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Case studies on flexibility

This chapter presents four case studies that illustrate how OECD countries are approaching the issues of flexibility. It shows how the United Kingdom is embedding flexibility in a new learning and development framework and how Korea is using digital technology to enhance its learning offer and data collection. The chapter shows how Belgium is designing mobility opportunities to be more flexible and how Slovenia supports mobility with specific IT tools.

The future of learning and development in the United Kingdom's Public Service: The Government Campus and Curriculum

Introduction

The United Kingdom has taken on an innovative and ambitious large-scale strategy aimed at reimagining and streamlining the learning and development (L&D) system for its 450 000-strong public service. The Government Campus and Curriculum¹ (GCC) aims to bring all the central Government teams responsible for training, learning and development under one umbrella, while reorganising the overarching strategy into one coherent package. It also adds e-learning, data, and evidence into the strategy and the L&D offerings. The focus has been to develop an explicitly defined curriculum – built around knowledge, skills, behaviours, networks, capabilities, and qualities – that serves the needs of the whole civil service. Through a framework of five strands, the programme has put a greater focus on management and leadership, developed standards, and more clearly defined expectations for all civil servants. The Government Campus and Curriculum is a modernisation and reform programme² designed and delivered by the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit (GSCU) and is a main pillar supporting the long-term efforts to professionalise the UK public service.³

The majority of UK civil servants are aligned with a “profession”; a series of roles created to define careers and their paths, ensure learning, development, and accreditation, and provide clarity around tasks, workstreams and advancement. The profession system underpins the employment structure in the UK civil service. The GCC initiative supports and enables the professionalisation of the civil service by ensuring there is a structured and strategised system for developing staff and clarifying learning paths. Examples of professions include economics, operational delivery, finance, science and engineering, project delivery, and policy. The GCC includes training specific to these, as well as skills needed for government generally and for stages of an employee's career, such as managerial training.

In early 2021, the UK government published its plan for the creation of the GCC.⁴ The intent is to create an all-encompassing system that catalogues and analyses training skills needs and corresponding learning offers, ensures coherence and clarity in development plans, enables a learning culture, recognises skills and future skill needs, and serves as an access point for all public servants to access learning offerings.

Embedding flexibility

As implied by its name, the Government Campus Curriculum has two central features: the campus, and the curriculum. These two components make up the central features of the GCC; where and how learning is delivered (for instance, on an online platform or in person), and the skills, competencies and knowledge taught.

Conceptually the Campus aspect is more than the delivery model – it's a complex system of internal and external suppliers, delivering through a wide range of modes. Training has often been independently or uniquely delivered across the civil service by varying departments, ministries agencies and professions. The GCC attempts to bring all government training together, and makes it accessible to the wider civil service, whether designed and delivered as part of the central strategy or not. It aims to reduce duplication, maximise economies of scale, and eliminate barriers to accessing training that already exists. Some training is offered online through a new platform, some through other means (for example, webinars, information handbooks, coaching), and some is offered in person – aiming to make better use of physical government facilities and recognising the flexibility of open platforms (e.g. FutureLearn, a widely used online learning platform that the United Kingdom has a contractual agreement with to create courses and use with high volumes of people). An inventory of available physical space is made more efficient through the system, by cataloguing space in buildings and making existing training accessible across the public service rather than contained to specific ministries. By expanding and streamlining learning systems,

employees from several ministries can attend in-person training at another, reducing overlap and creating networks. These multiple access points for learning, and the community they create, makes up the “campus” portion of the GCC.

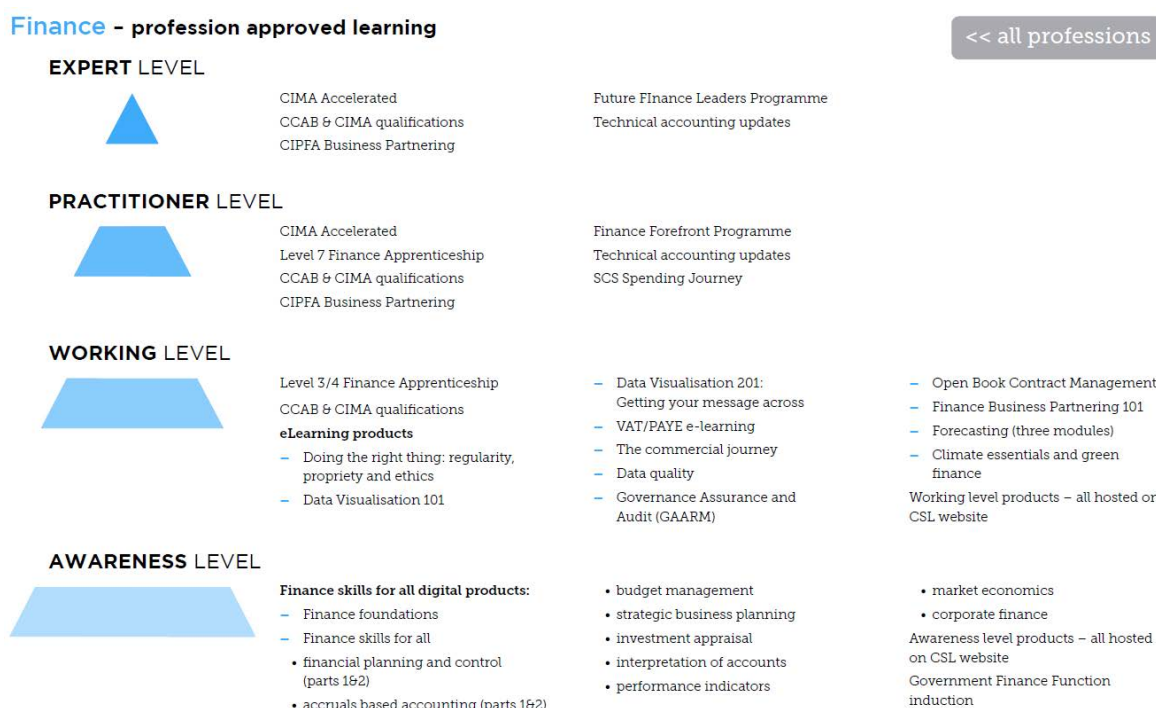
The varying subject matter available makes up the “curriculum”, and is divided into five strands:

