

Shaping the future of government through excellence

How the UAE Government has taken lead

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Daring to redefine excellence

We have been accustomed to excellence being a revolution in management thinking taking place in the Eastern world and also in the Western world. In most of these cases, excellence was introduced to deal with crises to assist various governments in remedying difficulties that their economies were facing and putting their competitive powers back on track. There is, however, a new revolution taking place which is emanating from the Middle East region and, in particular, led by the UAE Government. This time round, the excellence revolution that is taking place is not to deal with challenges and difficulties, and is not meant to remedy poor economic conditions. Excellence that has been embraced in the UAE and led by its government, is used proactively as a modern method for building the future and sustaining government performance. It's a deliberate choice, a firm belief, a fundamental principle and one of the values that the UAE Government is embracing in order to preserve the interest of society, and to build a happy future for communities and providing for them the conditions to thrive, prosper and enjoy high-quality standard.

To demonstrate that words are followed by deeds, the UAE Government has shown how excellence can be driven from the very top. Indeed, this unique experience is a role model that the world at large can benefit from. Driving ambitious visions at the highest level can be made possible with the virtues and offerings of excellence philosophy. It can create harmonization and generate the necessary alignment that can impact government at the highest level and deliver ambitious outcomes. The Government Excellence Model (GEM) has been proven to be an engine for growth, government development, for transforming and innovating, by exploiting new possibilities and for delivering the impacts that really matter which are those related to the quality of life. Furthermore, the UAE Government has emphasized the importance of excellence right at the core of what every individual



government organization does. It has insisted on innovation and transformational thinking, shaping the future and delivering the best that can be expected, and the best that can help position the country as one of the top ten governments in the world (Figure 1).

The excellence recipe that has been used by the UAE is also a unique blend, as it leads through disruption, and it emphasizes on generating accelerated momentums of delivery and performance impact. One could describe it as an approach to managing excellence through leading with agility to remain fresh and relevant but also to prevent complacency. Most governments in the world suffers from high levels of bureaucracy, obsolescence and old legacies that hamper progress and development in world that gradually requires speed and fast responsiveness. The ultimate goal of the excellence of transformation based on the GEM is to impact directly on the quality of life. This is done through putting service excellence as the spine of government thinking and to deliver services that are unique, that are based on real positive experiences and that impact by creating personalized solutions and memorable and emotionally impacting experiences. This is an approach that tests the government resolve and also validates that the real meaning of excellence in the modern context is to deliver to people's daily life but also to create happiness and well-being. For the first time in the history of quality in excellence, there is a new dimension that has been added in modern management thinking which is to impact quality through the outcomes that really matter and that is the use of empathy that helps have an impact on measurable levels of happiness. Cumulatively, the way the UAE Government has managed to disrupt management thinking and to introduce a new approach to implementing excellence can be described through the following:

- Using excellence with its limitless power by challenging what is difficult, what is almost impossible and finding solution through out-of-the-box thinking.
- To prevent complacency by conveying the message that the impact generated is always to be considered as finite and short-lasting.
- To emphasize on relevance being the new currency of success not the celebration of past legacies.
- To use disruption in a deliberate manner as a mechanism for reinvention and renewal.
- To ensure that the real impact and the ultimate goal is the quality of life.
- To mobilize energies and thoughts by conveying the message that the unknown is not to be feared any longer, and to highlight the powerful effect of big data analytics as the new torch that has made the future forcible, viable and achievable.
- To position the UAE Government as the future government, the government of possibilities, connectivity, leveraging and the government of inclusiveness, engagement and empathy.

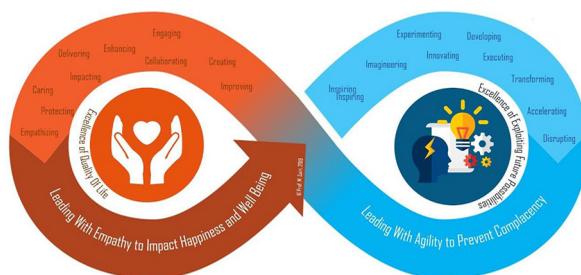


Figure 1.
Excellence of infinite
possibilities

The ten principles of UAE Government Excellence Model

The GEM is part of an evolutionary process; it is however revolutionary in terms of the “mind-set it represents.” Its key fundamentals are based on disruptive thinking and transformational innovation, which can deliver outcomes of a superior nature. The momentum that the GEM helps to create is based on major leaps in performance. These leaps are achieved by developing stretch goals and targets and managing distinctive capabilities that can help provide differentiation and ultimately results in a leading competitive advantage. Gauging performance outcomes is made possible by putting in place a measurement system that defines the toughest standards in the world as the only worthwhile ultimate objectives.

