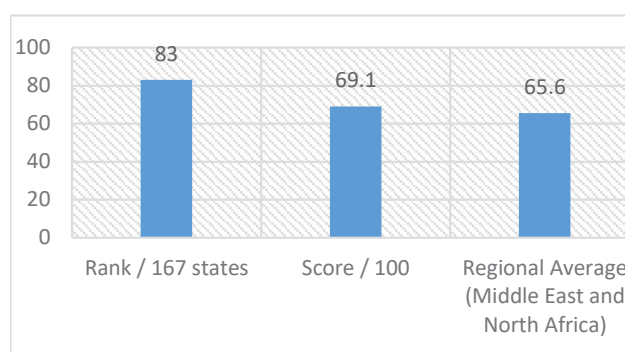

Figure 1:Egypt's Progress in Achieving the SDGs - 2024

Despite Egypt's score being above the regional average, the report identifies key areas of concern, particularly in environmental sustainability, health, and education, which may be impeding the country's overall ranking.

2.2. Egypt SDGS LOCALIZATION PROCESS

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has successfully produced reports for 27 governorates to enhance the engagement of local authorities in planning for the SDGs at the local level. These reports are essential for enabling local authorities to participate effectively in implementing SDGs, as they provide critical data that outlines the current status of each governorate concerning the SDG indicators and their respective targets for 2030. This data not only reflects the existing conditions but also aligns with the national ambitions to achieve the SDGs. By establishing a clear understanding of local contexts and challenges, these reports facilitate informed decision−making and strategic planning, ultimately contributing to the successful localization of the SDGs across Egypt (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, n.d.).

The Upper Egypt Local Development Program serves as an exemplary best practice for managing SDGs localization, highlighting the importance of community engagement in the planning and implementation processes to ensure that development efforts are tailored to local needs. By prioritizing public capital investments, the program has successfully improved connectivity and access to essential services in underdeveloped areas, demonstrating the critical role of infrastructure in achieving the SDGs. Additionally, the collaboration between the National Government and the

World Bank exemplifies the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships that leverage diverse resources and expertise. The program also focuses on capacity building, equipping local authorities and communities with essential skills for sustainable development, while robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms facilitate progress tracking and strategy adaptation. These lessons learned provide valuable insights for other countries aiming to effectively localize the SDGs, emphasizing the significance of tailored approaches, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous assessment in achieving sustainable development outcome (United Nations, SDG Good Practices: A compilation of success stories and lessons learned in SDG implementation (Second Edition), 2022).

The Egypt Voluntary National Review Report (2018) acknowledged the importance of localizing the SDGs to address geographic disparities within the country. Meanwhile, the 2021 report elaborated on this concept by emphasizing the necessity of monitoring and evaluating local efforts while adhering to principles of inclusive growth and the commitment to "leave no one behind." This progression indicates a deeper understanding of the challenges faced at local levels and a commitment to ensuring that sustainable development benefits all segments of the population, particularly marginalized groups.

Yet, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has made significant strides in producing reports for 27 governorates aimed at enhancing local engagement with the SDGs. However, these reports represent merely one aspect of the comprehensive approach required for effective SDG implementation at the local level. Best practices underscore the necessity of establishing and strengthening governing bodies at the local levels. Such bodies are essential for fostering accountability and ensuring that local authorities possess the requisite authority and resources to act on the SDGs (OECD, Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, July 2016).

The localization of the SDGs has been approached differently across various countries, yet several common themes emerge from their experiences. For instance, countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka have actively engaged in workshops and conferences to raise awareness and foster local ownership of the SDGs. These initiatives have been supported by international agencies, highlighting the importance of external collaboration in enhancing local capacities. However, despite these efforts, challenges such as limited resources and varying levels of political commitment have hindered effective implementation at the local level. This reflects a broader trend observed in many countries, where the gap between national policies and local execution remains a significant barrier to achieving SDG targets (United Cities and Local Governments, 2019).

In contrast, countries such as Morocco, South Africa, and Rwanda have developed

national frameworks that align closely with the SDGs, integrating them into their local governance structures. Morocco's national sustainable development strategy and South Africa's National Development Plan exemplify how strong national policies can facilitate local engagement and implementation. Similarly, Rwanda's SDG roadmaps have led to notable progress in areas like gender equality and health outcomes. However, these countries also face challenges, particularly in terms of financial resources and the capacity of local governments to execute these ambitious plans. The need for continuous capacity building and adequate funding is a recurring theme, underscoring the importance of empowering local authorities to effectively localize the SDGs targets (United Cities and Local Governments, 2019).

Furthermore, Kenya and Uganda illustrate the significance of establishing clear frameworks and guidelines for local governments to align their initiatives with the SDGs. Both countries have made strides in improving local service delivery and community participation, yet they also contend with disparities in resources among local governments. The experiences of these countries highlight the critical role of partnerships between local governments and civil society in enhancing the effectiveness of SDG localization efforts. Overall, while the challenges faced by these countries vary, the shared experiences of collaboration, the necessity for strong national frameworks, and the importance of local capacity building provide valuable insights into the complex process of localizing the SDGs targets (United Cities and Local Governments, 2019).

In addition to the previous best practices, experiences from more advanced countries offer valuable insights into the localization of the SDGs. For instance, Belgium and Sweden have effectively integrated the SDGs into local governance. In Belgium, 20 local governments, through the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, developed a Multi-annual policy plan that provides tools for sustainable municipal policy, although raising awareness among local political parties posed a challenge. Similarly, Sweden's Växjö municipality demonstrated strong leadership support for long-term planning, yet faced issues with intersectoral coordination, highlighting the need for tailored organizational changes (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN & United Nations Development Programme, 2023).

Japan and the United Republic of Tanzania also provide relevant examples. Japan's "SDGs Future Cities" initiative has fostered local ownership through multistakeholder partnerships, but challenges such as a lack of awareness and monitoring systems remain. In Tanzania, cities like Dar es Salaam and Dodoma have engaged in SDG localization driven by political will, yet insufficient coordination and data availability impede progress. Lastly, Türkiye's integration of SDGs into planning documents and the development of Voluntary Local Reviews in cities like Izmir and Avcilar illustrate the importance of consistent stakeholder engagement. Together, these experiences underscore the complexities of SDG localization and the critical need for awareness,

coordination, and strong partnerships (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN & United Nations Development Programme, 2023).

