

Civil service reform toolkit building effective states through public sector reform

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Civil Service Reform Toolkit

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Executive Summary

What the Toolkit Offers

This Civil Service Reform Toolkit provides a comprehensive, step-by-step guide for designing and implementing effective public sector reforms. It translates diagnostic insights and reform aspirations into actionable strategies tailored for Low- and Middle-Income countries (LMICs). Users will find practical tools for problem analysis, planning, and monitoring, including templates for assessing institutional capacity, frameworks for setting reform objectives, and checklists for tracking progress. The Toolkit core purpose is to serve as a road map to build a more professional, accountable, and citizen-oriented civil service.

Who Should Use this Toolkit

The Toolkit is designed for policymakers, reform leaders and officials in governments, as well as development partners. This includes central agencies like Cabinet Office or Public Service Commissions overseeing reforms, line ministry leadership tasked with implementation, and advisors or technical teams supporting change initiatives. Development partners and consultants can also use the Toolkit to align their support with government-led reform plans.

Why Civil Service Reform Matters

An effective civil service is a cornerstone to achieving inclusive and sustainable development, mandated to deliver essential public services. Yet in many LMICs, the civil service struggles with capacity gaps, outdated systems, and politicization, which undermine service delivery and public trust.¹ Strengthening the civil service is therefore critical to achieving national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (*especially SDG 16, which calls for effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions*).² By diagnosing these challenges and implementing appropriate reforms, governments can ensure that public resources are used wisely and that citizens receive better services. A well-executed reform not only improves services delivery but also strengthens the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its people.

What are key takeaways for Policymakers

- i. *Meritocracy is Fundamental – Recruitment and promotions* should be based on merit and competence. Investing in merit-based systems (like open competitive exams and independent civil service commissions) helps attract and retain talent, curbs patronage, and boosts morale across the civil service.
- ii. *Build Capacity and Incentives* – Continuous professional development, on-the-job training, and clear career paths are needed to equip civil servants with the skills to perform. At the same time, *motivation systems* must be strengthened. It is important to recognize and reward good performance (often through non-monetary incentives

¹ OECD (2018). Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies.

² World Bank (2020). To achieve sustainable development goals, let's get civil service right.

like recognition, career opportunities, and professional growth) while addressing poor performance fairly.

- iii. *Instill a Performance Culture* – A shift from process-compliance to *results-oriented management* is crucial. This means implementing a robust *performance management* system with regular feedback, coaching, and objective appraisals linked to service delivery outcomes. By setting clear goals and holding departments and individuals accountable for results, governments can create a culture of continuous improvement. Importantly, this should be paired with a supportive environment – one that values innovation, allows learning from mistakes, and breaks down silos between ministries for better coordination.
- iv. *Start Small and Adapt*: Successful reform is iterative. Rather than rolling out massive changes all at once, this Toolkit advocates for pilot programs and phased implementation. Test new approaches in a few ministries, through strong monitoring and evaluation, gather data on what works and refine the reforms before scaling up. This adaptive approach (often called *Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation, PDIA*) helps manage risk and tailor solutions to local contexts.
- v. *Ensure Political Support and Sustainability* – High-level commitment and alignment with budgets and policies are key to reform success. Policymakers must champion the changes and reforms should be embedded in national plans and the budget cycle (instead of being parallel projects) to survive beyond initial leadership. It's equally important to engage stakeholders, from civil servants and external stakeholders (such as unions, citizens), to build broad ownership.

In summary, the Toolkit's core purpose is to serve as a road map to build a more professional, accountable, and citizen-oriented civil service. It offers a structured approach from diagnosing root problems, crafting a theory of change, and designing interventions, to implementing solutions and learning along the way. The Toolkit is intended to guide policy makers in LMICs and stakeholders to avoid common pitfalls, make evidence-based decisions, and ultimately build a more effective civil service that delivers for its people.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

An efficient and effective civil service is fundamental to achieving inclusive and sustainable development. It forms the backbone of public administration, enabling governments to deliver essential services such as education, health, infrastructure, and social protection services that directly influence social equity, national resilience and economic growth. A well-functioning civil service ensures that public resources are managed responsibly, policies are implemented consistently, and citizens receive timely, quality services.³

Additionally, a high-performing civil service supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 on accountable institutions, and indirectly contributes to SDGs on poverty reduction, health, education, gender equality, and climate action.⁴ Therefore, a professional, meritocratic, and citizen-oriented civil service is also central to realizing national development aspirations. It is through the effectiveness of the civil service that government policies and commitments are translated into tangible outcomes that improve the lives of citizens.

