

# **Reforming the Civil Service System in Kazakhstan: Three Innovative Solutions and Priorities**

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## **Reforming the Civil Service System in Kazakhstan: Three Innovative Solutions and Priorities**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article considers the process of reforming the civil service system in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Based on a literature review, analysis of legal acts, program documents, the stages of civil service reform, the process of building a “listening”, high-quality, accountable, professional and pragmatic state apparatus are considered. The empirical data reveals the goals, functions, factors and prospects for reforming the civil service towards building the New Kazakhstan.

The results of the study show that, despite the systemic measures undertaken during civil service reforms over the past 30 years, remarkable changes have not been fully achieved (the average rating of respondents – civil servants, is 5.9 out of 10). Questions about monetary support and civil servants’ competency development remain open. In particular, low wages, insufficient motivation and competency levels are among the top three current issues.

Taking into account a retrospective analysis of civil service reform, as well as the data obtained during a survey, three innovative priorities for further improvement of the civil service are suggested.

**Key words:** public administration reforms, civil service, innovativeness, openness, transparency, Kazakhstan.

### **Introduction**

According to the OECD, Kazakhstan has its own public service system that combines elements of professional and strategic models (OECD, 2018). The next step is to transition to an innovative and client-oriented public service, focused on the needs of society. Administrative reform in the country has gradually adopted the principle of serving the people.

One of the latest documents that comprehensively addressed the issues of reforming the public sector in the country is the Concept for the Development of Public Administration in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030: Building a “Human-Centered” model - “People First” (Decree of the President of Kazakhstan, 2021). In addition, the National Report on the State of the Civil Service in the Republic of Kazakhstan comprehensively reviewed the main stages in the development of the civil service system (Agency for Civil Service Affairs, 2022).

A systematic approach to the problem of human resource management in the civil service assumes the existence of a personnel strategy and personnel policy in relation to both public authorities and organizations in the industrial sector of the economy and the public services sector. The challenges require a dynamic, active personnel policy in Kazakhstan, which should be characterized by maintaining a certain continuity, pragmatic borrowing of time-justified methods and means of implementing personnel policy.

In this regard, the purpose of this study is to analyze the key stages of civil service development of New Kazakhstan in order to provide the directions for further improvement.

### ***Research Questions***

To achieve this goal, the following research questions will be answered: What is the current stage of public service development in Kazakhstan? What results have been achieved and what areas for improvement can be suggested?

### ***Literature review***

One of the most important, but at the same time complex tasks today is the reform of the public service. Public administration reform, including public financial management, policy development, and service delivery, clearly implies civil service reform. In “Transforming Government in a New Era” research, the McKinsey Global Institute notes that “never before have governments and their staff been asked to do so much, so quickly”. As a result, public sector leaders are committed to transformative improvements in citizen services, policy outcomes, and regulation. But government transformation is difficult to achieve in the context of financial problems, public mistrust and workforce fatigue. A recent McKinsey survey of public sector leaders found that “nearly 80% of major change efforts fall short of their goals”. Public administration reform is enhanced by two cross-cutting imperatives: first, the constructive involvement of public sector employees; and second, the effective use of digital tools (McKinsey, 2022).

Review of the literature and foreign experience showed that the concept of an innovative state apparatus as a phenomenon does not exist. However, the OECD identifies an innovative civil service model as well as professional and strategic types (OECD, 2018). These models can be synchronized with the stages of public administration development: the Weberian model of bureaucracy, New Public Management, and New Public Governance (also known as Serving Government, Good Governance or Collaborative Governance). A more advanced level involves collaboration and policy decision making with public interest in mind. “Institutional changes that occurred in public administration in the twentieth century, led to a system of transformation of institutions of public administration bureaucratic type (Public Administration) to a system of interrelated institutions of managerial type (Public Management) and subsequently to its modification – the model of social coordination (Public Governance)” (Kapoguzov, 2015).

Weberian bureaucracy is characterized by a hierarchy of decisions, command and control, and isolation from citizens. At the same time, civil servants adhere to professionalism with a high degree of accountability and centralization. The Weberian model resonates with the professional model of civil service.