2.3. Governing framework for sustainable development in Egypt

The governing framework for SDGs is essential for ensuring effective implementation and coordination of sustainable development initiatives. It establishes the institutional arrangements and decision−making processes necessary for integrating SDGs into public policies, promoting coherence across various sectors and levels of government. A strong governing framework fosters collaboration among stakeholders, enhances transparency, and ensures accountability, which is crucial for monitoring progress towards the SDGs. Likewise, the governing framework plays a vital role in localizing the SDGs, empowering local authorities to tailor initiatives to their communities' specific needs. By fostering stakeholder engagement and facilitating resource mobilization, the framework ensures that sustainable development initiatives are tailored to local contexts. Effective governance mechanisms are therefore essential for achieving the SDGs and realizing Egypt's potential for sustainable development (OECD, Survey on Planning and Co−ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, July 2016; Igrioglu, Ostry, & Allam, 2020).

The Governing Framework for SDGs in Egypt embodies a structured and collaborative approach, defined by several key components (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrativ, 2018, pp. 8−9):

−   **Supreme Council for Planning and Sustainable Development.** The State General Planning Law No. 18 of 2022 established a Supreme Council for Planning and Sustainable Development, chaired by the President. The council's goal is to coordinate and collaborate among entities involved in planning and development to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy "Egypt 2030." This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process, define planning documents at national, regional, and local levels, clarify the integrated relationship between urban plans and economic and social development strategies, and ensure coherence between sectoral and spatial development.

The main responsibilities of the Supreme Council for Planning and Sustainable Development include ensuring the integration of sustainability principles into national development strategies, promoting equitable and balanced development across regions, and facilitating decentralization by empowering local administrative units. The Council is tasked with coordinating efforts among various state institutions to align their plans and programs, fostering community participation in the planning process, and adhering to established

planning standards. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of financial planning, flexibility in response to changing conditions, and the encouragement of innovation through modern methodologies, all while ensuring effective data and information exchange among relevant entities (State General Planning Law No. 18 of 2022, 2022).

- **Centralized National Strategy**: The "Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030" serves as the cornerstone of the governing framework. It integrates the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, providing a comprehensive roadmap for the country's development efforts.

- **National Committee**: The establishment of a national committee, which includes representatives from various ministries and governmental entities, underscores the importance of inter–institutional collaboration. This committee is responsible for coordinating efforts and ensuring that the SDGs are effectively localized within the national strategy.

- **Sector-Specific Strategies**: Different ministries have developed their own strategies that align with the overarching national framework. These sectoral strategies address specific areas such as education, energy, and women's empowerment, allowing for targeted interventions that contribute to the broader goals of sustainable development.

- **Sustainable Development Units**. The creation of sustainable development units within ministries is a significant step towards enhancing the implementation and monitoring of initiatives. These units are tasked with ensuring that sustainable development principles are integrated into the policies and programs of their respective sectors.

Overall, this governing framework aims to foster a cohesive and inclusive approach to sustainable development in Egypt. By aligning efforts across various sectors and stakeholders, it seeks to ensure that resources are utilized effectively and that the country makes meaningful progress towards its sustainable development objectives by 2030.

The Egypt Voluntary National Review Report (2021) provides a concise analysis of the national governance framework for the SDGs, highlighting key initiatives and challenges:

- **Good Governance Initiatives**: Egypt has established technological centers to enhance service delivery and accessibility for citizens.

- **Government Excellence Award**: The reinstatement of the 'Government Excellence Award' in 2019 recognizes outstanding performance in

government entities, aligning with Egypt Vision 2030.

- **Citizen Participation:** The "Sharek 2030" (Participate) application, launched in 2019, facilitates communication between the government and citizens, allowing for feedback on public services.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has implemented electronic monitoring and evaluation systems to enhance oversight and accountability of public projects linked to the SDGs.

- **National Committee for Monitoring SDGs:** A National Committee established under the Prime Minister's office oversees SDG implementation, ensuring alignment with the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS).

In conclusion, Egypt's governance framework has undergone notable evolution, with the SDS being further refined and operationalized through a participatory approach that engages a broader range of stakeholders, including government entities, civil society, and the private sector. This shift marks a transition toward a more inclusive governance model, essential for fostering ownership and accountability among diverse actors. However, there remains a need to strengthen governance structures to address coordination challenges among stakeholders, as these issues can impede progress toward achieving the SDGs.

2.4. SDGs implementation challenges in Egypt

Governments around the globe face significant challenges in achieving the SDGs, with these challenges varying among countries due to a multitude of factors. However, several common obstacles persist across different contexts. According to the OECD (Government at a Glance 2017, 2017, pp. 120–121) the primary challenges include:

- **Cross-Cutting Nature of SDGs:** The inherently cross–cutting nature of the SDGs complicates coordination efforts across various ministries and areas of responsibility.

- **Broad Scope:** The extensive range of the SDGs can be overwhelming, raising concerns that the scope may be too broad to facilitate effective implementation.

- **Resource Mobilization:** The need for additional resources for successful implementation presents a significant hurdle for many governments.

- **Perceived Irrelevance:** In some countries, there exists a perception that the SDGs may not align directly with their national priorities.

- **Duplication of Efforts**: Some nations feel that the SDGs duplicate existing national programs, leading to uncertainty regarding the added value of pursuing them.

- **Long Time Horizon**: The long–term nature of the SDGs can impede the mobilization of immediate support and commitment from stakeholders.

These challenges underscore the complexities of integrating the SDGs into national agendas and emphasize the need for tailored strategies to address them effectively.

In Egypt, these challenges are particularly pronounced, with a governance landscape marked by complex structures and overlapping responsibilities that lead to inefficiencies and a lack of accountability. Financial constraints further complicate the situation, as the country struggles to allocate sufficient resources for comprehensive policy implementation (Igrioglu et al., 2023). The varying levels of stakeholder engagement also pose a challenge, as effective SDGs implementation relay on the involvement of diverse stakeholders (Mwebesa et al., 2021). The absence of a formal collaboration framework often results in siloed approaches, undermining coherence. Overall, the institutional settings for implementing the SDGs in Egypt highlight the need for coordinated efforts among government entities, local authorities, civil society, and the private sector to ensure coherence and integration across all levels (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

These challenges underscore the necessity for enhanced data collection, targeted policy initiatives, and ongoing monitoring to enable Egypt to make substantial progress toward achieving the SDGs. Furthermore, there is a need for improved data disaggregation, as the lack of detailed disaggregated data impedes the identification of disparities and hinders efforts to ensure that no demographic group is left behind in the development process (Ghalib, 2024).

Nonetheless, national initiatives like Bedaya Gadida (New Beginning) in Egypt can significantly enhance the implementation of the SDGs by promoting intersectoral coordination. By fostering collaboration between various government ministries, civil society organizations, and the private sector, the initiative ensures that efforts across different sectors – such as education, healthcare, employment, and environmental sustainability – are aligned and mutually reinforcing. This coordinated approach is crucial for addressing the complex, interconnected challenges of sustainable development, as it enables a more holistic response to issues like poverty, inequality, and climate change. Through effective intersectoral coordination, Bedaya Gadida can leverage resources, expertise, and networks from diverse stakeholders, facilitating more efficient and impactful implementation of the SDGs and ensuring that progress is sustained across all sectors (National Initiative "Bedaya Gadida", 2024).