- Strand 1: Foundations of Public Administration
 - Essential, universal skills and knowledge. For example, digital essentials, personal effectiveness, and health and safety.
- Strand 2: Working in Government
 - Knowledge and skills specific to working inside a government, such as managing public money, managing relationships with ministers, and knowing about how government works.
- Strand 3: Leading and Managing
 - Managerial and leadership skills for developing and existing managers across a range of roles and departments.
- Strand 4: Specialist Skills
 - “Led by the professions for the professions”. Specialist skills through accredited training and professional development for profession and function members. There are 28 recognised professions and 14 functions in the UK public service.
- Strand 5: Domain Knowledge
 - Subject area knowledge, often across key policy areas or specific to a ministry.

Each of these strands encompasses a collection of related topics, each of which hold a multitude of learning offerings. Under each of these topics there is an expanding array of choice for learning opportunities. Figure 5.1 shows options under the Finance profession.

Figure 5.1. Example of the variety of offerings contained in the GCC

Some of the learning offerings for the Finance profession across various levels



Source: Provided by the GCC Unit.

Work on cataloguing, categorising, evaluating, and making available the full set of learning opportunities continues under the GCC initiative. Beyond what already exists, additional training can be designed or procured when gaps are identified. This can be done in-house but is also frequently contracted or purchased from expert content and service providers. The trainings available through the GCC are intended to be accessible to all government employees, vastly expanding the learning opportunities available, increasing cross-topical and inter-ministerial networks, reducing overlap, and allowing for easier tracking of learning undertaken, and skills attained, by the workforce.

Box 5.1. How do I ... be a Minister?

Government Campus Curriculum: Induction for All – training for new ministers and their staff

The Government Campus can expand its offerings when faced with exceptional learning needs, for instance when new important policy areas emerge or if a skills need is identified. An early training initiative that meets a significant need is a targeted new induction for all new civil servants and a programme of dedicated ministerial training that supports new ministers and those who will work closely with them. This means that whoever you are, on joining the government system, you are given the best opportunity to succeed.

The Induction to the Civil Service online course has been completed by around 15 000 civil servants over two years. GSCU has used the flexibility and social learning functionality of the FutureLearn platform to create a more customised, innovative, and active learning experience for new starters. The content was produced internally by experts and is continually tested by colleagues across government for relevance. It is designed to fit alongside Departmental and other local inductions. Evaluation feedback shows consistently high gains in knowledge across eight key areas, as well as very positive user experience.

The ministerial training intervention, a series of masterclasses, was developed through desk-based research and focus groups with ministers. The analysis unveiled a clear need for training and induction for new ministers, who felt unsupported from the centre of government in their new roles.

All of the inductions are targeted at those in the first 100 days in the job, though can give relevant and useful knowledge to those that have been in post for many months or even years. An important success of the ministerial training programme has been the rollout of legislation training for those ministers taking a bill through parliament, providing important procedural and practical insights from experienced colleagues. The general induction works to demystify the jargon and complexity of the UK system and shares hints and tips to aid a successful start. Valuable learning can also come through social opportunities, where participants learn with, through and from one another using comments and moderated questions throughout the course.

Conclusion

The GCC is a developing initiative that is still in early stages after being launched in 2021. A primary and immediate aim of the GCC has been to better organise and streamline learning and find ways to bring all offerings into one coherent system. But beyond this, the GCC has several ambitions for the medium and longer term. These plans aim to build the GCC into a broad and overarching learning system that fosters and enables the overall learning culture and goals of the UK public service.