Why does civil service reform matter for service delivery and state legitimacy? The quality of a country's civil service has a direct impact on the government's ability to deliver public services effectively. Civil servants serve as the link between the state and its citizens, and their performance plays a critical role in ensuring that services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure are delivered efficiently and fairly.⁵ A professional, accountable, and service-oriented civil service helps build public confidence in government. It demonstrates the state's ability to meet citizens' needs and uphold its responsibilities.

By contrast, when the civil service is weak, overly politicized, or unresponsive, service delivery deteriorates. This often leads to public dissatisfaction and a loss of trust in government. In such cases, citizens may disengage from official channels or seek alternatives outside the public sector, which further erodes the social contract between the state and its people. Therefore, reforming the civil service is not just a bureaucratic necessity but a cornerstone of improving governance, development outcomes, and citizen trust.

In this Toolkit, "civil service" is defined as the permanent administrative arm of government. That includes officials working in government ministries, departments and agencies: personnel who advise on, develop and implement government policies and programmes and manage day-to-day activities (GSDRC, 2015). The definition excludes other government employees, such as the military, police, teachers, health workers and state-owned enterprise staff. By focusing on the core civil service, the Toolkit aims to enhance the capacity of career administrators responsible for translating political leadership decisions into effective policies and services. Reforming this administrative backbone is often the key to improving overall government performance and development outcomes.

³ Schiavo-Campo and Sundaram (2001).

⁴ World Bank (2020). To achieve sustainable development goals, let's get civil service right.

⁵ USAID (2023). Civil Service Reform Field Guide.

1.1. Persistent Challenges in Developing Country Contexts

Despite numerous reform initiatives over past decades, civil service systems in many Low - and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) remain constrained by a combination of political, institutional, technical, financial, and cultural barriers. These multifaceted challenges create bottlenecks that limit governments' capacity to deliver effective, accountable, and citizen-focused services at scale. Cross-country evidence confirms that such issues are prevalent.⁶ For example, a survey across 14 developing countries found that politicisation and patronage in civil service management are common hurdles, alongside administrative fragmentation, under-investment in capacity, and resistance to change (Andrews, 2013). Some of the most frequently observed constraints include:

- 1. Politicization of Recruitment and Promotions.** Political interference in hiring and promotion undermines meritocracy, lowers professionalism, and reduces morale. When loyalty or connections trump competence, institutions suffer. Studies have shown that a large share of civil servants in some countries got their jobs at least in part due to personal or political connections. Such patronage-based systems weaken institutional effectiveness and public trust (Roll, 2014; Robinson, 2006). A survey of 23,000 civil servants across ten countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America found that at managerial level, 25% of civil servants believe that knowing a politician or a person with a political link has helped them to obtain their job, 22% for administrative staff, and 18% for technical professional level civil servants (Meyer-Sahling et al , 2018).⁷
- 2. Weak Technical and Managerial Capacity.** Many public institutions, especially line ministries and local agencies, lack enough staff with the modern skills and competencies needed for policy design, digital service delivery, data analysis, and results-oriented management. Skills gaps and a shortage of specialized expertise impede effective policymaking and innovation (McCourt, 2013). Additionally, low salaries and limited career growth can drive capable civil servants to leave for the private sector, exacerbating brain drain in government (World Bank, 2018). These capacity constraints directly affect the government's ability to design sound policies and implement programs effectively.
- 3. Low Accountability and Performance Culture.** In many civil services, there are few consequences for under-performance. Weak or absent performance management systems mean that employees are rarely rewarded for excellence or sanctioned for failure (McCourt, 2013). Often, formal appraisal systems exist on paper but are applied inconsistently or have no real impact on promotions and rewards. This leads to a culture where mediocrity is tolerated and initiative can be stifled, ultimately hurting service delivery to citizens. Over time, such conditions also contribute to reduced motivation among civil servants, as the absence of merit-based progression and recognition limits career growth opportunities. When strong performers see little

⁶ World Bank (2018). Getting the basics right: How to manage civil servants in developing countries.

⁷ The survey was conducted in the following ten countries: Ghana, Malawi, Uganda (Africa); Brazil, Chile (Latin America); Albania, Estonia, Kosovo (Eastern Europe); and Bangladesh, Nepal (Asia). See Meyer-Sahling, Schuster and Mikkelsen (2018). Civil Service Management in Developing Countries: What Works.

reward for effort, morale declines, and the incentive to innovate or take initiative diminishes (World Bank, 2018).