2.5.   International best practices in SDGs governance framework

A significant number of countries have established institutional mechanisms or processes to support the implementation of the SDGs, underscoring a strong commitment to integrating these goals into their national governance frameworks. The approaches to implementation vary widely; some countries have created dedicated committees or bodies specifically for the SDGs, while others leverage existing coordinating institutions. This diversity in strategies reflects the unique national contexts and governance structures of individual countries (OECD, Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, July 2016).

An analysis of SDG reports from 2016 to 2024 identifies key best practices in SDG implementation. Countries have adopted innovative strategies to integrate the SDGs into their national frameworks, reflecting a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda. For example, Bangladesh established a national monitoring framework, led by a coordinator in the Prime Minister's Office, to promote intergovernmental collaboration and address data gaps. Likewise, Mexico's National Council for the 2030 Agenda exemplifies a multi-sectoral approach, ensuring alignment between national policies and global SDG indicators.

Furthermore, countries such as Germany and Canada have made notable progress in incorporating the SDGs into their budgetary processes and national development strategies. In Germany, the Federal Statistical Office plays a pivotal role in coordinating data collection and dissemination, ensuring robust monitoring of SDG progress. Meanwhile, Canada emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement, particularly with indigenous communities, to ensure inclusive and equitable implementation. These approaches underscore the significance of embedding the SDGs within national priorities and fostering collaboration across diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, and the private sector.

Additionally, countries such as Rwanda and Sweden have demonstrated the effectiveness of results-based management and public participation in monitoring progress toward the SDGs. Rwanda's incorporation of the SDGs into its National Strategy for Transformation highlights a commitment to accountability and measurable outcomes. Similarly, Sweden's national action plan prioritizes stakeholder engagement, embodying a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. Together, these examples emphasize the importance of adopting integrated strategies that combine data-driven decision-making with inclusive governance to effectively advance the SDGs (United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2016-2024).

3.   Pathways to achieve the SDGs through policy implementation

The SDGs play a pivotal role in enhancing policy processes and institutional frameworks within countries, promoting a more integrated approach to governance. Their implementation requires a shift from traditional siloed policy–making to a collaborative, whole–of–government strategy that aligns economic, social, and environmental objectives (Biermann, Hickmann, Sénit, & Grob, 2022; Igrioglu, Ostry, & Allam, 2020). This shift not only supports the alignment of sector–specific strategies with national priorities but also fosters policy coherence across various governmental levels, thereby improving governance effectiveness (Biermann et al., 2022).

Likewise, the SDGs offer a valuable framework for countries to assess and strengthen their institutional capacities. By integrating the SDGs into national strategies and action plans, governments can identify both strengths and weaknesses in their institutional structures, enabling more informed decision–making and effective resource allocation (Igrioglu et al., 2023). The experiences of OECD countries underscore the importance of robust institutional coordination and strong political commitment for successful SDG implementation, helping governments address long–standing governance challenges and encourage cross–sectoral collaboration (Biermann et al., 2022; Igrioglu et al., 2023).

In Egypt, the establishment of the "Supreme Council for Planning and Sustainable Development" led by the President, demonstrates a strong commitment to incorporating the SDGs into national policy frameworks. The council's primary objective is to foster collaboration among various ministries, ensuring that policies are aligned with sustainable development goals. Despite these efforts, challenges such as institutional fragmentation and unclear role definitions within the Center of Government encumber the effective implementation of policies that address the interlinkages of the SDGs (Igrioglu, Ostry, & Allam, 2020).

The successful realization of the SDGs in Egypt is further impeded by weaknesses in data collection and monitoring systems, which are crucial for informed decision–making. The Center of Government plays an essential role in ensuring the systematic collection and analysis of data that links the SDGs to budgetary processes. Ongoing initiatives to enhance the capacity of line ministries and local authorities are vital for the effective implementation of the SDGs (Alessandro, Lafuente, & Santiso, 2014). However, inadequate data systems can obstruct the identification of disparities among different demographic groups, making it difficult to ensure that no one is left behind in the development process (Egypt's Voluntary National Review, 2021).

The interdependence between the SDGs and effective institutional arrangements is evident. The SDGs not only offer a roadmap for sustainable development but also drive improvements in governance structures and processes. By prioritizing

the SDGs, countries can strengthen policy frameworks, enhance transparency and accountability, and achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes for their citizens (Igrioglu et al., 2023). Therefore, commitment to the SDGs is both a strategic imperative and a means to enhance national governance and institutional effectiveness.

3.1. Challenges facing the interaction between policy and SDGs

The effective implementation of the SDGs is impeded by various challenges, some of which are general, while others are specific to contexts such as Egypt:

- **Complex Governance Structures:** The governance landscape is often characterized by overlapping responsibilities among various governmental bodies, leading to inefficiencies, miscommunication, and a lack of accountability (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

- **Limited Resources:** Financial constraints are a significant barrier, as many developing countries, including Egypt, struggle to allocate sufficient resources for comprehensive policy implementation. This limitation affects not only funding but also human capital and infrastructure (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

- **Varying Levels of Stakeholder Engagement:** Effective implementation of the SDGs relies heavily on the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, and local communities. In Egypt, the level of engagement varies, which can result in policies that do not reflect the needs or aspirations of those they aim to serve (Mwebesa, Yoh, & Doi, 2021).

- **Inter-Institutional Coordination:** Coordination issues among ministries lead to siloed approaches, hindering the integration of sector strategies with the SDG framework (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

- **Policy Coherence:** Achieving a whole-of-government approach is difficult due to misalignment among sector strategies, complicating the exploration of necessary linkages and synergies (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

- **Capacity and Skills:** Limitations in capacity and skills at various government levels affect policy formulation and implementation. Strengthening line ministries and subnational authorities is recommended (Igrioglu et al., 2023).

4. The role of the center of government in advancing SDG achievement
This section examines the role of the Center of Government in advancing the

SDGs. It covers the definition of Center of Government , its contributions to SDG implementation, successful examples of its impact, and the delivery approach that ensures effective application of Center of Government in achieving SDGS.