Chief among these ambitions is to make better use of data and technology. This can be to enhance and measure learning offerings and platforms, but also to enable better response to crises, support employee career progression, and maintain a future-ready workforce. Innovative technology and digital solutions,

alongside coherent and effective data collection, can aid the United Kingdom in building the GCC into a substantive and reliable keystone of the learning and growth environment.

One aim along these lines is to build a skills database, which would track and categorise the pertinent skillsets of the entire workforce. This goal is long term and very ambitious and would work by integrating learning outcomes and training as well as recruitment, evaluation and promotion data alongside inputs from employees and managers. The idea is to have a coherent database of the skills of each employee, so that they can be called upon in the event of need, such as a crisis, an event requiring surge capacity, the formation of a new working team, and so on. As an example, languages spoken would be an included skill. This arose as a clear need with the war in Ukraine; staff were needed who spoke Ukrainian to handle issues such as communication with the Ukrainian administration, the influx of refugees, and the co-ordination of aid and arms shipments. A skills database would allow for the quick and efficient identification of staff with needed skills. Since it is not known which skills will be needed in the future, it is important that the database would contain as much information as possible.

This would also allow for data analysis that could be used to identify skills gaps, aid in performance management, and help with the strategic planning of training offerings. More broadly, using data to better manage skills gaps, contribute to recruitment needs, and design training is another goal of the GCC. Consistent and coherent data collection, and its expert analysis, can help the UK plan for the future and ensure that its workforce has the skills and competencies required.

Data and technology can also be used to make training more individual and targeted, which can also contribute to the overall workforce skills planning. The United Kingdom aims to create a system in which employees are directed and signposted to what types of training they should be taking, where it be specialised or generalised. This can help fill gaps in individual employees' own knowledge and skills. Learning experts in the UK administration describe the development plans for many employees as being T-shaped; employees must have domain-specific knowledge, but also generalist knowledge and skills (for example, about working effectively in government or upskilling digitally). It is not enough, in a modern public service, to just have one. Technology can be used to inform employees about their needed training, assess skills, and track what has been done or may be needed. This is one future aim of the GCC.

Data is also needed to undertake outcome measurement and monitoring of learning and development endeavours, such as training offerings. The GSCU has developed a thorough and rigorous evaluation strategy to measure the impact of both training offers and the Campus and Curriculum itself.⁵ Information on the outcomes of courses, programme evaluation, platform use, attendance and participation, diversity indicators, and so on is needed. Evaluating the success of learning is in the public interest, and programmes are audited. The UK Civil Service estimates its annual spend on learning and development to be around GBP 300 million and getting high returns on this expenditure is a priority for the UK administration. The GCC now has a team of people working on a redesign of data, including its collection and use. A challenge for this team is that existing data is not of high enough quality – and without high-quality data, the team cannot glean high-quality insight. A long-term dedication to data is needed, alongside a commitment to procuring and maintaining the infrastructure required to store and access it.

Infrastructure is just one aspect of the technological requirements for the long-term aims of the GCC. The initiative also requires a modern and expansive platform, capable of linking all existing training and allowing access by nearly half a million public servants. Before the creation of the GCC, many ministries and departments ran their own distinct platforms, some of which continue to operate. Bringing all systems under one umbrella is a large technological challenge. The GCC also aims to expand the scope of what e-learning can be; beyond only online modules, but also within an ecosystem that can encourage and enable sharing, interaction, content creation, and a broader range of training offerings.

The GCC is also exploring the best balance between online and digital learning and the use of physical spaces. An earlier and well-known UK administration learning initiative – the National School of Government – was a physical campus with face-to-face courses, which left a legacy in the administration.

Though it was closed in 2012, the United Kingdom is now evaluating how to best balance physical training with e-learning capacity. At the same time, it also must balance learning being both centralised and decentralised, and how to make the best of all options more broadly available. The creation of networks, cross-ministerial sharing, and communities of practice is a focus. A system available to all can encourage high-performing and large ministries to create and share training and aid under-resourced ministries without the capacity to create learning offerings. The focus now is largely on enabling collaboration and meeting the needs of learners, whatever the best method for that may be. In many ways, it is a clean slate to develop a new strategy and way of doing things.

The team behind the GCC aims to build it into an essential and long-term staple of the UK administration's workforce strategy that provides consistency and coherency in learning prioritisation. It is a major component of fostering and maintaining a learning culture throughout the public service. Embedding the GCC into processes and practice, using innovative methods and an evidence-based approach, is the long-term overarching aim of the initiative.

Learning cultures in the public service: E-learning in Korea

Introduction

This case study is an example of how Korea is developing digitalised and online learning systems that support an overall culture of learning within a modern, future-ready workforce. E-learning has been a priority of the administration for more than two decades. As technology has evolved, so has the strategy, and recent advancements and reforms are no exception. A new online learning platform incorporates a multitude of types of learning content and encourages learning content creation and interaction across the workforce. This system reflects the changing nature of online interaction in society, keeping up with the needs of an evolving society, and the expectations of the next generations of public servants.

