



Shiraka Programme

Improving public performance in partnership

Key results of the STP and G2G components 2016 - 2021

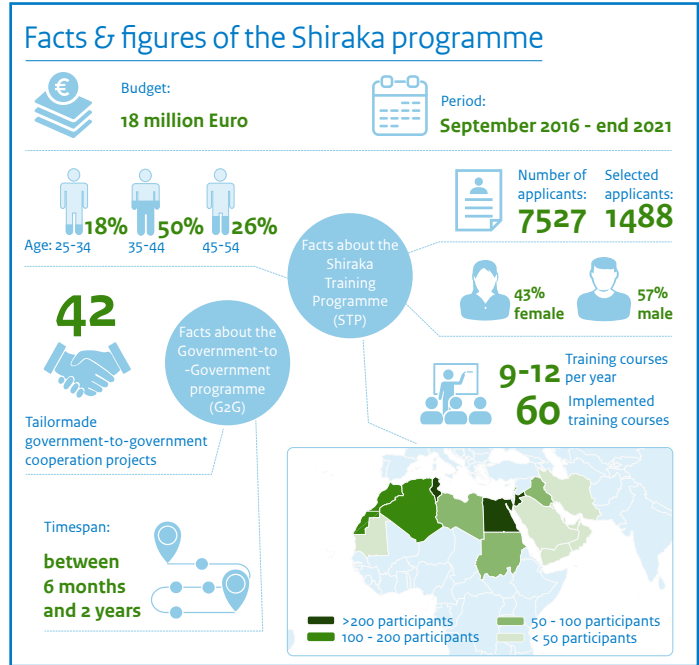


What is the programme about?

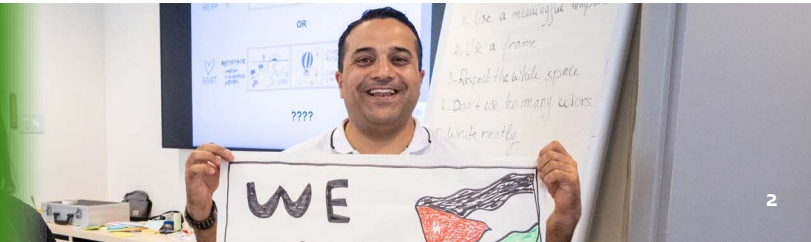
This e-zine is developed to give an overview of the Shiraka programme and the evaluation of its two sub programmes STP and G2G.

The Shiraka programme was launched in 2016 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is executed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO). Its purpose is to contribute to public service delivery and to improve the relationship between citizens and governments in 19 countries in the MENA region.

In partnership, the Netherlands support Training Programmes (STP) for civil servants and Government-to-Government (G2G) cooperation in the field of governance, legislation, human rights, transparency, rule of law, economic infrastructure, etc. The Shiraka programme 2016-2021 has been evaluated in 2022.



The programme



Why this evaluation?

The main aim of the evaluation on Shiraka 2016-2021 was to gain insight into the relevance and the short- and longer-term results / spin-offs achieved by the STP and G2G intervention.

The evaluation reconstructed and analysed a programme-specific Theory of Change to verify if interventions led to both **individual** (skills/knowledge, ideas/inspiration, international relations/networks) and **institutional effects**.

Data collection in response to the specific evaluation questions took place through desk-study, survey and focus group discussions among participants of STP and G2G learning trajectories, and interviews with various stakeholders in the Netherlands and seven selected programme countries (including representatives of Dutch embassies and national governments).



The evaluation



What are the results of the programme?

Overall, the evaluation considers the STP and G2G components of the Shiraka programme successful. With relatively limited resources, important competencies were developed, including strengthened self-confidence in the field of good governance among a large group of civil servants in the MENA region. This has resulted in a widespread network of government employees having a positive image of, and affinity with the Netherlands. This network can be of great value for bilateral relationships and diplomatic efforts in the region, if strategically utilised.

The STP and G2G interventions have laid the foundations for government officials from the MENA region to use their strengthened capacities and confidence to inspire institutional change. This is often a challenging and long-term process. However, the STP/ G2G interventions have been important catalytic contributions, that can serve as inspiration for the next phase of the programme.



Did the programme do the right things?

The STP training courses responded to a clear need for competence-strengthening of government employees in the region. This was evident from the strong interest in these training courses from the intended target group (mid-career civil servants), also during the COVID pandemic, and confirmed by (former) participants and embassies in the region.

G2G projects were relevant, but more difficult to develop, especially in times of COVID. Government officials and embassies in the MENA region showed ample interest in the G2G modality, given the number of ideas for G2G projects that were launched. Although time-consuming, the development of G2G projects proved valuable in improving bilateral contacts and in creating mutual understanding (between Dutch and national counterparts), even if this ultimately did not lead to a G2G project.

STP and G2G interventions focused primarily on individual government employees as stepping stones towards the programme's wider ambitions of organizational development and improved public services. Strengthening the knowledge, skills and motivation



“Both G2G and STP fit well in the objectives and plans of the embassy to support economic reform and improving public accountability. The programme also fits the country context. Especially the new training on Eco-system for entrepreneurship is highly relevant.”