4.1. Definition of Center of Government

The Center of Government refers to the organizations and units that assist the chief executive (president or prime minister) and the cabinet in performing cross–cutting functions, including strategic management, policy coordination, performance monitoring, political management, and communications. It encompasses various entities such as general secretariats, cabinet offices, and councils of ministers' offices across different countries. The Center of Government plays a crucial role in supporting the organization and delivery of initiatives, particularly where line ministries may lack experience in cross–disciplinary policy implementation (OECD, Government at a Glance 2017, 2017). The Center of Government is characterized by several key functions that enhance its effectiveness in governance:

–   **Steering Implementation**: The Center of Government often leads the implementation of policies, either independently or in collaboration with designated ministries.

–   **Cross-Disciplinary Coordination:** It leverages expertise in policy coordination to manage cross–disciplinary policies, facilitating collaboration among various government sectors.

–   **Political Sensitivity:** The Center of Government navigates complex inter–ministerial relationships and promotes synergies between domestic and foreign affairs.

–   **Resource Allocation:** In some countries, the Center of Government ensures effective resource allocation to support initiatives, integrating them into regular budget processes.

–   **Performance Accountability:** The Center of Government establishes mechanisms for accountability, ensuring that ministries report on their progress related to specific goals, thereby enhancing transparency and performance management (OECD, Government at a Glance 2017, 2017).

4.2.   Center of government contribution to the implementation of SDGs

A study based on a survey of 32 countries, including both OECD members and select non–OECD countries, highlights the pivotal role of the Center of Government in leading and co–leading the implementation of the SDGs. The findings emphasize that the Center of Government plays a strategic role in coordinating and directing efforts across various sectors and ministries. Typically situated within the Prime

Minister's or President's office, the Center of Government is essential for establishing a clear vision and framework for the effective implementation of the SDGs (OECD, Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, July 2016). In many countries, such as Finland and Estonia in Europe, as well as Japan and Malaysia in Asia, the Center of Government leads initiatives related to the SDGs, ensuring that policies align with these goals and that coherence is maintained across different governmental levels. This leadership can be exercised solely by the Center of Government or in collaboration with line ministries, allowing for shared responsibilities that leverage expertise and resources effectively implementation (OECD, Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, July 2016).

Successful examples of a focused Center of Government include notable improvements in healthcare and crime reduction across various countries, demonstrating the significant impact of a well-functioning Center of Government on key priorities. A prominent case is Pernambuco in Brazil, where the adoption of the Center of Government model resulted in substantial improvements in service delivery and overall government performance. By establishing clear performance metrics and accountability mechanisms, the Pernambuco government reduced inefficiencies and enhanced the effectiveness of its interventions. This example highlights the importance of prioritizing critical government issues, implementing rigorous performance monitoring, and promoting inter-governmental collaboration to achieve better outcomes for citizens (Alessandro, Lafuente, & Santiso, 2014).

Indeed, there is a pressing need for a thorough assessment of the impacts of the Centre of Government on government outcomes. This underscores the importance of focusing efforts on key priorities to prevent the dilution of resources. By strengthening strategic capabilities and promoting collaboration among ministries, the Center of Government can achieve improved outcomes and deliver services that effectively meet the needs of citizens in an increasingly interconnected environment (Alessandro, Lafuente, & Santiso, 2014; Shostak, Alessandro, Diamond, Mosqueira, & Lafuente, 2023).

4.3. Delivery Approach as a mechanism for effective application of the Centre of Government

The concept of Center of Government is fundamentally rooted in principles of collaboration, work culture, and a shared commitment among members of government or the Cabinet. It emphasizes the importance of cohesive governance structures that facilitate effective decision-making and policy implementation across various sectors. However, to translate these principles into tangible outcomes, there is a pressing need for applicable mechanisms that can operationalize the Center of Government framework. In many countries, particularly in developed nations such

as the United Kingdom and the United States, the implementation of a delivery approach has emerged as a vital strategy. This approach focuses on ensuring that government initiatives are not only well-planned but also effectively executed, thereby bridging the gap between policy formulation and real-world impact.

4.3.1. Definition of Delivery Approaches

The concept of Delivery Approaches (DAs) encompasses structured processes or institutionalized units within government bureaucracies that aim to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery. These approaches are specifically designed to address the shortcomings of traditional public policy and administrative systems, which often struggle to produce tangible results due to outdated procedures, excessive controls, and a lack of focus on outcomes (Mansoor et al., July 2021).

Delivery Approaches can be defined as frameworks that integrate various managerial functions to shift the focus from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes. This shift is essential for improving bureaucratic functioning and ensuring that government initiatives are responsive to the needs of citizens. By institutionalizing this approach, government can foster a more agile and results-oriented environment that prioritizes problem-solving and the effective implementation of policies (Mansoor et al., July 2021). This alignment with the principles of the Center of Government underscores the necessity for applicable mechanisms that translate collaborative governance into actionable results, particularly in developed countries where delivery units have been successfully employed to drive progress and accountability.

4.3.2. Importance of Delivery Approaches

Delivery approaches are crucial for driving substantial improvements in government performance. Several key factors highlight the essential role these approaches play, as outlined below:

- **Enhanced Accountability:** Delivery Approaches promote accountability by establishing clear goals and metrics for success. This focus on measurable outcomes enables governments to track progress and hold relevant stakeholders accountable for results (Watkins et al., 2010).

- **Improved Service Delivery:** By concentrating on outputs and outcomes, Delivery Approaches ensure that public services are delivered more effectively and efficiently. This focus can lead to increased citizen satisfaction and greater trust in government institutions (Mansoor et al., July 2021).

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Delivery Approaches emphasize the use of data and evidence to inform policy decisions. This reliance on data

helps governments identify performance bottlenecks, allocate resources more effectively, and make informed adjustments to strategies as needed (Kohli & Moody, 2016).

– **Adaptability to Change**: In a rapidly changing political, economic, and social landscape, Delivery Approaches provide governments with the flexibility to adapt their strategies and priorities. This adaptability is essential for addressing emerging challenges and ensuring that government initiatives remain relevant (Gold, 2017).

– **Focus on Results:** Ultimately, Delivery Approaches shift the focus of government activities from mere compliance with processes to achieving meaningful results for citizens. This results–oriented mindset is crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement within public institutions (Barber, 2018).

Ultimately, Delivery Approach signifies a fundamental change in governmental operations, prioritizing accountability, data–informed decision–making, and an emphasis on outcomes. By implementing these approaches, governments can improve their performance and more effectively address the needs of their citizens, in the end, building trust and encouraging greater participation in the democratic process. The Delivery Approach is effectively translated into a modeling framework known as the Delivery Unit, which serves as a crucial mechanism for enhancing the effectiveness of the Center of Government . The following section will elaborate further on the specific functions, structures, and impacts of Delivery Units in various governance contexts.