The Korean government's Human Resources development (HRD) online platform for public official includes the Government e-Learning Centre that has been in operation for more than 20 years and the new HRD Platform launched in 2023.

Embedding flexibility

Korea has two main HR development online platforms: the Government e-learning centre and the HRD intelligent open platform. The Government e-learning Centre and the HRD Platform are both platforms where learning content for public servants is gathered and consumed, but there are differences in several aspects such as content providers, types of content, and the technologies applied to each platform.

First, in the case of the Government e-Learning Centre, government L&D agencies are the main providers of learning content. However, in the HRD Platform, anyone, including government agencies, private companies and creators, can provide learning content. The Government e-Learning Centre plays a role of one of the content providers in the HRD Platform.

Second, the Government e-Learning Centre focuses on online training for public servants, whereas the main purpose of the HRD Platform is to enable public servants to search and learn from various materials in the workplace, so that learning can take place naturally while working and be part of the working culture. So, the HRD Platform covers not only e-learning content but also documentary content such as academic materials, research papers and policy papers that can be referenced while working.

Third, the HRD Platform recommends personalised learning content considering aspects such as job duties and learning history, by utilising Big Data and AI that are not used in the Government e-Learning Centre. The HRD Platform therefore intends to be a customised learning content recommendation system applying AI and Big Data technologies for the first time in the field of HRD for public official.

Government e-Learning centre

The Government e-Learning Centre was launched before the turn of the millennium. It is an online learning system for public officials that provides e-learning courses and mobile learning services for learners to access their desired learning contents anytime, anywhere. It aims to increase the effectiveness of learning by offering public servants diverse and high-quality on-demand learning content.

Basic educational content like public service values, administrative philosophy, leadership and job skills that public servants have to know are uploaded and updated. Also, the L&D institutes purchase a variety of educational programmes from private sector providers (e.g. on language, economy and business administration, liberal arts, and international affairs) and offer public servant these contents for free through this centre. In addition, videos edited by filming offline classes and seminars are offered in the form of Government-Massive Open Online Courses (Gov-MOOC) and micro learning is available for users to select and learn topics of interest. There are also e-books and open courses that can be taken without registration.

To improve user experience, the National HRD Institute (NHI) established an all-in-one system optimised for mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones in 2017, in co-operation with public and private L&D institutes. Thanks to these efforts, public servants are able to use e-learning services regardless of the time and their location.

The Government e-Learning Centre also provides an informal social collaboration service so that learners can share their knowledge and information. Users can do various informal learning activities such as communities, blogs, knowledge sharing Q&A, free bulletin boards and content evaluation. The NHI expects this social networking collaborative learning service to help create a knowledge ecosystem in the public service.

The Government e-Learning Centre has long been striving to provide an environment for public officials to learn comfortably anytime, anywhere. In this sense, it has played a leading role in creating an online knowledge ecosystem in Korea's public service.

However, the Government e-Learning Centre has some fundamental issues which limit its ability to respond to rapidly changing policy environments. First, most of the content has been supplied by the government, which means that creating and distributing new content requires complex and time-consuming procurement processes. This sometimes results in failure to provide learning content in a timely manner and can be a big barrier for start-ups and small businesses that want to move into the learning market for public officials. Secondly, the Government e-Learning Centre does not integrate sophisticated content recommendation functions driven by the latest technologies like Big Data and AI. Therefore, there may be a certain level of limitation in accurately recommending learning content that the user needs and wants. Third, the Government e-Learning Centre is not a system for real-time online lectures. So, in the period of COVID-19, most L&D institutes used video conferencing systems produced by the private sector for real-time online lectures. However, using private video conferencing systems is expensive, requires annual costs and can pose particularly security concerns.

To overcome these challenges and take a leap forward, the Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) has established a new open platform from 2020 to 2023.

HRD intelligent open platform

Innovation in science and technology and changes to the policy environment present an opportunity for a total renewal in the way HRD is delivered for public officials. With the advancement of technology, it has become possible for a learning system to recommend personalised learning content applying AI and Big Data. In addition, younger age groups tend to prefer learning content that can be consumed in a short time. Furthermore, in 2020, most offline training for public officials was suspended to prevent the spread of

COVID-19, so the importance of building a digital infrastructure for non-face-to-face learning received even greater attention.

In this context, the MPM began developing an innovative learning platform in 2020 that collects high-quality content from inside and outside the government, recommends customised learning products, facilitates various activities that can connect work and learning and integrates a real-time video lecture system. The platform underwent a pilot launch before being scaled up across the administration.

The HRD Platform is designed with an open architecture so that anyone will be able to easily provide L&D content, including small businesses which were often excluded from the procurement processes required for the e-Learning Centre. Any content provider can access and join this platform without complex procedures, provide contents directly to consumers and make a profit. Employees themselves can also become content creators by uploading training they make, often as micro-content (e.g. short videos). Furthermore, the MPM has plans to provide various analysis data such as user preferences and sales revenue for each content subject through this platform to help them create better learning products aligned with the actual needs of public servants.