In contrast, the New Public Management approaches involve adapting the best corporate practices in the public sector with an emphasis on “doing more with less”. Decentralization of decision-making functions, implementation of result-based budgeting,

and a focus on strategic development are key elements of this system. However, critique of the New Public Management's market nature led to the emergence of another theory – New Public Governance. According to this approach citizens are placed at the forefront of reforms through participation in policy decision making. This contrasts with the New Public Management, in which the relationship between public managers and clients reflects individual interests and is based on market principles. It also differs from Weberian bureaucracy, where citizens are seen as passive recipients of the results of vertical policies and public service delivery mechanisms (Waldorff et al., 2014).

Through a clear understanding of service needs citizen-centric and innovative approaches examine service delivery issues from a citizen's point of view, join up government based on citizen needs and organize services around the needs of the citizen to ensure that they receive all of their entitlements, no matter how complex their needs (Gareis et al., 2004; Ebbers et al., 2008). The public service context and environment is becoming increasingly complex. In response, the management of change and innovation has become a core task for the successful public manager (Brown & Osborne, 2005).

Historical institutionalism implies a sequence of changes where “the original institutions are left in place, but new elements are added alongside the old system, elements that have transformative potential in the long run” (Thelen, 2009). Innovation suggests the need for multiple collaborations and networking among key stakeholders. Politicians are constituted as meta-governors who facilitate creation of self-governing networks. Professionals serve as experts in these networks and also manage the interactions among the multiple participants. The ideal citizen is active and takes part in network activities as a resourceful co-creator or co-producer of public services (Waldorff et al., 2014). Besides government-citizen collaboration, the new civil service model looks to put the work of the state apparatus on an innovative track. Innovation in the public sector is a multi-faceted aspect of the continuous effort to adopt new approaches or programs in order to significantly improve public sector activities (Bokayev et al., 2021).

Looking for a better form of management, the new concept of “Good Governance” appeared in the 1990s. The Good Governance system stands on three pillars: the unity of goals of the state and society, accountability and transparency of the activities of government bodies. Flexibility of public administration in relation to the needs of society reduces bureaucracy.

In February 2021, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Concept for the development of public administration in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 Building a human-centered model - People First” was approved. The concept implies improving interaction of citizens with the state; increasing the efficiency of strategic planning; augmenting the quality of civil service staff; improving the efficiency of the quasi-public sector; optimizing the state apparatus and switching to a proactive format for the provision of public services; developing local self-government; improving regulatory and anti-corruption policies, as well as transforming judicial and law enforcement systems.

## **Methodology**

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was derived from the works of Kazakh and foreign researchers and legal acts on the theory of public administration. A logical next step in the analysis was to measure the current state of the civil service. For

this purpose a survey of Kazakhstani civil servants was conducted in order to establish civil servants' value orientations and attitudes towards various principles of civil service management. An anonymous survey was conducted by experts from the Academy of Public Administration of Kazakhstani civil servants from April 19<sup>th</sup> until May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The methodology with instructions, as well as a portion of the survey questionnaire are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