4.3.3. Delivery Unit: definition and Key components

Delivery units represent a critical element of the delivery approach, functioning as specialized entities within government structures that are dedicated to advancing the implementation of priority objectives, enhancing accountability, and cultivating a results–oriented culture. By establishing clear lines of responsibility and employing data–driven methodologies, delivery units are instrumental in translating the commitments made by the Center of Government into tangible progress at the operational level. A Delivery Unit is defined as a specialized team or institutional framework within a government that focuses on improving the execution of key policy priorities while enhancing overall bureaucratic performance. The concept emerged in the United Kingdom with the establishment of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) in 2001. Delivery Units are specifically designed to rectify the inefficiencies inherent in traditional public administration by emphasizing results–oriented management and effective problem–solving (Mansoor et al., July 2021; Gold, 2017).

Typically situated at the center of government, Delivery Units are responsible for monitoring progress on priority initiatives, identifying barriers to effective delivery, and facilitating collaboration among various government agencies. They utilize data and evidence to inform decision−making processes, ensuring that government actions are aligned with strategic objectives (Kohli & Moody, 2016). Delivery Units are essential elements of contemporary governance, dedicated to enhancing policy implementation and optimizing bureaucratic efficiency. By setting clear objectives, garnering political backing, integrating seamlessly with existing frameworks, harnessing data−driven insights, building institutional capacity, and promoting collaborative efforts, Delivery Units have the potential to catalyze substantial advancements in government performance and service delivery. Their strategic role is essential for fostering a responsive and accountable public sector that effectively meets the needs of its citizens.

4.3.4. Delivery Unit models

Delivery Unit models encompass a range of frameworks and structures that governments can implement to strengthen their capacity for effective policy execution and service delivery. These models exhibit significant diversity in their design, focus, and operational mechanisms, which are tailored to the unique political, economic, and social contexts of each country. This variability underscores the adaptability of Delivery Units in addressing specific governance challenges. The following section presents an overview of several prominent Delivery Unit models observed across various nations, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Delivery Units Models and Examples

Model	Description	Example (s)
Centralized Delivery Units	Centralized Delivery Units are typically situated at the heart of government, often reporting directly to the head of state or government. These units focus on tracking progress on national priorities and ensuring that various ministries and agencies align their efforts with overarching government goals.	The UK's Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) was established to monitor and drive progress on key policy initiatives during Tony Blair's administration. It emphasized accountability and results−oriented management.

Model	Description	Example (s)
Task Forces and Commissions	These are temporary or permanent groups formed to address specific issues or implement particular reforms. They often bring together experts from various sectors to focus on targeted challenges.	The National Sustainable Development Committee (NSDC) in Kuwait monitors the implementation of the Vision 2035 and the country's progress towards the SDGs.
Collaborative Networks	Collaborative networks emphasize cooperation among various stakeholders, leveraging existing relationships and networks to solve complex problems. These models often utilize data-driven approaches to identify and address implementation challenges.	The Commissioner's Delivery Unit (CDU) in Kentucky, United States, employs Networked Improvement Communities (NIC) to collaboratively identify and solve challenges in service delivery.
Results-Based Management Units	These units focus on achieving specific results and outcomes, often using performance metrics to guide their work. They are designed to ensure that government initiatives are aligned with measurable objectives and that progress is regularly assessed	Kenya's Presidential Delivery Unit is tasked with ensuring the implementation of national priorities, focusing on outcome-based goals in sectors like manufacturing and health.
Performance Management and Delivery Units	These units are dedicated to driving the implementation of government transformation programs through a strong focus on performance indicators and results-based management. They often work closely with various ministries to ensure that strategic objectives are met.	The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) in Malaysia drives the implementation of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) through a results-oriented approach.

Model	Description	Example (s)
Innovation Labs	Innovation labs are experimental spaces within government that focus on developing and testing new ideas and approaches to public service delivery. They often employ design thinking and agile methodologies to foster creativity and innovation.	Various countries have established innovation labs that work on pilot projects aimed at improving service delivery and addressing specific policy challenges.

Source: Compiled by the author utilizing data derived from global best practices (Mansoor et al., July 2021; Gold, 2017; (Barber, Success Delivered: How Delivery Units make a difference for governments and the citizens they serve, 2018); (Alessandro, Lafuente, & Santiso, 2014).

In conclusion, Delivery Unit models demonstrate significant diversity and adaptability, tailored to the unique needs and contexts of different governments. By employing various frameworks –ranging from centralized units to collaborative networks– governments can enhance their capacity for effective policy implementation, promote accountability, and improve service delivery to citizens. Each model has its own strengths and challenges, with the choice of the most suitable model depending on the specific objectives, available resources, and political context of the governing body. A nuanced understanding of these models is crucial for optimizing governance and achieving successful outcomes in public service.

4.3.5. **Success and failure factors of delivery units**

Delivery Units are designed to enhance government performance and improve policy implementation. However, their effectiveness can vary significantly based on a range of factors. Understanding these success and failure factors is crucial for optimizing the performance of Delivery Units. Below are the key factors that influence their success or failure.

a. **Success factors**

– **Clear Goals and Objectives:** Successful Delivery Units establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time–bound goals. This clarity helps align efforts and ensures that all stakeholders understand the desired outcomes, facilitating focused action (Mansoor et al., July 2021). For example, Pakistan's Punjab Schools Reform Roadmap focused on

measurable metrics like teacher attendance, which fostered accountability and led to tangible improvements in educational quality (Todd, Martin, & Brock, February 2014). Balancing Short–Term Outputs with Long–Term Outcomes is vital. While it is important for Delivery Units to achieve immediate outputs, they should also maintain a focus on long–term outcomes. This balance ensures that short–term successes contribute to sustainable improvements in service delivery and policy impact. In Tanzania, the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative faced challenges due to its broad range of simultaneous reforms, which diluted the impact of individual initiatives (Todd, Martin, & Brock, February 2014

- **Strong Leadership and Political Support**: Effective Delivery Units benefit from strong leadership that champions the initiative and secures necessary political backing. This support is crucial for navigating bureaucratic challenges and ensuring that the unit has the authority to drive change (Gold, 2017). For instance, in the UK, the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) was established within the Prime Minister's Office, which provided it with the political weight needed to influence policy and implementation (Watkins et al., 2010). Similarly, in Indonesia, the President's Delivery Unit was created to help navigate challenges during the president's term, highlighting the importance of political endorsement (Khan & Khan, 2018).

- **Integration with Existing Structures**: A successful Delivery Unit is typically integrated into existing bureaucratic frameworks, allowing it to leverage available resources and processes. This integration helps minimize resistance from established institutions and facilitates smoother implementation of new initiatives (Mansoor et al., July 2021). For instance, the PMDU in the UK was able to utilize established government structures to drive its initiatives (Watkins et al., 2010).

