The Netherlands invites civil servants from the MENA region to apply for a professional development course on Communicating with the Public. Eligible countries are: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

The objective of the course is for civil servants working in the field of Government Communication to share their knowledge and skills enabling them to lead and inspire the modernization of Government Communication in their home countries. The course also aims to strengthen participants’ ties with the Netherlands and the Dutch government; especially between Dutch civil servants and their counterparts in the target countries.

Goals of the ‘Communicating with the public’ professional development course

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands is organising the professional development course with the following aims:

- To increase the participant’s knowledge about government communication theory and understanding of the role of communication with the public in a democratic society;
- To increase the participant’s insight in processes and in the playing field between government and citizens regarding communication with the public;
- To increase practical skills and professional competencies for communication professionals.

Additionally, the course provides participants the opportunity to develop a valuable network with other civil servants in the region and in the Netherlands.

Course outline and content

The professional development course on Communicating with the Public comprises three inter-related and integrated components: theory, practical skills and study visits.

Online course, September 2020

During the online course the participants will gain insight into the relationship between government, citizens and journalism in a democratic society and the role of the government communication. Participants gain practical experience on project management, making a communication plan and crisis communication.

The participants will follow several online courses, make assignments and have individual coaching sessions with a trainer.

Training – October 2020, Netherlands

In the second week, the emphasis will be on triggering changes in the political-administrative environment, for example by means of entering dialogue with the environment. Participants gain practical experience on government communication by following various workshops touching upon topics, such as media- and stakeholder analysis. The participants will also get the opportunity to gain practical skills through workshops about negotiation and intercultural communication. We will also meet communication officers who work in the field of communicating with the public in the Netherlands.

Back Home Action Plan (BHAP)

The course will also allow the uptake of the learned principles in a practical project: Back Home Action Plan (BHAP). The BHAP describes a concrete project in communication with the public, such as: writing a (improvement) plan for the communication function within their organization, making a (improvement) plan for the further professionalization of one or several communications aspects (such as communications advice, press relations, research) or making a communication plan for a specific project in which communication with the public plays an important role. Each participant start with the BHAP during the online course and present their plan to the group on the final day of the course.
Costs and fees
The Dutch government will take care of all relevant costs for participants from countries on the OECD-DAC list. This includes international travel, board and lodging, visa and insurance, and tuition fees for the course. Participants from countries that are not on the OECD-DAC list will pay for their own international travel costs; flight tickets and visa. Board and lodging, insurance and tuition fees for the course will be covered by the Dutch government. All applicants are responsible for the organization and costs of travelling to the airport in their own country. Participants from countries on the OECD-DAC list departing from an international airport outside their own country, will have to cover local travel expenses themselves and will be compensated for the international part of their journey.

Participants are responsible for the organization of their visa application.

In case of no-shows or cancellations within four weeks before the start of the first part of the training, the organization has the right to claim all costs incurred from the participants’ employer.

Shiraka and the COVID-19 outbreak
Because of the current outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world we offer a part off this training program as an online course. The training week in the Netherlands will take place if this is possible. If the health situation does not allow this, the online program will be extended and the training week in the Netherlands will expire.

Eligibility criteria
- Administrative check. Fully documented applications received before the deadline.
- Match of job position and learning goals with the topics of the course and motivation.
- Between 5 and 10 years relevant work experience as civil servant in communication and international experience.
- No (previous) participation in other Shiraka or Matra-South Training Programmes.
- English proficiency; excellent reading, writing and speaking
- ICT; to follow the online course you the participant must have good computer skills and sufficient access to a computer with a recent operating system and a good internet connection. (Participants must be able to use skype, google chrome/ safari, word and powerpoint)

We encourage female civil servants to apply. There are 25 places available, which will ideally be divided equally between the invited countries.

Shiraka training programme
The course will be organized as part of the Shiraka programme, an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Shiraka is a Dutch bilateral effort dedicated to contributing to political development in the MENA region. Through this Shiraka training programme, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to stimulate and support sustainable transition in the MENA region and to strengthen relations between the Netherlands and the target countries.

More information
IDHinfo.nl (for questions concerning the database);
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The Shiraka Training Programme is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The department International Entrepreneurship of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency implements the Shiraka Training Programme. The [title training] professional development course will be organized by [name uitvoerder].

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