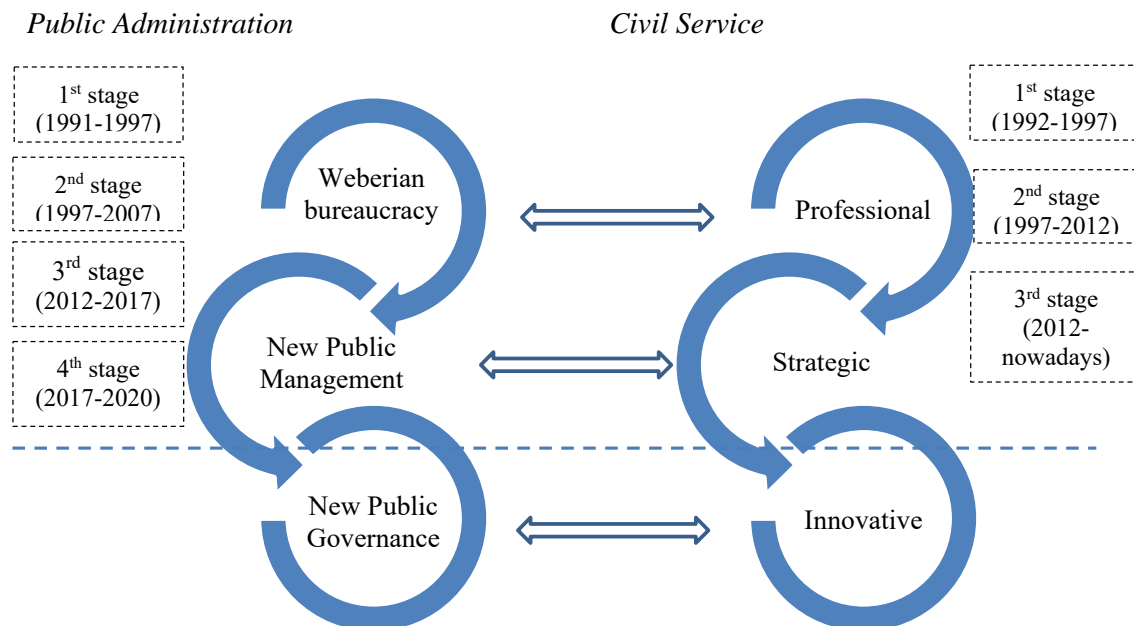
## Findings

This section includes an analysis of civil service reforms, which summarized by three key innovative solutions that bear the foundation for future transformations of state apparatus. Also, an analysis of the current state of civil service system based on the opinions of civil servants received during the survey is reflected in the section.

### *Analysis of public administration reforms in Kazakhstan*

Analyzing a chronology of public sector evolution, three main models of public administration and civil service were distinguished. The models represent a transition from centralized management to decentralization and delegation of state functions, as well as from a corporate and results oriented focus to a Citizens First approach (Amirova, 2019). Therefore, civil service evolution in a sovereign and independent Kazakhstan (since 1991) is closely linked to the historical progression of public administration reform (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Key stages of public administration and civil service development in the Republic of Kazakhstan**



Source: OECD, 2018; Amirova, 2020

As indicated in Figure 1, there have been several stages of Kazakhstani public

administration and civil service systems<sup>1</sup> development:

- 1) institutionalization of the public administration system. Among the post-Soviet countries, Kazakhstan was one of the first to institutionalize the civil service and introduce advanced technologies in personnel management;
- 2) implementation of social state principles, legislative division into political and administrative civil servants, competitive basis and professional requirements for entering the civil service;
- 3) implementation of strategy and programs aimed at Kazakhstan's entry into the top 30 developed countries in the world: digitalization of the state apparatus, annual assessment of the effectiveness of state bodies, strategic plans, state audits, creation of Corps "A" of administrative civil service<sup>2</sup>, etc.;
- 4) further professionalization of the civil service (Open Government, transition to a career model, decentralization of public functions, a new institution - the ethics commissioner - was created, implementation of meritocracy principles into the law enforcement system, etc. (Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021; Agency for Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022).

The civil service in Kazakhstan is constantly being improved, taking into account the political processes and challenges taking place in society, national legislation, as well as international best practices. International practice in the field of public administration shows that improvement of the civil service system without losing its effectiveness is possible only through the formation of a professional state apparatus in the person of a highly competent civil servant (Bokayev et al., 2022).

Depending on the tasks set, the civil service system acquired more pronounced features of a positional or career model. Without dwelling on each aspect in detail, only an example of competition procedures demonstrates the openness of the system to candidates from outside or the "narrowing of the neck" of admission, depending on the stage of reform. Thus, it's more efficiently to focus on key innovative solutions of civil service reforming.

#### *Innovative solution No. 1: Implementation and continuous improvement of e-government*

According to the UN, Kazakhstan ranks 28th in the e-Government Development Index, including 8th in the Online Services Index. This is a very high assessment of the work of public services.

At the same time, the current model for the provision of public services is actually focused on the appeal of citizens (or businesses) with an application for receiving a service.

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<sup>1</sup> In Kazakhstan, the concepts of civil service and public administration systems are separated. At the same time, the civil service is part of a wider range of issues that public administration covers. The powers of state bodies are also divided. For example, the Ministry of National Economy is responsible for the development of the public administration system. At the same time, an Agency for Civil Service Affairs was created to develop and implement public personnel policy.

<sup>2</sup> There are two types of civil service in Kazakhstan: the politicians and administrative civil servants. The Corp "A" is a senior level of the administrative civil service, which includes managerial positions at higher level of administration (for example, the head of apparatus in the ministry or agency).

This means that the initiative to provide services lies with the citizens, and the state only responds to their “requests”.

E-Government Infrastructure such as e-Government Portal, Open Government, e-License, Smart Data Ukimet, Smart Bridge, Digital Family Card, Social Wallet, e-Otinish, mGov mobile application and others have already made it possible to provide more than 40 public services in a proactive way, without “waiting” for a citizen to apply.