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Utilizing data and evidence to inform decisions is a hallmark of effective Delivery Units. By analyzing performance metrics and outcomes, these units can identify bottlenecks, assess progress, and make informed adjustments to strategies (Kohli & Moody, 2016). For example, the PMDU employed customer journey mapping to reveal performance bottlenecks, demonstrating the importance of data in driving improvements (Watkins et al., 2010).

- **Capacity Building:** Successful Delivery Units invest in building the capacity of their staff and stakeholders. This includes training and development initiatives that enhance skills and knowledge, enabling team members to effectively address challenges and implement solutions (Mansoor et

al., July 2021). A successful delivery team should comprise individuals with varied professional backgrounds, including bureaucrats, private sector experts, and academics. This diversity enhances problem−solving capabilities and allows for innovative approaches to challenges. The integration of different perspectives can lead to more effective strategies and solutions (Khan & Khan, 2018).

- **Learning and Feedback Integration**: Establishing mechanisms to incorporate lessons learned into the public administration system is vital for sustainability and improvement in policy execution. Continuous learning allows Delivery Units to adapt and refine their approaches based on past experiences, ensuring that they remain responsive to changing circumstances and challenges (Khan & Khan, 2018).

- **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement**: Engaging a wide range of stakeholders fosters collaboration and enhances the effectiveness of delivery efforts. By involving various government agencies, civil society, and other relevant actors, Delivery Units can create a more comprehensive approach to problem−solving and service delivery (Gold, 2017).

b. Failure factors

- **Lack of Clear Mandate**: Delivery Units that operate without a well−defined mandate may struggle to focus their efforts effectively. A vague or overly broad mandate can lead to confusion and diluted priorities, hindering the unit's ability to achieve meaningful results (Gold, 2017).

- **Insufficient Political Support**: A lack of political backing can undermine the authority and effectiveness of a Delivery Unit. Without strong support from political leaders, these units may face challenges in securing resources, navigating bureaucratic hurdles, and driving change (Mansoor et al., July 2021).

- **Poor Integration with Existing Structures**: If a Delivery Unit is not well integrated into existing bureaucratic frameworks, it may encounter resistance from established institutions. This disconnection can lead to inefficiencies and hinder the unit's ability to implement initiatives effectively (Gold, 2017).

- **High Staff Turnover:** High levels of turnover among staff members and unit heads can disrupt continuity and hinder the development of institutional knowledge. Frequent changes in personnel can lead to a loss of momentum and undermine the unit's effectiveness (Gold, 2017).

- **Inadequate Data and Resources:** Delivery Units that lack access to quality data and resources may struggle to make informed decisions. Insufficient capacity within the wider delivery system to support data-tracking and analysis can limit the unit's ability to assess progress and identify challenges (Mansoor et al., July 2021).

- **Over emphasis on Outputs Rather than Outcomes:** In some cases, Delivery Units may focus too heavily on achieving output-type goals rather than long-term outcomes. This short-sighted approach can lead to superficial successes that do not translate into meaningful improvements in service delivery or policy impact (Mansoor et al., July 2021).

In essence, a deep understanding of these factors is crucial for policymakers to optimize Delivery Units and enhance the performance of the Center of Government.

5.   Public sector readiness to apply Center of Government and Delivery Units in managing SDGs implementation

The Egyptian government is undergoing a public sector reform aimed at modernizing the infrastructure of state administrative bodies. This reform seeks to improve coordination among government entities, streamline public sector processes, and establish regulatory frameworks to enhance operational efficiency (Rashed, 2022). It also focuses on strengthening the capacity of state employees through training and e-government initiatives, with the goal of increasing transparency, accountability, and citizen satisfaction. These efforts align with the broader objectives of sustainable development and good governance (Rashed, 2022). Reform strategies further include the implementation of a merit-based recruitment and promotion system, fixed-term contracts for civil servants, and outsourcing public services to private entities to reduce the state's operational burden and improve efficiency (Labib, 2022, p. 6). Civil Service Law No. 81 of 2016 underpins these reforms by establishing merit-based recruitment through competitive examinations, ensuring the selection of qualified candidates for public service roles. In addition, the initiative of the National Training Academy (NTA), designed to serve as an intellectual incubator, aims to empower future leaders by providing innovative solutions and fostering human development. The NTA plays a pivotal role in shaping leadership within Egypt's public sector by offering comprehensive training programs that cultivate transformative leaders capable of driving governmental change (Rashed, 2022).

The New Administrative Capital (NAC) is a key component of Egypt's public sector reform, enhancing coordination and integrity among government institutions. Serving as a hub for smart governance, the NAC promotes collaboration among universities, businesses, and government entities, incorporating advanced technologies to address urban challenges and improve institutional responsiveness. This initiative

is integral to Egypt's Vision 2030, which aims to modernize the civil service and enhance administrative efficiency through the relocation of government agencies to the NAC. The relocation is designed to streamline operations, foster innovation, and improve public service delivery (Ali, 2021; The Chandler Institute of Governance, 2024, pp. 46–50). In addition to infrastructure improvements, the NAC fosters a cultural transformation in the civil service by prioritizing employee relocation based on specific skills and self–improvement. The city's smart design and improved living conditions attract skilled professionals and encourage collaboration among public employees, thereby enhancing governance effectiveness. The integration of advanced information and communication technology (ICT) further supports this transformation by digitalizing administrative processes, improving service delivery, and boosting efficiency. However, addressing bureaucratic challenges and ensuring the effective implementation of Coordinated Government concepts are critical to realizing the NAC's full potential and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Rashed, 2022).

In addition to infrastructure and institutional reforms, presidential initiatives such as the "Decent Life" and "100 Million Health" campaigns have become central to Egypt's development strategy. These initiatives aim to improve public services and quality of life, particularly in underserved rural areas, by providing tailored solutions to meet the specific needs of marginalized communities. Their visibility enhances accountability and attracts funding, further strengthening their impact.