- 4. Organizational Inertia and Resistance to Change.** Resistance to reform within civil services is often driven by deeply rooted interests, rigid hierarchies, and fear of losing influence. Public institutions develop routines and power structures that make them resistant to change, especially when reforms threaten the status quo (Andrews, 2013). This lack of genuine buy-in leads to implementation failures, where policies look good on paper but are undermined in practice by insiders. A relevant example is Zambia, where many ministries and agencies delay the formulation of institutional strategic plans, an essential step for operationalizing national priorities.⁸ These delays contribute to policy implementation bottlenecks and reflect a broader reluctance to embrace change, particularly when strategic planning is perceived as a threat to existing power dynamics or requires shifts in internal accountability structures. Overcoming such inertia requires more than technical solutions; it demands effective change management, reform coalitions, strong leadership at multiple levels, and incentives aligned with reform goals. Without broad ownership and political support across institutions, even well-designed reforms are likely to stall.⁹
- 5. Outdated and Fragmented Administrative Systems.** In many developing countries, core administrative systems (for human resources, payroll, procurement, data management, etc.) are outdated or fragmented. Heavy reliance on manual processes or siloed databases leads to data opacity and inefficient decision-making. Different parts of the government may not share information, hampering coordination. Such fragmentation delays service delivery (e.g. slow hiring or payment processes) and undermines transparency (World Bank, 2023). Citizens experience these weaknesses as cumbersome procedures and unresponsive services, which can diminish trust in government.
- 6. Inadequate and Unpredictable Financing.** Limited and inconsistent funding is a major barrier to sustained civil service improvement. Budgets for public administration are often limited and reliant on external donor support, leading to reforms that begin with promise but stall due to funding gaps or shifting priorities (UNU-WIDER, 2013). For example, pay reform or HR system upgrades may be partially implemented and then halted, reducing their intended impact and even lowering staff morale.

This financial uncertainty frequently results in a pattern of short-term pilot projects or one-off interventions that fail to institutionalize systemic change. Without sustained investment, reform momentum is lost, and governments struggle to deliver consistent progress.

⁸ Cabinet Office (2025), through interviews indicated that a key challenge to reform implementation is the delay by institutions in incorporating reforms into their strategic plans, which are essential for guiding day-to-day operations and aligning activities with national priorities.

⁹ Grindle (2012).

These persistent challenges point to the need for civil service reforms that go beyond technical fixes, focusing instead on transforming governance norms, accountability systems, and incentive structures within the civil service. Recognizing these challenges is the first step toward designing context-appropriate reforms that can gradually shift behaviours and improve state capacity.

1.2. Motivation and Purpose of the Toolkit

Addressing the persistent challenges in civil services outlined above such as weak capacity, low accountability, politicization and outdated administrative systems requires more than high-level policy commitments. In practice, reform initiatives can be hampered by a lack of practical tools, insufficient implementation support, and inadequate adaptation to local context. Too often, well-intentioned reforms fail because they lack a clear roadmap or do not anticipate on-the-ground realities.

This Civil Service Reform Toolkit has been developed to fill that gap between reform aspiration and implementation. Drawing initially on in-country experience in Zambia, the Toolkit offers a structured, evidence-informed, and context-sensitive approach to designing and carrying out civil service reforms in LMICs. In line with international best practices (such as the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach and OECD guidelines on public sector modernisation), it bridges the gap between diagnostics and action. The Toolkit is intended to empower governments and reform managers to operationalise reform priorities in a coherent, results-oriented manner, by turning broad objectives into practical steps.

Specifically, the Toolkit is intended to:

- i. **Translate diagnostic evidence into reform strategies:** It helps users go from identifying problems to formulating targeted solutions. Rather than one-size-fits-all answers, it guides a problem-driven analysis so reforms address root causes of dysfunction.
- ii. **Provide step-by-step guidance:** The Toolkit lays out how to set objectives, identify entry points, sequence interventions, and plan the reform process. This includes guidance on creating feasible reform roadmaps that consider political realities and capacity constraints.
- iii. **Offer tools for implementation and adaptation:** It includes templates and instruments for action planning, costing reforms, monitoring progress, and learning-by-doing. These tools support adaptive implementation, allowing reformers to track results and adjust tactics in real time.
- iv. **Strengthen reform capacity:** Guidelines are given on building institutional readiness, managing risks, and developing the change management aspects of reform.
- v. **Promote accountability and stakeholder engagement:** The approach encourages involvement of oversight institutions, civil society, and service users throughout the reform cycle. By fostering transparency and participation, the Toolkit helps build the broad ownership needed for reforms to stick.