An important aspect is the change in mentality and the activation of the transition of citizens to digital service. The sharp spread of “Kaspi payment” through a smartphone, the use of “digital documents” (from 20 thousand to 5-6 million per year) show the potential and demand for such “non-standard” services.

On the other hand, widespread digitalization increases the requirements for the development and uninterrupted operation of information systems, due to the risk of failure and unavailability of services, it is difficult for users to navigate among many different services and digital resources, the need to authorize in each application and provide their personal data causes dissatisfaction, and gaps in databases can cause e-government services to become unavailable.

#### *Innovative solution No. 2: New remuneration system and competency-based appraisal and competitive procedures*

An important result of the civil service reform will be a new system of remuneration of civil servants, taking into account their contribution and effectiveness, as well as the complexity and specifics of the work performed. Its implementation made it possible to bring the level of salaries of employees closer to the private sector, level the difference in official salaries between the center and the regions, and generally increase the attractiveness of the civil service.

The results of the project approbation showed that in most of the state bodies there is an increase in the performance indicators of their work. For example, in the Ministry of Justice, compared to 2018, performance indicators have significantly improved (from 85.74 to 94.72 points). Also, the level of turnover in local executive bodies decreased by three times, the competition for one place increased by 2.6 times. In some pilot regions, the number of structural divisions of state bodies was optimized (by 9%).

The official salary of civil servants will increase by an average of 1.9 times. For example, the minimum salary of a leading specialist at the rural level has increased from 81,000 tenge to 195,000 tenge and has come close to the salary of an expert of a central government agency (212,000 tenge).

The competence-based approach is used in all human resource management procedures. For example, this is an assessment of the work of civil servants, a competencies appraisal for admission and promotion in the civil service, as well as for the development of a balanced advanced training program.

#### *Innovative solution No. 3: Project management and contract service*

In order to effectively implement project management principles project offices are being created in state bodies, the functions of which are coordination, consulting, methodological, analytical and organizational support for project personnel and stakeholders.

As part of project management, in order to monitor the implementation of projects of the country's strategic documents, a cross-platform "kz2050 Easy project" was created. The task of the portal is to organize joint project activities of cross-functional project teams implementing government programs, territorial development programs and other documents of the state planning system, regardless of their organizational and legal form, departmental affiliation, form of ownership and field of activity.

This platform will allow preserving "institutional" memory and helping minimize errors in the implementation of projects by studying and exchanging experience in the framework of previously implemented similar projects.

The strategic tasks of the Head of State to transform and improve the public administration system, global challenges affecting aspects of digitalization, communication, tolerance, and openness of society are indicators of determining a high level of civic maturity and self-awareness in Kazakhstan. In this regard, according to Concept-2030, the new model of public administration will be based on the principles of a "listening", effective, accountable, professional and pragmatic state.

### ***Kazakhstani civil service in numbers***

As of January 1, 2023, the number of civil servants amounted to 83 963 staff units. In pursuance of the task of the Head of State, in 2021 the staffing of state bodies was reduced by 15% or 9 589 staff units. At the same time, 79% of the reduced positions are vacancies.

Despite optimization, the education of civil servants remains at the proper level, as an important element in ensuring the quality of human capital. So, 92% of employees have higher education. About 5 200 employees (of 83 963) have postgraduate education, which is 24% higher than in 2017.

The share of women in civil service remains stable at 55.5% (2018 – 55.4%, 2019 - 55.7%, 2020 - 55.5%, and 2021 – 55.7%). At the same time, leadership positions are 39% occupied by women. For comparison, in OECD countries, the representation of women in the public sector is an average of 58%, in senior positions 37%.

The average age of civil servants in recent years has been 39 years, with an average of 11 years' work experience. A stable level of civil servants net turnover was also maintained of 6.2% per year. At the same time, the dynamics of the decrease in the share of young people in the civil service is observed during the last five years (2018 - 24.6%, 2019 - 23%, 2020 - 21.6%, 2021 - 18.1%, and 2022 - 17.8%).

According to a survey conducted with retired employees, the main reasons for leaving the civil service were irregularity of employment for labor, low wages, and inconsistency of work with goals and expectations, and lack of career prospects. At the same time, 72% of those laid off voluntarily worked in a position for an average of less than 3 years.