- Dutch Embassy representative in Iraq

of individual civil servants played a vital role, but a broader effort is required to enable the use of this new knowledge and skills in pursuit of institutional improvements.

G2G interventions were demand-driven, requiring that ideas for cooperation come from institutions in the MENA region to tackle certain issues or improve a specific public service.

Both **STP and G2G were unique in strengthening the image of the Netherlands as a flexible and pragmatic partner country**, especially because of the conscious combination of theory and practice, in which the Dutch ‘model’ served as example but not as a norm.

Did the programme achieve its objectives?

Knowledge and skills

The G2G and STP programmes have helped to improve skills and knowledge, mainly because of the effective training methods and quality design of interventions. Participants experienced the Shiraka STP and G2G programme as useful but quite intense, which made internalisation of new information at times challenging.

Inspiration

STP Alumni indicated often they were inspired by different work approaches, tools and methods. The visits to institutions in the Netherlands were an important source of inspiration. Participants were also very enthusiastic about learning from each other's systems and approaches, which were in some cases even more applicable in their context.

Especially G2G projects with a longer duration were highly effective in inspiring participating government representatives as they allowed for more regular and repeated exchange of experiences.



Improved networks

Almost 50% of the STP alumni indicated that their regional network with peers had improved, but highlight that it requires active efforts to retain their energy and value.

Relationship with the Netherlands

More than 70% of alumni have developed a more positive image of the Netherlands and look forward to further cooperation with the Netherlands, requiring active efforts from both sides.



What are examples of impact on government institutions?

STP and G2G interventions have had a convincing impact on individuals given the many examples of alumni putting forward new ideas and initiatives.

Turning these initiatives into institutional improvements is a complex and long-term process, but there are certainly more than a few examples of projects that successfully impacted institutions.

On the right and on the next pages are examples of institutional change.

Netherlands Court of Audit regional programme of institutional cooperation with Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs)

The main aim of the programme was to strengthen the capacity and integrity of SAIs with special attention for assessing SDG implementation in seven countries in the MENA region through training, technical advice, and exchange of best practices.

The project has supported individual auditors to take part in the project activities. For instance, participants from, among others, Iraq, Morocco, and Palestinian Territories testify to have moved from a so-called 'compliance by rules' approach and embraced the 3E (Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness) approach, while displaying a more critical attitude towards data quality.

An even stronger effect can be found in the wide-spread desire to go out and interact regularly with external stakeholders to ensure a more complete and inclusive data collection and analysis process.

In addition, many participants demonstrate an increased eagerness to improve external communication about audit results, be it with varying success as existing procedures and practices may stand in the way. These individual effects sometimes translate in broader institutional effects. However, this only happens at small scale, as it appears difficult to disseminate learnings beyond the few auditors directly involved in the project and build a critical mass in support of institutional change.



The improvement of Food Safety in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

This G2G intervention has included three consecutive phases: a needs assessment (from October to December 2017), and two follow up implementation periods of two years. The project aims to improve the food safety situation by empowering food safety inspectors in the veterinary and phytosanitary organizations and to clarify the mandates of the different Ministries and institutions involved in food control in Jordan. The Jordan Food and Drug Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and the Greater Amman Municipality are key partners.

The intervention has so far inspired the development and harmonisation of relevant legislation and regulations in the food and agriculture sector, ensuring the enforcement of inspection and supervision on the process of pesticide-free production and the increased use eco-friendly products. The program not only helped Jordan to improve the performance of departments supported and the quality of its local food market for the welfare of the population, (but also) to improve its health control on custom borders and its export and trading products.

Finally, this cooperation facilitated greater coordination among national government institutions, research institutes and private sector, and a structured mutual exchange of experience over scientific and international standards between Jordan and the Netherlands.

Reduction of backlog of court cases in Tunisia

The Administration of Justice training aims to enhance the capacity of civil servants to support institutional strengthening of the justice sector in MENA countries. The participants were encouraged to draft a Back Home Action Plan (BHAP) in an area they thought needed serious reform.

One of the BHAPs that was developed by a female judge from Tunisia aimed at designing a judicial workload measurement tool to inform effective distribution of cases and a reduction of backlog of court cases. The alumni presented the BHAP to her superiors, created the measurement tool, and conducted the research. The results were published in the first annual report of the Court of Cassation of the year 2017. Thereafter, a major colloquium on the reform of the court was organised and the Prime Minister asked the STP alumni to present the study findings to judges, university professors, lawyers and members of the Superior Council of the Judiciary.

After this presentation the superior council acted by hiring additional staff, making changes in the distribution of advisers as well as the distribution of work between the chambers. This eventually ensured the backlog was eliminated.

Strengthen the institutional capacity of the High Judicial Institute in Libya

The aim of this project was to develop the skills of the High Judicial Institute (HJI)'s personnel in Libya, only institution responsible for training judicial personnel in the country, thus contributing to strengthen the judicial sector and the Rule of Law. Two successive and successful training programmes allowed the HJI to improve the capacities, skills and knowledge of its staff to develop up-to-date and suitable legal / judicial curricula and to apply modern and interactive training methods.