The Toolkit is designed for a broad set of actors involved in public sector reform, including:

- Government policymakers (e.g. public service commissions, cabinet offices, ministries of public administration) and reform managers;
- Technical experts and advisors supporting reform processes;
- Development partners and donor agencies working on governance, public administration, and institutional development;
- Oversight institutions and civil society organizations engaged in promoting accountability and service delivery improvements.

Too often, civil service reforms are implemented without a clear theory of change, a realistic roadmap, or mechanisms for tracking progress and learning. This often results in fragmented efforts, poor sustainability, or unintended consequences. By providing a coherent framework and practical tools, this Toolkit is meant to help reformers navigate the complexity of institutional change more effectively. It encourages an approach where reform initiatives are anchored in evidence, continuously adjusted through feedback, and aligned with both international standards and local context.

2.0 REFORM LOGIC MODEL

An effective civil service reform program requires a clearly defined Theory of Change (ToC), a logical model that maps out how specific actions will lead to desired outcomes and impacts. This section presents the reform logic model, both as a narrative and a visual diagram, to guide planning and evaluation. The model connects strategic inputs and activities to the outputs, outcomes, and ultimate impacts we expect from civil service reform. It also outlines key assumptions that must hold true for the reform to succeed.¹⁰

2.1. Reform Pathway (From Inputs to Impact)

At its core, the logic model addresses two critical questions: (1) *What is the pathway of change for civil service reform?* and (2) *How will these reforms improve services and development outcomes for citizens?* The model acknowledges that reforms must navigate political constraints and are rarely linear – progress often requires iteration and learning. It explicitly embraces a *Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)* approach, which has been advocated in recent public sector reform research. Traditional “best practice” reforms often led to capability traps where governments adopted reforms in form but not in substance, changing laws on paper without actual improvement on the ground.¹¹ To avoid this, our logic model is built on locally identified problems, experimentation, feedback, and adaptation. This adaptive theory of change is especially suited to civil service reforms, given the complex political and institutional dynamics involved.

¹⁰ Kansas University CTB. Developing a Logic Model or Theory of Change (overview of logic model components).

¹¹ Andrews, Pritchett & Woolcock (2012). *Escaping Capability Traps through Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)*. This work introduces the PDIA approach, arguing that many traditional reforms fail due to isomorphic mimicry, and outlining four core PDIA principles that contrast with standard top-down reforms.

The reform logic model underscores that successful civil service reform is rarely achieved through a single grand overhaul. Instead, it requires connecting a series of changes each building on the last, from problem diagnosis to results. This step-by-step transformation aligns with a problem-driven, iterative approach (PDIA) and must be adapted to each country's specific context.

Reform unfolds across the following stages:

- i. **Inputs:** Diagnostic insights that identify root causes of dysfunction and inform reform priorities.
- ii. **Activities:** Tailored interventions and reform actions designed to address the identified problems.
- iii. **Outputs:** Institutional changes such as new systems, rules, or structures resulting from the interventions.
- iv. **Outcomes:** Shifts in behaviours, capacities, and organisational performance that emerge as reforms take root.
- v. **Impact:** Improved service delivery and development results that benefit citizens and reinforce trust in government.

The model draws on global best practices and evidence, but it is not prescriptive. Rather, it provides a flexible structure for LMICs to develop their own contextualised theory of change for civil service transformation. Below, we discuss each element of the logic model in detail, explaining how they fit together in a problem-driven theory of change for civil service transformation.

Inputs (Foundations for Reform)

Inputs are the resources, conditions, and preparatory steps that enable a reform initiative to take off. At the input stage, reformers lay the groundwork by gathering evidence, securing commitment, and building the initial capacity needed for change. Key inputs typically include:

- **Diagnostic assessments and evidence:** A reform process usually begins with a thorough diagnosis of existing gaps or problems (e.g. high vacancy rates, skills gaps, or poor accountability) and uncovering their root causes. *For instance, if analysis reveals that overly complex hiring rules are causing long vacancies in government posts, a key input would be evidence (and consensus) pointing to the need to streamline recruitment procedures.*
- **Political commitment and authorising environment:** High-level support provides the mandate to pursue reforms and to break the business-as-usual environment. Engaging senior leadership (Head of State, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries), mid-level managers, front-line civil servants, and unions, early on is crucial to secure an authorising environment, build a coalition for reform and pre-empt resistance. *Experience from Mozambique shows the importance of early stakeholder*

engagement: a 2009 pilot in the justice sector used workshops with local officials to identify bottlenecks and generated political buy-in to try new approaches.¹²