At the same time, there is a trend towards a decrease to the share of employees working 30 years (from 25.7% in 2017 to 19.1% in 2021) and an overall decline in attractiveness civil service employment among young people (from 65.7% in 2017 to 44.4% in 2021). At the same time, the number candidates wishing to work in district and



rural state bodies, remains at a low level (average number of applicants for one place at the regional level - 2.3 people, at the district level - 1.5, in rural area - 1.1).

In turn, at the central level of public administration there is a lack of regional work experience (21% of employees have field experience, including in leadership positions - 18%). During the last year only one in four respondents participated in a competition to move from the “center” to the regions (97 out of 392).

### Survey data analysis

The survey of civil servants of Kazakhstan was conducted from April 19 to May 20, 2023. In particular, 10 942 respondents took part in the survey, representing both central and local levels of government. The profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Profile of survey respondents**

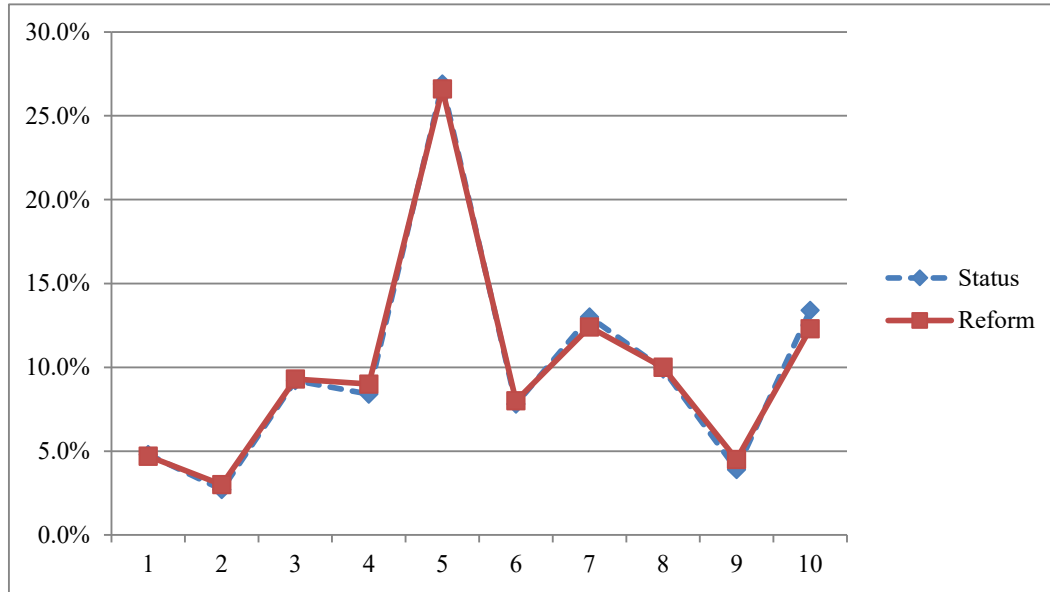
Parameter	Number	Share, %
<i>Gender:</i>		
male	3968	36.3%
female	6974	63.7%
<i>Age:</i>		
20-30	2570	23.5%
31-40	3800	34.7%
41-50	2704	24.7%
more than 51	1868	17.1%
<i>Education:</i>		
secondary school graduate	12	0.1%
college graduate	865	7.9%
bachelor degree	9095	83.1%
master’s degree	898	8.2%
PhD	72	0.7%
<i>Marital status:</i>		
married	6887	62.9%
single	2486	22.7%
divorced	1221	11.2%
widow	348	3.2%
<i>Occupation:</i>		
executive position (regional level)	8867	81.1%
managerial position (regional level)	1762	16.1%
executive position (central level)	98	0.9%
managerial position (central level)	151	1.3%
other	64	0.6%

Based on Table 1 data most of the respondents were women (63.7%) with bachelor’s degrees (83.1%). The average age was 39. About 4/5 of the participants are working in an executive<sup>3</sup> position at the regional level of public administration.