The G2G intervention has positively inspired the HJI to adopt new methodological, educational, experiential, and specialised learning approach and methods, on selected emerging legal international topics, including organized crime, financial crimes, human trafficking and human smuggling, as well as gender and human rights topics.

Moreover, the programme had a positive effect by sustaining the benefits of the training and the transfer of knowledge at a personal and institutional level, enabling to increase efficiency of the HJI trainers, the professionalism of the Judiciary, judicial personnel, legal practitioners and to raise the status of the HJI.

It also contributed to reinforce the valuable relationship between the Dutch Government and the Ministry of Justice in Libya, and to develop exchange of experience on legislative topics.



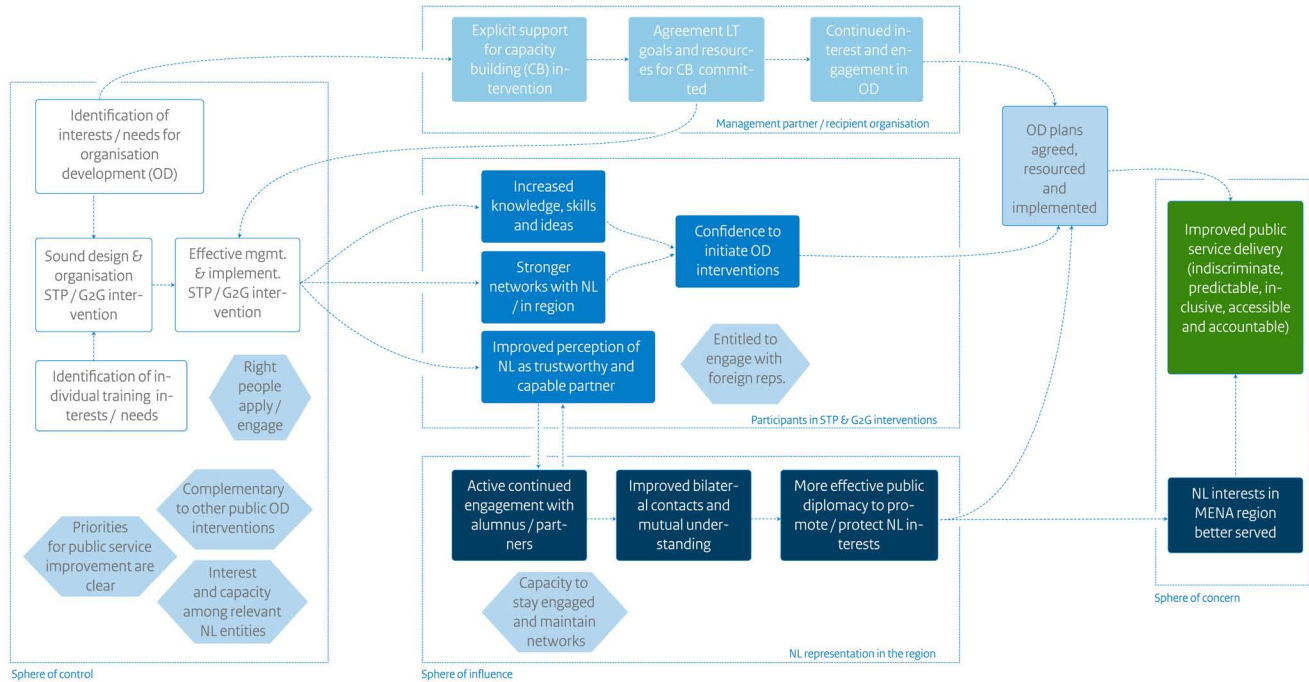


What does the evaluation suggest to improve in the future?

- Intensifying efforts to broaden the scope of G2G projects with deliberate attention for organisation-wide change management processes, so they stand a better chance to have institutional effects.
- Further strengthen the focus on gender equality in G2G and STP interventions, by developing more interventions that specifically target, or are adapted to, the diverse capacity development interests of women and specific minority groups.
- Target clusters of participants from the same organisation / country from fewer yet similar countries within a particular STP course, which would lead to more depth, relevant exchange, and momentum for follow-up.
- Draw upon the experiences during the COVID pandemic to optimise the blend of online and face-to-face learning modalities.
- Maintain alumni networks more actively so the potential of these networks for improved bilateral cooperation is more sustainably utilised.
- Capture spin-off effects of both STP and G2G projects for a more comprehensive reporting of meaningful results. This will benefit continuous learning from, and improvement of, interventions.

The programme will continue its work based on an adapted Theory of Change (ToC) that incorporates the learnings from the evaluation. This new ToC includes three complementary pathways reflecting the programme's ambition to:

1. support the capabilities and inspiration of individual government officials,
2. strengthen broader public organisations, and
3. facilitate NL representatives in the region to help improve public service delivery.



The future - Theory of Change



This e-zine is based on the findings of the recent evaluation by MDF Training & Consultancy.



Download the executive summary of the evaluation report here.

More information about the Shiraka programme and registration of the courses can be found on this [website](#).

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