- **Resources and expertise:** Adequate funding, technical expertise, and human resources need to be mobilised before implementation. These inputs ensure the reform has the necessary tools and skills from the outset. Training of reform teams is an important input as well. *In Malawi, a PDIA-based education reform was preceded by training a local team in iterative problem-solving techniques and clearly defining their roles and responsibilities. This preparedness enabled the team to effectively pilot and adjust reforms.¹³*

By investing in these inputs such as evidence, political backing, and resources, countries create a strong foundation for the reform activities to follow. It is during this stage that reformers clarify objectives, build initial momentum, and mitigate risks.

Activities (Adaptive Implementation Actions)

Activities are the reform interventions and processes undertaken to bring about change. In a traditional logic model, activities might be a fixed set of actions (e.g. *“implement a new performance appraisal system”*). However, this Toolkit advocates for adaptive activities guided by the PDIA approach. Rather than one absolute plan, activities are carried out in iterative cycles of action, feedback, and adjustment

A hallmark of this stage is the emphasis on experimentation and learning. A growing number of field experiments, *randomized control trials (RCTs)* have measured the impacts of various management reforms on bureaucratic performance. These studies show, for instance, that offering career advancement opportunities can attract more qualified candidates and that performance pay or recognition rewards can boost effort, but also that poorly designed incentives may encourage gaming of the system. *Rahman et al. (2021)* assemble such evidence from multiple RCTs, demonstrating which interventions are most promising in different contexts, reminding that context matters for success.¹⁴

This Toolkit’s logic model therefore treats activities not as one-size-fits-all prescriptions, but as contextually tailored actions that are continuously adjusted. Common categories of reform activities in civil service initiatives include:

- a) **Policy and process changes:** e.g. revising recruitment rules, introducing merit-based promotion criteria, streamlining performance appraisal forms.
- b) **Capacity-building efforts:** e.g. training programs, on-the-job coaching, creation of leadership development courses.

¹² European Commission (2009). Delegation to Mozambique.

¹³ Andrews et al (2013).

¹⁴ This study synthesizes evidence from several RCTs across LMICs, particularly focusing on maternal mental health and community-based psychological interventions. It identifies three categories of effective delivery models; community health workers, peer support with digital enhancements, and mobile-based psychological interventions. This highlights the importance of contextual tailoring in program design, training, and delivery. The authors emphasize that successful implementation depends not only on efficacy but also on cultural relevance, delivery feasibility, and system integration

- c) **Motivation and accountability mechanisms:** e.g. piloting incentive schemes, establishing citizen feedback loops and strengthening performance evaluation.
- d) **Technology and systems innovations:** e.g. implementing digital Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) to reduce ghost workers.

What ties these diverse activities together is the method of implementation: iterative adaptation. For each activity, reform teams identify a specific problem, devise a possible solution, try it on a small scale, rigorously examine the results (through data and feedback from front-line staff and citizens), and then decide to scale up, adjust, or abandon the approach based on evidence. This cycle repeats, fostering a culture of continual improvement within the reform process itself.

Outputs (Immediate Results of Activities)

Outputs are the direct, tangible results of the reform activities¹⁵, the immediate changes within the civil service that occur because of the interventions. They answer the question: “*What is different inside the government after we carry out our activities?*” Examples of outputs include:

- **New or revised regulations and procedures:** *For instance, the adoption of a new civil service recruitment code or an updated performance appraisal guideline can be an output of activities aimed at improving meritocracy or accountability.*
- **Institutional structures established or reformed:** *For example, setting up a new Civil Service Training Academy or creating a Performance Management Unit in the Cabinet Office are outputs that reflect structural change. These provide a platform for sustained capacity-building or oversight.*
- **Staff trained or re-skilled:** Training programs often result in a certain number of civil servants gaining new competencies. *An output might be “500 mid-level managers trained in leadership and project management.”*
- **Pilot projects completed and evaluated:** *For example, completion of an e-recruitment pilot in two ministries – with process manuals developed and lessons documented – is a concrete output that sets the stage for broader roll-out.*

Outputs are essentially the early markers of change. They indicate that the activities have produced something new within the system. However, by themselves, outputs are not the end goal; they enable subsequent outcomes.