<sup>3</sup> leading specialist, chief specialist

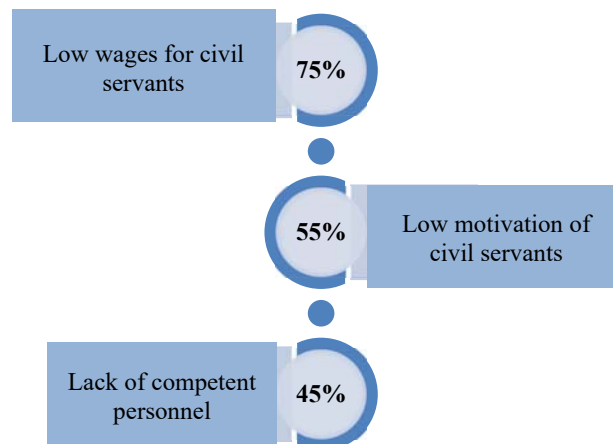
The respondents were asked to assess the current status of the civil service and quality of public administration reforms. For this purpose a 10-point Likert scale was applied. Results of the assessment are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Assessment of Kazakhstani civil service current status and reforms**



In both cases, respondents tended to be neutral about the reforms carried out and the results achieved in the civil service (Figure 2). The average scores are 5.87 and 5.92, for assessment of civil service current state, as well for assessment of public administration reforms, respectively. Furthermore, the respondents were asked about the top three issues for civil service development (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Top-3 issues in the civil service system of Kazakhstan<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> The respondents were asked to choose no more than three options from a list of issues.

Based on the survey results, competence-based development of human capital and remuneration remain unresolved issues. The monetary and non-monetary components of the civil servants' lives should be systematically addressed. Those reforms that have already been carried out and those measures that have already been taken of are insufficient. The results of the survey make this clear.

## **Discussion**

The current public administration reform aims to improve the living standards of the Kazakhstani population by ensuring sustainable economic growth. The strategy for achieving this reform is based on the concept of a “hearing state” and open government that also define the main vectors for effective communication between government and society. In the case of consistent implementation of this reform, the level of transparency, accountability of authorities and stakeholders participation that is typical for OECD member states will be achieved.

The main priority is the professionalization of the state apparatus: personnel policy on a nationwide scale is designed to contribute to the maximum disclosure of the potential of each citizen in accordance with his qualifications. Based on the survey results, the degree of efficiency of the state apparatus still causes some dissatisfaction due to the stated, but not justified expectations.

According to survey results the following the top five directions for further improvement of the civil service system could be proposed:

- ✓ a process for raising the social status of civil servants, including raising wages, providing social benefits, and so on – 63% of respondents;
- ✓ organizational development of the civil service, including all structural elements that perform key functions and their relationships, as well as the regulation of these relationships (President Administration, Agency for Civil Service Affairs, ministries, departments, etc.) – 11%;
- ✓ institutional support, including a clear description of the mission, goals, objectives, norms, rules, and historical traditions, expressed in strategic policy documents, laws, concepts, and so on – 11%;
- ✓ a process for professional development of civil servants – 10%;
- ✓ a selection process for entry the civil service – 5%.

A systematic approach to the problem of human resource management in the civil service assumes the existence of a personnel strategy and policy in relation to both public authorities and organizations in the industrial sector of the economy and the public services sector. It also requires a dynamic, active personnel policy, which should be characterized by maintaining certain continuity, pragmatic borrowing of time-justified methods for implementing personnel policy. There are three key global trends that are currently being initiated in the public sector.

***Global trend No. 1:*** The civil service as a preferred employer, not a last resort.

According to the OECD (2023), the civil service needs to become more forward-thinking and flexible in order to attract, retain and motivate high-performing talent. The selection procedure for the civil service also needs to be improved in terms of ensuring the transparency of all its stages, eliminating subjectivity.

Today, special attention is paid to the talent management system around the world, complex solutions are present in the practice of such countries as Singapore, South Korea. In Kazakhstan, talent management is more fragmented. The question arises of purposeful training of personnel for the needs of the public service.

***Global trend No. 2:*** Matrix (flexible) structure of the state apparatus.

Project management, the accumulation of teams based on several ministries to solve one problem, regardless of departmental affiliation, is becoming increasingly important.

In many leading countries, the role of a transformational leader in the implementation of innovations has been given to an authorized body in the civil service (for example, Public Service Division of Singapore, Ministry of Personnel Management of South Korea).

The Agency for Civil Service Affairs could play a more proactive role in innovative development and transformation of state bodies. This message is consonant with the issue of transition to strategic human resource management, which involves long-term planning and selection of human capital, taking into account the goals and objectives.