At the core of the HRD Platform is a customised content recommendation function based on Big Data and Artificial Intelligence. This recommendation function uses a content labelling model - the Active Learning methodology. This is a method of effectively and accurately classifying vast amounts of data such as learning products and HR information, and recommending personalised learning content to learners. The HRD Platform, as of December 2022, contains more than 1 200 000⁶ learning products are uploaded on this platform.

Public officials are required to complete 100 hours of training every year, but it is not easy for most public servants to secure extra training time for learning and many practical learning activities in the workplace such as data surveys, searching for materials and sharing materials are not recognised as learning time. However, various work-related activities in the HRD Platform such as searching, communication, and sharing work know-how will be automatically recognised as learning hours. Public officials who effectively use the HRD Platform will no longer have to rush at the end of the year to fill training hours.

The HRD Platform provides a hybrid learning environment where instructors or managers can freely design and deliver a curriculum by combining online, offline, formal or informal learning methods. Namely, one curriculum can consist of e-learning, real-time video lectures and field lectures. For example, pre-learning is possible using e-learning or micro learning, and lectures on theory can be held with a real-time video lecture system. Field practice and evaluation can be conducted through offline classes. The fact that various educational methods can be mixed should mean that the most effective curriculum can be designed and learning effects can be maximised.

The HRD Platform integrates social learning tools that supports interaction and knowledge sharing among learners. It is expected to facilitate an online learning community where information and knowledge in the public service will be accumulated and expertise will be shared through the following social learning functions. For example, if there is content that public servants want to share with colleagues, they can register the feed by copying the URL. When they share their learning content, their colleagues can click "I like it" and post comments such as learning reviews and experiences. In addition, they can 'follow' interested learners and create groups of learners with similar interests to share information and make research groups. Furthermore, learners can bundle various learning resources into a single learning process according to a specific topic or purpose. They can also share their own learning collection and learn other collections created by their colleagues.

In 2021, a real-time video lecture system was mounted on the HRD Platform. This service was piloted with various functions like attendance management, class records, and real-time interactions such as chatting and quizzes. In addition, by the end of 2022, various functions to support video lectures were added such

as interfaces, monitoring class concentration and encouraging participation in learning. A mobile service suitable for video lectures is also possible.

Conclusion

Korea is using various new digital technologies to build an ambitious universe of learning that is fit for the modern world and a new generation of public sector learners and users. With the launch of the Intelligent Open Platform, the administration is innovating and making use of technological advancements and aligning its future needs with its current strategy implementation. The platform embraces a new way of doing things, breaking from traditional methods and putting innovation skills to work – something many central administrations are working to achieve. This new open and collaborative digital system for learning uses new technology to its fullest, such as using AI to filter and make learning suggestions. But the system is also harnessing the immense benefit of less formal ways of learning, such as through interaction and discussion, and sharing one's own knowledge through participating in content creation.

Korea is also demonstrating leadership in the collection and use of data on learning. The digital systems have the ability to provide data on a multitude of things, which in turn can help the administration continually improve on the design the online platform and the public service learning and development strategy as a whole. Data can be collected on who is doing what and on how people are learning and interacting with the technology. There is also potential to track the outcomes of learning in the workplace, and to identify where in the workforce certain skills can already be found (e.g. seeing where content is being created and who is discussing it in more advanced ways).

Korea's plans to link both systems – the long-established e-learning centre as well as the Intelligent Online Platform – and to buttress the learning offerings within each, has the potential to aid in a smooth transition to new ways of learning and ensure that all public servants can find and undertake training that works for them in their roles. Together, these systems aim to build a big-picture learning and development strategy and platform that is fit-for-purpose for the modern world and its complex policy problems. Korea's ambitious next generation of public servants are participating in the creation of their learning systems, and as such, a culture of lifelong learning through their careers.

Promoting mobility in the Belgian civil service

Introduction

Promoting mobility of public servants within an organisation, across organisations and between different governmental levels can help to provide opportunities for skills and competence development for public servants as well as being able to restructure the public workforce according to demands.

The Belgian civil service has developed several programmes to promote mobility opportunities permanently and temporarily, and within and among organisations. The variety of these programmes increases the flexibility of the Belgian public service allowing the public service to proactively structure the workforce according to long-term as well as short-term needs and offers civil servants with a greater variety in their career paths. This case study looks at the mobility programmes in detail, in particular at how they have been implemented and integrated in the wider array of public employment and management tools.

Embedding flexibility

Permanent mobility opportunities

In the Belgian civil service, permanent mobility can be characterised according to three different types:

1. Internal mobility (within the same organisation).
2. Intra-federal mobility (between organisations within the federal administration).
3. Inter-federal mobility (between different governmental levels).