Cross-country reform experiences illustrate how outputs manifest. *In the Chile transformation case, one output of reform activities was the creation of a new merit-based senior executive service system (the Sistema de Alta Direccion Publica) and the transparent recruitment competitions that it entailed.*¹⁶ *In Indonesia, an output of civil service reform efforts was the*

¹⁵ Kansas University, Center for Community Health and Development, “Chapter 2 Section 1. Developing a Logic Model or Theory of Change.

¹⁶ Leite, (2023). “Learning from global experiences: transforming public administration through senior civil service reforms,” Global Government Forum.

establishment of an independent Civil Service Commission and the rollout of the merit-based Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi (JPT) hiring system for high-level posts. These outputs, the new systems and institutions – are early markers of change, achieved through the reform activities, and they set the stage for deeper outcomes.

Outcomes (Intermediate Outcomes and Behavioral Changes)

Outcomes are the intermediate changes that occur in the behaviour, practices, or performance of the civil service as a result of the outputs.¹⁷ While outputs are usually about things that are produced or put in place (new systems, policies, units, or trained staff), outcomes are about how those outputs are actually used and with what effect. Examples of outcomes in a civil service reform context might include:

- **Improved staff performance and motivation:** If one output was introducing performance contracts and incentive awards, an outcome might be *higher staff productivity or motivation* – for example, the study in Pakistan’s tax department found that after a performance-pay pilot was introduced, tax revenues collected per inspector rose significantly – indicating that the new system led to a behaviour change in effort and effectiveness.).¹⁸
- **Enhanced capacity and skill application:** If hundreds of managers underwent leadership training (output), an intended outcome could be that these managers apply better planning and people-management practices on the job. This might show up as more efficient internal processes or faster decision-making.
- **Changes in decision-making or policy implementation:** Following the creation of a new policy coordination unit or delivery unit (output), an outcome might be that ministries now routinely use data to track their projects and troubleshoot delays, leading to faster implementation of government programmes.
- **Reduced corruption or absenteeism:** If a new attendance monitoring system is put in place (output), an expected outcome would be a measurable drop in staff absenteeism or the elimination of “ghost workers” from the payroll. Similarly, if stricter recruitment controls were implemented, an outcome could be an increase in recruitments handled through meritocratic processes.
- **Better internal service delivery processes:** For example, if a bureaucratic process is streamlined (output), an outcome could be shorter processing times for business licenses or passports, indicating a more responsive civil service.

Outcomes are the critical link to eventual impact. Achieving outcomes often requires **behavioural change** among civil servants and managers. This means that reforms must not

¹⁷ Kansas University, Center for Community Health and Development.

¹⁸ Khan, Khwaja, and Olken. (2015). “Tax Farming Redux: Experimental Evidence on Performance Pay for Tax Collectors.” The study found that performance pay led to approximately 9.4 log points (which translates to a 46 percent higher growth rate) increase in tax revenues relative to the control group.

only deliver new tools or rules (outputs) but also *motivate and enable people to work differently*. Techniques such as strong leadership, ongoing communication of reform benefits, involving staff in the change process, and demonstrating “quick wins” can help convert outputs into genuine behavioural and cultural change on the ground.¹⁹

Cross-country reform experiences illustrate various outcomes. In Chile, within a few years of implementing the SADP merit-based senior appointments, the outcome was a markedly more professionalized top civil service – evidenced by competitively selected public managers who were better qualified and insulated from political churn²⁰. In Indonesia, the introduction of the JPT hiring system and Civil Service Commission led to outcomes such as increasing meritocracy in promotions and a new norm that top officials should meet competency standards rather than merely rely on patronage.²¹ In Mozambique and Malawi, pilot PDIA programs reported outcomes like greater problem-solving initiative among civil servants and teams solving specific service bottlenecks (e.g. clearing backlogs in a particular process) through iterative experiments. These intermediate successes build momentum and confidence in the reform process.

Impact (Long-Term Frontline Outcomes)

Impact refers to the high-level, long-term goals that the reform ultimately contributes to. These are the improvements in public service delivery and governance that citizens experience, and the broader development outcomes for society. In the context of civil service reform, the ultimate impact we seek is an effective, efficient, and accountable public service that delivers better results for the public.

Depending on a reform’s focus, anticipated impacts can include:

- **Higher quality public services:** For example, infrastructure projects might be completed faster and to higher quality standards due to more effective project management in ministries.²²
- **Increased public trust in government:** Over time, a more meritocratic and customer-oriented civil service can improve citizens’ perceptions of their government’s integrity and effectiveness.
- **Economic growth and social welfare gains:** civil service reforms may result in impact of a more conducive climate for business (e.g. quicker business licensing and less red

¹⁹ Andrews et al (2013).