***Global trend No. 3:*** Invisible and anticipatory governance.

As was mentioned in previous sections of the research paper, the e-government framework is carried out at a fairly high level. However, introduction of more innovative products using the capabilities of artificial intelligence, scenario planning, as well as the need to improve interagency cooperation to eliminate bureaucratic procedures are becoming more important. In this regard, it is necessary to take into account the following principles for further improvement of e-government:

1. Citizens first: orientation of civil servants to the implementation and protection of the needs, rights and legitimate interests of the population;

2. “Continuity of development of man and society”: the need to create conditions for the development of man throughout life, which also contributes to the development of society as a whole;

3. Proactivity: advancing the provision of services, the creation of benefits and benefits for all stakeholders (G2C, G2B, G2G) at all levels of decision-making by government bodies as one of the basic principles of interaction between the state and citizens;

4. Result(citizen)-oriented: it is important not to provide a separate service, but to decide or help the citizen as much as possible to achieve the final goal, only in this way it is possible to ensure the growth of his trust and satisfaction, this also implies:

- constant receipt of feedback from the service recipient and its analyst, for a clear understanding of the goals and needs of the population;

- project approach to solving problems and effective interaction of stakeholders and interested parties;

5. Continuous improvement - the development of society, its needs and applied technologies requires ensuring a continuous process of developing the quality of services provided by the state, including this principle requires improving the training of civil servants and improving their qualifications, it is required to take systemic measures to measure overall satisfaction;

6. De-bureaucratization and creativity: rejection of the bureaucratic approach, the introduction of new approaches and services to ensure the end result needed by the citizen, the use of the AGILE methodology, in which people and the end result are more important than documentation;

7. “Service where it is convenient”: the solution of complex life situations cannot be solved only by the state, interaction with business, non-governmental organizations and citizens (B2G, C2G) is required, on issues that go beyond the actions of government bodies, in addition, the active involvement of business and citizens into the provision of public services and providing them with open APIs to enable them to independently create services will allow the development of independent/non-state platforms for receiving services (banks, superapp);

8. “Rule of one time”: state bodies never ask the applicant for the same information twice, ensure pre-filling of forms, information in state databases is considered appropriate by default, balance the efficiency of the state and the security of personal data of citizens;

9. Awareness and crowdsourcing of digital data: all key data about oneself contained in state databases are available to the citizen, including about the support measures allocated / available to him, with the provision of services for their correction.

10. “Digital means extraterritorial”: service automation, digitalization of processes within the structure of the service provider should ensure the possibility of receiving services regardless of the place of residence or actual location.

## **Conclusion**

Summarizing the results of this retrospective analysis of administrative reform in Kazakhstan leads to the following conclusions:

1) Unlike most foreign practices, where the concepts of civil service and the public sector are improving taking into account cohesive strategic goals, in Kazakhstan the components of the public administration system are developing separately;

2) Analysis of existing literature and benchmarking of other countries showed the absence of a professional, strategic or innovative form of civil service in its “pure form.” Kazakhstan is no exception. Since independence in 1991, the country’s government has applied best practices, taking into account national aspects. Individual segments of the public sector are at different stages of development in terms of adopting best practices;

3) According to the OECD Kazakhstan is on the way to becoming an innovative civil service and to adopting a new model of public administration (New Public Governance). While digitalization and the Open Government initiative are features of this model, a full transition can only occur if all the necessary conditions are in place, including needed development of human capital and transformation of both the structure and work processes of government bodies;

4) It is necessary to change the Kazakhstani public administration paradigm, adopt a new model and include the principle of citizenship in all aspects of the state apparatus. A list of tasks has already been described in the Concept for the Development of Public Administration until 2030. The key issue is the quality implementation of these tasks without losing focus on the main strategic goal of Citizens First vision.

The results of the analysis of theoretical approaches, foreign and Kazakh experience in the transformation of their civil services and public administrations, as well as the results of the survey have provided inputs to understanding of the Kazakhstani experience of public administration development and how it could be further improved.

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## **Appendix A: Methodology and Instructions of Kazakhstani civil service survey, 2023<sup>5</sup>**

The *purpose* of the survey is to obtain information about the main issues in the civil service system that need to be addressed at the next stage of the reform.

The *research tool* for collecting opinions is an anonymous online survey among civil servants of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which will clarify the conclusions obtained from literature review and the results of structured and in-depth interviews.