The way internal mobility is organised largely depends on the organisations themselves, however, it is common that opportunities are published internally. In larger organisations this works quite well, while smaller organisations have at times issues in finding suitable candidates. Over the last five years, the number of civil servants taking advantage of mobility opportunities has continuously increased (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Uptake on internal permanent mobility opportunities

Year	Average	Maximum
2018	5.3%	37.4%
2019	5.9%	31.6%
2020	6.2%	30.6%
2021	8.4%	54.8%

Note: The percentage indicates the number of civil servants that moved within the same organisation compared to the total number of civil servants within the organisation.

Source: Information provided by the Belgian Federal Service.

In comparison to internal mobility, permanent intra-federal mobility, referring to mobility between organisations, is structured at a more general level. Vacancies are published on an internal website which effectively creates an internal market for opportunities. The advantage of hiring staff through this channel compared to external hiring is that the hiring is usually more simplified and can be done on a more ad-hoc basis when needs arise. The number of civil servants taking up permanent mobility opportunities within other organisations has remained relatively stable. Some organisations do however hire new staff mostly through this permanent mobility scheme (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Mobility opportunities promoting permanent mobility among organisations per organisation

Year	Average	Maximum
2018	16.8%	50.0%
2019	13.7%	50.0%
2020	12.3%	88.2%
2021	10.4%	84.6%

Note: The percentage indicates the number of civil servants that moved between different federal organisations compared to the total number of new hires (internal + external) per organisation.

Source: Information provided by the Belgian Federal Service.

Intra-federal mobility, referring to mobility between different levels of government, is quite rare within the Belgian civil service. Less than 1% of mobility pertains to this category. Currently, there is no specific policy to incentivise this, and reward systems differ between local, regional and federal levels of government, which may explain why this is relatively rare. Intra-federal mobility can also signify a higher cost for civil

servants with potential relocation, change of working language and working practices given that practices may be less harmonised than at the federal level.

Temporary mobility opportunities

By using temporary mobility, the public sector can react flexibly to ad-hoc temporary needs in specific areas of the public sector, for example in the event of a health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or other specific isolated events, for example the organisation national census.

In Belgium, several programmes for temporary mobility are in place. As a result, the Belgian federal service can react flexibly as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic when the number of temporary mobility opportunities increased significantly in comparison to previous years (Table 5.3). In fact, in one organisation 97.3% of all new hires were temporary staff from other organisation in 2020.

Table 5.3. Temporary mobility opportunities used

Year	Average	Maximum
2018	3.0%	17.4%
2019	4.2%	32.7%
2020	9.7%*	97.3%
2021	4.4%	37.1%

Note: The percentage indicates the number of civil servants that moved between different federal organisations on a temporary basis compared to the total number of new hires (internal + external) per organisation.

* strong increase due to corona crisis.

Source: Information provided by the Belgian Federal Service.

Two specific temporary mobility streams are:

1. *Special Federal Forces* denotes a temporary mobility programme designed for organisations that have an urgent temporary need for specific assignments or project, for example a centre for asylum requests during the refugee crisis. The period for the temporary assignment is usually not pre-determined. Opportunities are published through a launch call, followed by a condensed selection process consisting of an interview. The salary of the selected candidate is paid by the sending institution.
2. *Talent Exchange* is a mobility concept for employees of the Belgian public sector at all levels, federal, regional, community, municipal and provincial services. *Talent Exchange* allows participating organisations to exchange talents for specific assignments or projects lasting from 6 to 18 months, and to offer them new challenges adapted to their skills. The network is promoted at the central level with human resources offices supporting the promotion at the organisational level.

In comparison to the *Special Federal Forces* the timeframe is determined from the start of the assignment. The vacancies are posted on a central website as well as internal websites of organisations. Candidates undergo a simplified recruitment process which consists of an interview. Vacancies can therefore be filled quicker than through external hiring. Similar to the *Special Federal Forces*, the salary of staff taking part in the *Talent Exchange* is paid by the sending institution.

There has been a quick growth of member organisations in the beginning, which has now remained stable. The majority of organisations participating are larger organisations. In 2021, 219 assignments were published. Overall, the numbers have been increasing steadily with mobility opportunities of 12 months being the most common (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Mobility placements taken as part of Talent Exchange

		2019	2020	2021
6 months	Total	2	2	0
	Returned	1	0	0
12 months	Total	31	47	53
	Returned	17	30	*
18 months	Total	3	0	1
	Returned	3	0	*

Note: 11 out of 19 federal organisations provided data for this table.

* no information yet.

Source: Information provided by the Belgian Federal Service.

The promotion of mobility largely falls on human resources services and internal websites. In the beginning of programmes such as *Talent Exchange* and *Special federal forces* specific information campaigns were launched to promote the programmes. Managers play an important role in encouraging staff to take advantage of mobility programmes or to use the programmes in their own teams. Additional programmes provide career guidance and identify options for civil servants. These include the *Career centre*, which is housed at the DG recruitment and development of the federal public service Policy and Support (BOSA). This is supported by a network of career coaches in the organisations. Furthermore, to facilitate mobility, Belgium is currently working to create a platform that would collect demand and supply for mobility bringing together opportunities in one place.