The GEM helps to advance the management thinking to be beyond the achievement of an end target. It considers the organization as an open system with dynamic inter-related activities supported by smart systems, which extend beyond the traditional “closed boundaries.” It also helps to develop extended relationships that can further enhance value creation, allows leveraging to take place in the required areas and builds a bigger capacity for knowledge transfer, capability building, agility and adaptability readiness in an unprecedented manner.

The GEM helps ensure that excellence as an applied philosophy is integrated into the organizational culture on a sustainable basis, can be put to work in all key and support areas and can focus on the development of “means” and the delivery of “ends” in tandem. The model helps to ensure that an organization can develop in a healthy and powerful manner, allows the permeation of fresh ideas and new thinking, thus keeping the organization on the path of sustainable learning and development. It also establishes connections, which can support growth whilst ensuring resilience and adaptability.

The GEM is based on disruptive thinking, uses transformational innovation to generate major leaps in performance that can secure the achievement of leading competitive positioning. This model has, therefore, the uniqueness to not only build excellence maturity through building core and critical capabilities but also present a method of constant disruption and to uniquely act as a compass for dynamic organizations that operated as an eco-system.

The unique fundamentals of the GEM can be described through the following ten fundamentals (Figure 2).

Ambitious vision

The GEM presents the development of an ambitious vision for influential and positive future governments through creating an integrated government structure of synergy and



Figure 2.
Principles of the UAE
GEM

partnerships. The government is resolute about the accomplishment of its ambitious vision by positioning the country amongst the best and most advanced nations in the world. It aims to do so through a dedicated focus on specific priorities including building a strong nation that is characterized by its ability to preserve itself, developing its human capital for the creation of a strong and resilient economy, creating a harmonious and cohesive society that is proud of its national heritage and where every citizen can enjoy a high standard of living and preserving the country's future through nurturing, guiding, transforming with a sense of collective responsibility and to achieving a prosperous and bright future for a society thriving in a safe and sustainable environment for the sake of achieving happiness and wellbeing of the society.

Stretch objectives

The GEM disrupts conventional thinking by looking at opportunities and giving a true meaning to the word “ambition.” It does not therefore present limitations as an excuse for compromising standards but rather seeks to look at solutions to limitations through building new capabilities, adopting smart transformational enablement and establish connected networks for leveraging. The model inspires beyond limits, tackles limitations through revolutionary thinking using a disruptive mindset and encourages the government to move to a new era in which to build a modern culture supportive of radical innovation. The model stimulates governments to build their plans and objectives continuously without stopping at the point of achievement or satisfaction of successful implementation to ensure the economic, social and environmental long-term sustainability.

Disruptive mind-set

The GEM brings with it new concepts and changes to not only the new meaning of excellence but also the new dynamics of aspirational organizations. The model emphasizes on modernity not only as a subtle element through evolution but rather as a process for changing, transforming and renewing organizations in all aspects that affect their survivability and future direction. A pioneering thinking in so many aspects, with untried novel methods, can reshape the future of excellence at the heart of value creation. Smart government means a holistic philosophy of total enablement and not the substitution of a traditional infrastructure providing support with smart devices replacing the old but doing similar support tasks. The digital disruption is to abandon the old methods, value-creation approach, process management thinking and system's setup for entirely a new organizational model with leading practices, personalized experiences that are fulfilling and which can positively impact happiness and wellbeing levels of customers and citizens. Innovation and excellence for stretching government practice is one of the most distinguished aspects of the model. The emphasis on innovation as a total philosophy for managing operations, establishing a creative dynamic culture, building the right momentum to drive performance at a superior level and boosting value creation as a continuum with stakeholder orientation at the core activities.