Despite continuous efforts to enhance public sector performance, it still faces several challenges, including:

a.   **Overstaffing in the Egyptian Bureaucracy**: Overstaffing remains a significant issue within the Egyptian bureaucracy, characterized by an excessive number of government employees relative to the population. Recent estimates indicate that there are approximately 6.4 million government employees, resulting in a ratio of one employee for every 17 citizens. This figure far exceeds the internationally accepted standard of one employee for every 80 citizens. The consequences of overstaffing include a substantial wage bill and persistent calls for administrative reform aimed at enhancing efficiency and reducing the workforce to a more manageable level (Baradei, 2021, p. 64).

b.   **Centralization of Decision-Making:** Centralization in Egyptian public administration refers to the concentration of decision–making authority and administrative functions within the central government, rather than distributing power to local governments. Despite the division of Egypt into 27 governorates, the term "local government" is rarely employed; instead, "local administration" is preferred, indicating a lack of real empowerment

for governors and local entities. This highly centralized bureaucratic structure has contributed to various issues, including overstaffing and inefficiencies, as the system is ill-equipped to manage the large number of employees effectively (Baradei, 2021, p. 64).

c. **Low Compensation and Job Demand:** Low compensation is another notable challenge within the Egyptian bureaucracy, characterized by relatively low salaries for government employees. This issue has been exacerbated by overstaffing, rising wage bills, and limited government resources. Following the currency devaluation in 2016, the real value of salaries significantly declined, leading to a sharp reduction in purchasing power for government employees. Despite these financial drawbacks, the public sector continues to be the preferred employment sector due to its favorable working conditions compared to the private sector. The public sector is characterized by job stability, benefits, and better overall working conditions, especially in a context where job informality is rising. However, there is a noted decline in public sector employment rates among new labor market entrants (Barsoum & Abdalla, 2020, p. 16).

d. **Aging Workforce in the Public Sector:** The public sector in Egypt is experiencing significant aging, with a notable increase in the proportion of older employees. As of 2018, 39% of public sector workers were in the age category of 48-60 years, a rise from 24% in 1998, 29% in 2006, and 33% in 2012. This trend indicates that the workforce is becoming older over time, presenting both challenges and opportunities for reform (Barsoum & Abdalla, 2020, p. 12).

In summary, Egypt's ongoing public sector reform aims to modernize administrative infrastructure, improve coordination, and enhance efficiency through initiatives such as merit-based recruitment, the relocation of government agencies to the New Administrative Capital, and the establishment of the National Training Academy. While these reforms strive to strengthen governance, challenges like overstaffing, centralization, low compensation, and an aging workforce remain. Presidential initiatives, such as "Decent Life" and "100 Million Health," support these efforts by focusing on underserved areas. To overcome these challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), continued investment in human capital, decentralization, and innovation is essential.

5.1. Evaluating Egypt's public institutions effectiveness: progress and challenges in international indices

This section analyzes several international indices to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of public institutions based on global benchmarks. Utilizing these

established frameworks offers a comprehensive understanding of the current state of governance and public service delivery. The indices examined in this analysis include the Worldwide Governance Indicators, the Comprehensive Governance and Government Index (CGGI), the E-Government Development Index, and the GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI).

a.   Worldwide Governance Indicators

A review of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank) reveals concerning trends in the government effectiveness percentile rank, which ranges from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest). The data indicates a notable decline in government effectiveness scores over recent years, highlighting the need for increased attention to this critical area of governance. Specifically, the percentile ranks were recorded as follows: 36.19 in 2020, 34.76 in

Figure 2 :Government Effectiveness -Percentile rank among all countries

2021, and 33.96 in 2022. This downward trajectory underscores the urgency for policymakers to address the factors contributing to this degradation in government effectiveness to enhance overall governance and public service delivery (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2023).
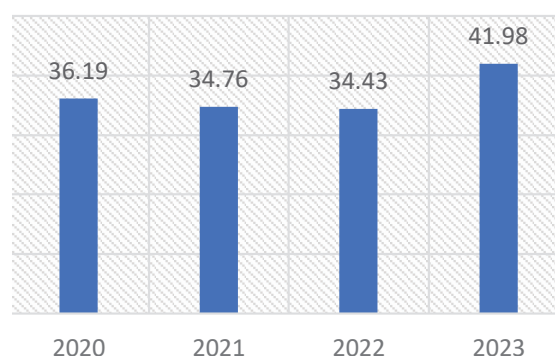
b.   Comprehensive Governance and Government Index (CGGI)

The Comprehensive Governance and Government Index (CGGI) serves as a robust measure of national government effectiveness, evaluating the capabilities and performance of governments across 113 countries. The index operates on a scale ranging from 0, indicating the lowest score, to 1, representing the highest score. In this context, Egypt holds a global rank of 75 out of 113 countries, while its rank in the category of strong institutions is notably lower at 80 out of 113. These rankings highlight a pressing need for focused efforts to enhance the quality of bureaucratic processes and strengthen institutional frameworks within the country. Addressing these deficiencies is essential for improving overall governance and fostering sustainable development in Egypt (The Chandler Institute of Governance, 2024).

c.   E-Government Development Index

An analysis of the E−Government Development Index indicates significant progress for Egypt in the global rankings. Out of 193 countries, Egypt was positioned at 111 in 2020, improved to 103 in 2022, and further advanced to 95 in 2024. This upward track reflects the collective efforts made by the Egyptian government to enhance the quality and accessibility of online services. Such advancements are indicative of a commitment to improving e−governance and ensuring that citizens have better access to essential services through digital platforms. This progress underscores the importance of continued investment in e−government initiatives to further facilitate service delivery and promote transparency in governance (United Nations, United Nations E−government Survey 2024, 2024).

d.   The GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI)

The GovTech initiative is primarily associated with the World Bank Group (WBG). The GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI) is a project developed by the World Bank to measure and enhance the maturity of digital government transformation in client countries . GovTech represents a comprehensive strategy for modernizing the public sector, aimed at fostering a government that is straightforward, efficient, and transparent, with a strong focus on placing citizens at the heart of the reform efforts. The four focus areas measured by the GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI) (0 (minimum value) to 1 (maximum value) are: Core Government Systems Index (CGSI); Public Service Delivery Index (PSDI); Citizen Engagement Index (CEI); GovTech Enablers Index (GTEI). These areas are assessed using a total of 48 key indicators across the 198 economies included in the index.

Egypt has made notable progress in the GovTech Maturity Index, as reported by the World Bank. The country's overall score stands at 0.75, surpassing the global average of 0.68. In terms of specific components, Egypt's Core Government Systems Index achieved a score of 0.78,
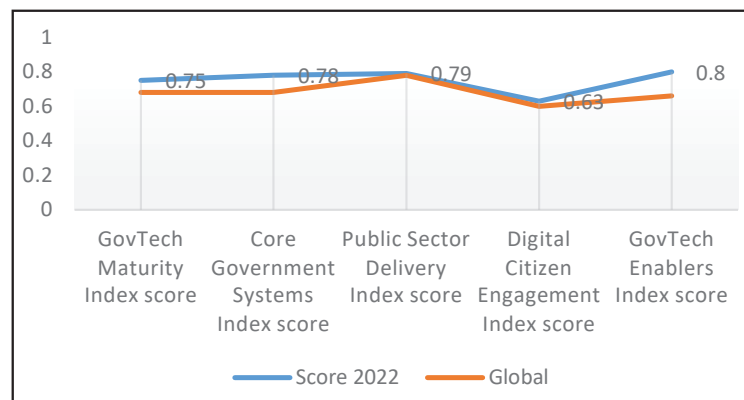

Figure 3 Egypt Score 2022, The GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI)

compared to the global average of 0.68. Furthermore, the Public Sector Delivery Index reflects a score of 0.79, which is slightly above the global average of 0.78. The Digital Citizen Engagement Index for Egypt is recorded at 0.63, exceeding the global average of 0.60. Lastly, the GovTech Enablers Index demonstrates a strong performance with a score of 0.80, significantly higher than the global average of

0.66. It is important to note that these scores range from a minimum value of 0 to a maximum value of 1, indicating varying levels of maturity in GovTech practices (World Bank , GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI) Data Dashboard, 2022).