Conclusion

For the Belgian civil service, the principal advantages of using mobility programmes is to be more flexible and hire staff through a quicker process. It can also help to hire staff for functions that are difficult to hire through the external market. For civil servants of the Belgian federal public service, while formally mobility is not a factor to consider in promotions, it can nevertheless be useful in showing the flexibility of candidates and demonstrate their transversal skills.

In Belgium, the positions that are suited most to the programmes are mid-level career professionals, for example project leaders. Meanwhile, operational services use mobility programmes less which often has to do with the specific skills needed. To broaden the scope of the mobility programmes, one of the key challenges Belgium is trying to tackle is to offer programmes for careers that require lower education. One possibility discussed is to offer mobility regularly on specific days of the week. It would signify a more punctual exchange which can offer more flexibility. This can help to build skills, while ensure the specialist skills remain within the organisation.

This case study of mobility programmes in the Belgian federal public service illustrates how in order to promote mobility, it can be useful to draw up different mobility programmes that support specific types of mobility and needs. One of the key factors to make the mobility programmes a success in Belgium has been to showcase successful examples and how they have been advantageous for both the public service organisation as well as the civil servant. Once managers have experienced how mobility can help them fill needs and how their team can benefit from experiences gained during a placement, they are also more likely to not only support staff in pursuing mobility opportunities, but actively encourage staff and use mobility programmes within their own teams. Supporting programmes, such as career guidance, can help to further institutionalise mobility programmes.

In Belgium, it has also proven vital to continue to develop new formats and programmes for mobility to target specific groups or specialisation. Being able to monitor which target group the main programmes reach, allows the federal service to realign programmes and to design new mobility opportunities in those

areas which are taking less advantage of mobility. Efforts to design mobility opportunities for staff to develop IT skills illustrate this.

As a result, the mobility programmes put in place in the Belgium have increased the flexibility of the public service to react to any short-term needs. This was particularly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic during which the numbers for temporary mobility assignments increased exponentially. Indeed, in some organisations more than 90% of new staff was recruited through temporary mobility.

‘Is-Muza’: Developing an IT tool to strengthen mobility and people development in the Slovenian public administration

Introduction

One of the core values underlining the upcoming civil service reform in Slovenia is ensuring that staff find their work meaningful and to support lifelong learning to equip the workforce with skills needed for the future. At the same time, increasing mobility is one of the goals of the reform as one way to increase work productivity and responsiveness of the public administration. To support the management and development of employees and to facilitate mobility, Slovenia has created an interactive IT system called *Is-Muza*. The objectives are two-fold:

- increase mobility, career development of employees, engagement and motivation by providing an internal project marketplace
- support managers, employees and Human Resources (HR) departments in the area of effective employee management.

The tool was initially targeted at employees in the Ministry of Public Administration and has been slowly rolled out to the entire public sector

Embedding flexibility

Throughout the development phase of *Is-Muza*, the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia set out a plan for implementation, including a pilot phase before roll-out to the entire public administration. The plan identified stakeholders, resources, timeline and responsibilities. In addition, a working group with representatives from different ministries was established who would act as ‘ambassadors’ in each entity. The following considerations were taken into account in order to successfully implement *Is-Muza*:

Stakeholders

- Project managers must understand the system and form reasonable expectations of how it would work.
- Participating staff should have time to take on the tasks offered.

Resources

- Scale of the pilot is important: too many staff joining at once would become unwieldy and difficult to learn from; too few would risk missing a quorum of projects for there to be true choice and agency for participating staff.
- Software will be needed for the online platform to function; this could be as simple as a message-board tool which allows comments and names contributors.

Timeline and responsibilities

- Responsibility for the platform would initially fall under the Ministry of Public Administration, with the possibility to decentralise it as an independent service as other ministries join.

Implementation of the platform took place over a 12-month period, with weekly meetings in the first month and monthly meetings thereafter to assess the setup and uptake of the system. A launch conference was organised in order to raise awareness of the tool. Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Administration conducted live trainings for managers and HR offices and developed a short promotional film for employees.

Is-Muza consists of two modules:

1. Internal labour market
2. Development of employees

Module 1: Internal labour market

Module 1 provides an internal labour market for temporary and permanent mobility. It presents possibilities for informal exchange of information on supply and demand in the state administration bodies. It encourages entities to use the internal labour market before holding a public competition or public announcement. By increasing mobility of employees, the internal labour market aims to acquire key personnel faster, optimise personnel planning and facilitate the search for experts and knowledge within the public administration. Lastly, it is expected that mobility can help to identify talent and motivate and engage staff by providing diverse opportunities for development.