Leadership at the helm

The GEM is entirely a leadership-centric philosophy. It makes leadership extremely relevant in a modern era where turbulence, great uncertainty and the effect of disruptive technological advancement are becoming the norm. The new leadership agenda is to not focus on consistency and the preservation of what has been built but rather it is about what can be explored in the future without harming the existing context of the organization. The model places great emphasis on creating a dynamic and positive leadership mind-set shared

in all government entities to support improvement and development through exploiting future possibilities, experimenting business models and having the required resilience and adaptability in adopting successful governmental work models to achieve the targeted results in the society's happiness and wellbeing, which will lead to creating competitive environment based on collaborative work among government entities. The model also depends on the philosophy of focusing on leadership commitment in driving the government entity through disruptive innovation and pioneering thinking to achieve and sustain the country's leading position among all countries worldwide.

Total alignment

The power of GEM is its ability to mobilize, harness and give relevancy to a country's vision. It provides a solid foundation for delivering national priorities and creates opportunities for wider involvement and participation through the delivery of meaningful and necessary contributions. It conveys a sense of urgency and emphasizes the importance of total alignment through the development of an ambitious vision for influential and positive future governments through creating an integrated government structure of synergy and partnerships. The model also encourages the seamless collaborative working relationship between the government entities in different sectors by transferring knowledge and building joint ventures. This will form a strong base for the government to accomplish and reach society happiness and wellbeing as a foundation of the government national agenda.

Value creation

The main virtue of the GEM is its insistence on customers, citizens and key beneficiaries from an organization's activities. The creation of value that meets and exceeds the expectations of primary stakeholders is what really matters and the GEM constantly prompts the significance of stakeholders in all its criteria. In the assessment of capabilities that drive value creation, the starting point is always on identifying stakeholders, determining their needs and requirements, developing and deploying capabilities that can support the creation of value directly or indirectly. Besides, raising the standards by evaluating the performance of customer happiness center according to a seven star rating system to reformulate the standards of providing government services in an innovative and integrated way raising the efficiency to the best international standards, which will with provide exceptional personalized customers' experience through all customer service delivery channels including customer happiness centers, call centers, websites and smart applications.

Outcome-Based measurement

The management of quality and the development of organizational excellence are the long-lasting impact that the organization generates. The measurement of outputs is an internal concern to the organization and not the customer. Furthermore, output measures are a subset of value creation and the cycle must continue until the real impact has been achieved. The measurement of value, which is what primary stakeholders expect, is what the GEM concentrates on significantly. The GEM emphasizes on global competitiveness by adopting international best-in-class practices used by government entities to drive performance at a superior level, improve the competitiveness of the country and its global ranking and boost the level of effectiveness, efficiency, excellence and sustainability in political, economic, social, cultural and environmental fields.

Pioneering methods

The GEM considers the future with new powerful methods, extra depth and rigor of analysis and exploration and possibilities' considerations. Shaping the future is a major consideration when evaluating the role of leaders in this digital era. The model also encourages the government entities to develop their future capabilities through using future foresight tools to identify continues future trends and global directions. This helps the government entity be able to predict, analyze and respond to these global and future changes to create its future readiness through continuous redefinition of existing business models supported by new and advanced technology, which insures the progress of the entity beyond its existing capabilities.

Learning and development

The GEM has introduced a new meaning to learning and development for driving excellence. In an era of constant change because of disruption, continuous transformation for creating meaningful value and the required maneuverability and adaptability of organizations to survive, everything becomes commoditized, because of the shrinking shelf-life and relevance. Learning and development is therefore, not based any longer on "learning for doing" but rather "learning through doing." Experimentation provides the opportunity to explore various avenues, study possibilities and develop the right approaches to suit the specific requirements. This is a new mind-set of learning in a dynamic environment.

Leading government

The power of the GEM is in preparing organizations to compete against the toughest standards globally and to reach the summit through their success by securing leading positions in their core activities. At the baseline level, the model helps create a foundation of quality, efficiency and a lean culture of process optimization. At a higher level, the model supports the building of distinctive capabilities for driving value creation through transformational thinking and with digital, smart enablement that can help create opportunities for partnerships, connectivity and leveraging. In an advanced level, the model encourages disruptive thinking for the generation of a new momentum through acceleration and the establishment of new benchmarks. The dynamic nature of the model ensures that obsolescence is prevented and learning and development constantly rejuvenate and preserve the longevity, sustainability and relevance of the organizations.

Further reading

UAE Government Model (GEM) Guidebook, Version 2 (2018), "Sheikh Khaliah Government Excellence Program (SKGEP)", Prime Minister's Office - Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Future.

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