²⁰ Leite (2023) describes how Chile’s Sistema de Alta Direccion Publica was implemented to promote merit-based, competitive selection of senior civil servants, resulting in more effective policy implementation and insulating the bureaucracy from undue political influence.

²¹ Ibid. Leite (2023) also notes Indonesia’s establishment of the Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi (JPT) system overseen by an independent Civil Service Commission (KASN), created a professional cadre of senior officials and is cited as a key step in Indonesia’s civil service transformation, aiming to ensure ethical and meritocratic leadership in the public sector.

²² Leite, (2023). "Learning from global experiences: transforming public administration through senior civil service reforms," Global Government Forum.

tape spurring entrepreneurship), or more efficient social programs that reach their intended beneficiaries, thus improving welfare indicators.²³

- **Reduced corruption and leakage:** Over the long term, institutionalising meritocracy and accountability in the civil service can help lower levels of bureaucratic corruption.

It is important to note that impacts are multi-faceted and take time to fully materialise. They are also influenced by many factors beyond the civil service reform itself such as political stability, economic trends, or other complementary policies. Therefore, when planning and evaluating reforms, one should be realistic about attribution.

The experiences of Chile and Indonesia again provide examples of impact. In Chile, the long-term impact of professionalizing the civil service has been cited as one factor in the country's ability to consistently implement sound economic and social policies, contributing to its sustained growth and improved human development indicators.²⁴ In Indonesia, civil service reforms over the past two decades (part of a broader democratization and decentralization process) have helped to gradually improve public services; for instance, some studies note improvements in administrative efficiency and service access in regions that adopted reforms more rigorously.²⁵ Citizens may not always notice the process of civil service reform, but they feel the impact when, say, it becomes easier to obtain an ID card. Those tangible improvements are the end-goal of the theory of change.

Assumptions and Enabling Conditions

Throughout the logic model and theory of change, several critical assumptions and enabling conditions underlie the linkages between each stage. Making these explicit is important for policymakers and reform managers to understand what must hold true for the reform to work as intended:

- a) **Political Commitment and Authorizing Environment:** Reforms depend on sustained political support from senior leadership. High-level champions (e.g., a President, Prime Minister, or key Ministers) help overcome resistance and provide the authority needed for change. Without this backing, even well-designed reforms risk stalling mid-course.
- b) **Institutional Stability and Coordination:** A basic level of administrative continuity and cross-agency collaboration is assumed. Reform success requires effective coordination among key actors, such as the Cabinet Office, Public Service Commission, and line ministries, supported by clear governance structures (e.g., steering committees, inter-ministerial taskforces).
- c) **Adequate Resources:** Sufficient funding, skilled personnel, and infrastructure must be available for the reform. This includes the assumption that government (and possibly donors) will allocate budget to reform initiatives, and that capacity (either internal or

²³ World Bank (2018).

²⁴ OECD (2014). Senior Executive Service System (Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública), Chile.