Through the internal labour market, public servants and personnel offices are able to make public announcements regarding vacancies or availability for mobility in the case employees. The module includes data on knowledge needs, work needs and potential candidates, including their knowledge, skills and competences. Currently, about 30 000 users, both permanent and fixed-term contract employees use *Is-Muza*. On the employer-side it is used by ministries, bodies within ministries, administrative units and government offices.

A particular focus in the design of the system was to make it intuitive. The IT systems provides a template how to publish opportunities, be that vacancies or availability of employees. The opportunities are formulated in an engaging, simplified, and accessible manner (Table 5.5). Positions can be either temporary or permanent. Managers can post projects and tasks on the online platform for staff to volunteer or apply to work on them. Employees publishing availabilities and searching for opportunities can do so anonymously if wanted. Employees, managers and HR offices can access vacancies, with managers being able to send a direct message expressing their interest in employees. The recruitment phase is simplified and usually done via an interview. On average it takes about 75 days to finalise the recruitment.

Table 5.5. Announcement types on *Is-Muza*

Permanent employment contract	
Public employee	State body personnel offices
I want to change work post or field of work (anonymous)	We are looking for a public employee for a work post
I want to work additionally in a project group, work group or project unit	We are looking for a public employee to work in a working group, project group or project unit
I want to share my knowledge, experience, skills	We are looking for a public employee with knowledge, experiences and skills
	Available civil servants placed on the internal labour market – LEGAL OBLIGATION
	People with disabilities – search for relocation opportunities based on their remaining work capacity – LEGAL OBLIGATION
	We are looking for a candidates to fill positions in the army
Fixed-term employment contract	
Public employee	State body personnel offices
I am looking for work due to the termination of a fixed-term employment contract	We are looking for a public employee to conclude a fixed-term employment contract

Module 2 Development of employees

In addition to the internal labour market, *Is Muza* includes a module on employee development, specifically competence identification, development interview and identification of training needs. The objective is to equip managers with an easy tool to manage employees and support them in life-long learning by identifying skills gaps and suitable trainings. The identification of competences is based on the competency model which is categorised according to three competency types: leadership competences, job-specific competences and core competences. Based on this, development interviews are organised several times a year. The IT-tool supports managers to conduct these interviews by providing a unified electronic form that creates automatic reports for different users. This can also help to analyse mobility opportunities as part of skills development which can be identified through Module1: Internal labour market of *Is-Muza*.

Conclusion

In developing *Is-Muza*, the Ministry of Public Administration has been able to identify the added value of the tool for different target groups. For the public administration, *Is Muza* provides an IT tool to facilitate HR processes signifying less paperwork and reducing time consumption. It also supports the continuous process of integrating HR processes, while increasing transparency. Overall, this means that the capacity of the public administration is improved.

Is Muza supports HR by improving the capacities of the HR function. It provides templates for specific processes such as internal mobility and people development. The tool itself also represents a contemporary approach to HR management and development by underlining mobility as a way to increase flexibility and life-long learning to equip the workforce with the skills needed.

For public leaders, *Is Muza* is an intuitive tool to support the management and development of employees. Providing easy to use templates can help to strengthen awareness for the need to manage professional development. Supported with trainings and awareness-raising, it can also enhance skills, knowledge and competences for people development.

Lastly, for employees, *Is Muza* strengthens awareness of the importance of life-long professional development and helps to identify mobility opportunities through which skills, knowledge and competences may be developed which in turn can increase motivation and engagement.

Evaluating the pilot phase, the Ministry of Public Administration has identified several success factors to create an enabling environment for the roll-out and use of *Is Muza*:

- It is key to change the mindsets of public leaders in considering that mobility does not mean losing talent, but rather to perceive it as skill development and as such encourage staff to take advantage of advertised opportunities. Positive examples and experiences are key to showcase this.
- The involvement of managers in the early design phase of the tool contributed to ownership of managers as co-creators.
- Constant revision and evaluation of the system contribute to ensuring user-friendliness.
- The nomination of “ambassador” who promote the IT tool in the entities and can answer any questions helps to create ownership and promote *Is Muza* within the entities.

Notes

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-government-campus-curriculum>, or the platform at <https://campus.learn.civilservice.gov.uk/>

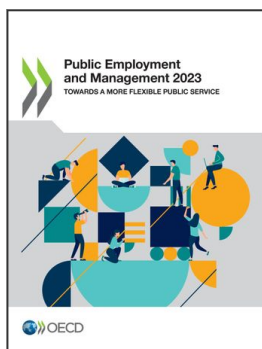
² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993902/FINAL_Declaration_on_Government_Reform.pdf

³ <https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/professions/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills/better-training-knowledge-and-networks-the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills>

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1035932/Evaluation_strategy_final_version_24_Nov.pdf

⁶ 800 000 Academic journals, 200 000 Judicial precedents, 42 000 Youtube content, 140 000 content from Government e-Learning Centre.



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