The analysis of Egypt's performance across various international indices reveals a mixed picture of governance and public service delivery. While Egypt has made notable progress in digital governance, as evidenced by its GovTech Maturity Index score of 0.75—above the global average of 0.68 and an improvement in the E-Government Development Index from 111 in 2020 to 95 in 2024, challenges remain. Conversely, the Worldwide Governance Indicators indicate a concerning decline in government effectiveness, with scores dropping from 36.19 in 2020 to 33.96 in 2022. Additionally, the Comprehensive Governance and Government Index ranks Egypt at 75 out of 113 countries, highlighting weaknesses in institutional frameworks. This disparity between advancements in digital services and persistent governance issues suggests that technological improvements alone are insufficient.

6.   Findings

In conclusion, Egypt has made notable progress in the implementation of the SDGs, as evidenced by its ranking of 83rd out of 167 countries in the Sustainable Development Report 2024, accompanied by an overall SDG Index score of 69.1, which exceeds the regional average for the Middle East and North Africa. This progress signifies a robust commitment to the integration of economic, social, and environmental dimensions within its national development framework, particularly through the "Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030."

Nevertheless, despite these commendable achievements, Egypt continues to encounter persistent challenges that impede the full realization of the SDGs. Critical barriers include issues related to resource mobilization, inter-institutional coordination, and the imperative for enhanced data systems. According to both international SDG reports and the national voluntary review reports, Egypt has established a governance framework aimed at advancing the SDGs and embedding them within its national planning system. This framework encompasses essential components such as the Supreme Council for Planning and Sustainable Development, a Centralized National Strategy, a National Committee, Sector-Specific Strategies, and Sustainable Development Units, in addition to a comprehensive localization process.

However, the existing legal framework is insufficient on its own to bolster the effective implementation of the SDGs. It is imperative to embody the principles of the Center of Government concept and to develop sustainable and efficient mechanisms that

facilitate the ongoing implementation of the SDGs while addressing the inherent challenges faced by public institutions. Insights drawn from global best practices in SDG implementation further underscore the significance of this approach.

Addressing these challenges is vital for Egypt to maintain its momentum and ensure that the SDGs yield meaningful outcomes for all segments of society. By concentrating efforts in these areas, Egypt can further enhance its public administration and strengthen its capacity to effectively achieve sustainable development goals. To effectively apply the Center of Government concept "Delivery Units" in Egypt, it is essential to draw from international best practices that emphasize collaboration, accountability, and innovation. The Delivery Unit model, which has proven successful in various contexts, can be adapted to Egypt's unique governance landscape by fostering inter–ministerial cooperation and ensuring that sustainable development principles are embedded within sector–specific strategies. By establishing clear roles and responsibilities, enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems, and promoting stakeholder engagement, Egypt can leverage these frameworks to improve policy execution and service delivery.

The readiness of public sector in Egypt to adopt the Center of Government concept and Delivery Units presents a complex interplay of potential opportunities and significant challenges. On one hand, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the necessity for reform and innovation within the public sector, spurred by the imperative to achieve the SDGs and enhance governance outcomes. Egypt has demonstrated experience in implementing national initiatives through task force management, which bears resemblance to the Delivery Unit model. However, these task forces require a strategic orientation that shifts their focus from isolated initiatives to a cohesive mechanism aimed at achieving national objectives, particularly the SDGs. Furthermore, it is essential that these task forces are institutionalized, possess a clear line of authority, and operate under the auspices of the Prime Minister's office to effectively navigate anticipated challenges. This alignment would also serve to strengthen the Center of Government framework.

Conversely, several challenges persist, including embedded bureaucratic practices, limited financial and human resources, and varying levels of stakeholder engagement, all of which can impede progress. To leverage the existing opportunities, it is imperative for Egypt to invest in capacity building, cultivate a culture of collaboration, and address the governance issues that hinder effective implementation. By undertaking these initiatives, Egypt can enhance its public administration and ensure that the SDGs translate into meaningful outcomes that benefit all segments of society, thereby flagging the way for sustainable development and an improved quality of life for its citizens.

Despite these challenges, the Egyptian government has demonstrated a commitment

to reforming public institutions, motivated by both internal citizen demands and the expectations of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The establishment of the New Administrative Capital, the national digital initiative, and the creation of programs aimed at enhancing leadership, such as the National Academy for Training, signify the potential for substantial improvements within the public sector in Egypt. These developments reflect a proactive approach to addressing the complexities of governance and underscore the government's resolve to foster a more effective and responsive public administration.

7.   Recommendations

Based on the analysis and conclusions drawn from Egypt's current progress and challenges in achieving the SDGs, the paper proposes key recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of SDG implementation. These recommendations are informed by global best practices and aim to address the barriers identified, including:

–   **Establish and Strengthen Delivery Units**: As evidenced by global best practices, integrating Delivery Units under the Prime Minister's office is crucial for the successful achievement of SDGs. These units should be strategically aligned with national goals, equipped with clear authority, and held accountable for driving SDG implementation across sectors.

–   **Enhance Resource Mobilization and Financial Strategies**: To overcome funding limitations, Egypt should prioritize the development of sustainable financial mechanisms, ensuring sufficient resources are allocated to SDG-related projects, thereby supporting the long-term success of the Delivery Units.

–   **Strengthen Inter-Institutional Coordination**: Effective delivery of SDGs requires strong inter-ministerial cooperation. By aligning sector-specific strategies with national SDG objectives, Egypt can enhance the efficiency of public administration and ensure that all sectors contribute meaningfully to SDG targets.

–   **Invest in Data Systems and Monitoring**: To enable the Delivery Units to operate effectively, Egypt should invest in robust data collection, monitoring, and evaluation systems. This will ensure that SDG progress is accurately tracked, fostering evidence-based decision-making and enhancing accountability.

–   **Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Capacity Building**: It is essential to invest in public sector capacity building programs that encourage collaboration and innovation. By fostering a results-oriented culture within public institutions, Egypt can address governance challenges, ensuring that SDGs are achieved through effective and efficient service delivery.

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