*Recruitment* of participants: dissemination of a link to online survey through a branch structure of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and the Academy of Public Administration, which is represented in all regions of the country

*Interpretation and operationalization* of basic concepts: at present, the way to modernize the civil service is to implement innovations. To register and analyze the parameters of reforming the civil service, a system of the following empirical indicators was developed, evaluated by respondents: remuneration, incentives, benefits, social security at the place of service, working conditions, work organization, work regulation, workload distribution among employees, etc. The study of indicators will identify the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees, material and non-material stimulation of labor, opportunities for professional and job growth, relations with management, psychological climate, etc. The concepts of reforming the civil service will be measured through the quantitative expression of units of analysis (the number of people, their specific actions, statements, opinions, etc.), which allows fixing the frequency of manifestation of the studied attribute of the object.

The questionnaire includes 47 questions with open and closed answers and consists of four parts: I. "SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS" (questions 1 – 13), II. "PERCEPTION OF CIVIL SERVICE" (questions 14 – 21), III. "PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF CIVIL SERVANTS" (questions 22 – 31) and IV. "SOCIAL STATUS OF A CIVIL SERVANT" (questions 32 – 47).

In the questionnaire, the vast majority of questions are built on the principle of multi-item scales, which are strictly alternative in nature, i.e. the respondent must choose only one answer. For open-ended questions where no answer options are offered and the question is followed by a blank line(s), the respondent should print their answer on the line(s).

*Processing of survey data* includes:

- introduction and encoding of "raw" data in Microsoft Office Excel, translation of data into the language of formalized processing and analysis by creating numerical variables, which allows using the software to calculate the results;

- exporting "raw" data to Microsoft Office Excel for statistical processing of all interviewed employees, analysis and correlation of factors;

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<sup>5</sup> This methodology and instructions represent a larger study on civil servants' social status, which funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (BR18574203). However, the article includes only civil service reforms' assessment.



- view statistical data of survey questions regarding various factors (age, gender, length of service, region, position (management and non-management), structural unit);
- in case of semi-closed questions, displaying all types of employees' answers in the "Other" column in textual, quantitative and percentage form;
- conducting statistical analysis - identifying some statistical patterns and dependencies that make it possible to draw certain generalizations and conclusions;
- analysis of the obtained data using statistical methods and preparation of the final summary report in the form of an analytical report, consisting of an introduction, content, conclusion and appendices.

*Final report* should be prepared in the form of an analytical report, consisting of an introduction (explanatory note), content, conclusion and annexes. The introduction reflects brief data on a sample of employees. The main part contains characteristics of the respondents, representation and analysis of the data obtained, practical recommendations and conclusions, applications in the form of graphs and tables. Deadlines for the submission of the final report according to the Calendar Schedule of BR18574203 Project realization.

**Appendix B: Kazakhstani civil service survey, 2023 (Fragment: part of civil service reforms' assessment)<sup>6</sup>**

[...]

**II. PERCEPTION OF CIVIL SERVICE**

- 1. How do you assess the GENERAL state of the civil service of Kazakhstan (reforms, status of a civil servant, achievement of objectives, implementation of state policy)?**

Very low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent

- 2. How do you assess the current level of REFORMING the civil service in Kazakhstan?**

Very low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent

- 3. In your opinion, what are the main areas of the Kazakhstani civil service that should be reformed firstly? Please choose one of the options from the table below.**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Institutional support, including a clear description of the mission, goals, objectives, norms, rules, traditions, expressed in strategic and policy documents, laws, concepts, etc.	
Organizational and structural direction of the civil service, including all structural elements that perform key functions and their relationships, as well as the regulation of these relationships (Agency for Civil Service Affairs, Presidential Administration, ministries, departments, etc.)	
Selection process to entry the civil service	
The process of professional development of civil servants	
The process of raising the social status of civil servants, including raising wages, providing social benefits, etc.	
Other	

<sup>6</sup> This section is a part of a larger study on civil servants' social status, which also funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (BR18574203)

**4. Please identify THREE main problems in the civil service of Kazakhstan. You could choose only three options from the table below**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Answer</b>
High degree of corruption	
Low competence of civil servants	
Lack of competent personnel	
Low motivation of civil servants	
Lack of meritocracy	
Low wages for civil servants	
Lack of public confidence in civil servants	
Uncertainty associated with the lack of a clear state policy, development strategy, and specific vision	
Other	

[...]