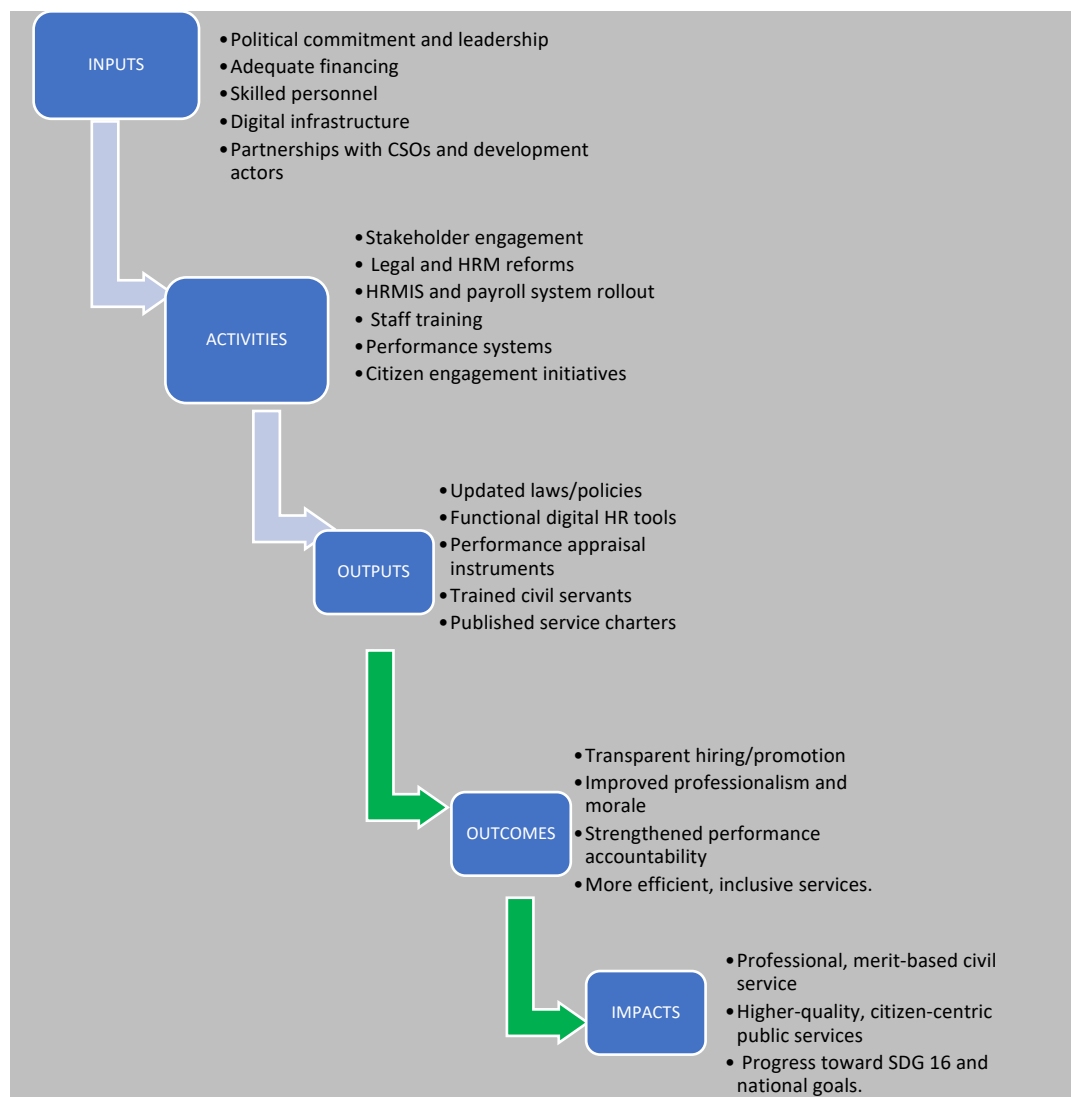
²⁵ World Bank (2019). Mapping Indonesia's Civil Service.

via technical assistance) exists to implement new systems. If budgets are slashed or key expertise is missing, the chain from inputs to outputs can be broken.

- d) **Behavioral Response and Change Management:** Reform assumes that civil servants will respond positively applying new skills, complying with merit systems, and adjusting behaviors.
- e) **Time and Learning:** Civil service transformation takes time. As shown in Chile and Indonesia, reform maturity may span decades. Patience, iterative feedback, and peer learning (e.g., across IGC partner countries) are key to sustaining progress and adapting reform strategies.

Figure 1: Civil Service Reform Logic Model – illustrative diagram depicting the flow from inputs through activities to impact, with feedback loops for learning.

Figure 1: Civil Service Reform Logic Model



In summary, the Reform Logic Model is a comprehensive, adaptable framework that empowers countries to design and implement effective civil service reforms tailored to their unique contexts. By systematically linking each phase; from in-depth problem diagnosis, strategic intervention design, and milestone outputs to tangible behavioral changes and lasting societal impacts, it ensures that reform efforts are grounded in robust evidence, continuously informed by real-world feedback, and capable of evolving dynamically.

2.2 Key Stages in the Civil Service Reform Process

An effective civil service reform process typically follows a structured cycle, rather than ad hoc or fragmented efforts. This structured approach ensures reforms are comprehensive yet focused, with clear plans, sequencing, and follow-through mechanisms (OECD, 2018). In LMICs, where reform capacity and fiscal space are often constrained, following a staged and evidence-informed process is particularly important.

A well-designed civil service reform cycle moves through six main stages: problem identification, reform design, prioritisation, costing and resource mobilisation, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E). These stages are interconnected, forming a continuous improvement loop that ensures reform strategies are both realistic and adaptive. Crucially, stakeholders, both across and outside government should be engaged throughout, to build ownership, align expectations, and improve sustainability (OECD, 2018).

2.2.1 Problem Identification (Diagnosis)

A successful civil service reform process begins with rigorous problem diagnosis. Reformers must identify the institutional constraints holding back performance, understand the root causes of those problems (including political and cultural factors), and then define clear priorities for change. Without a sound diagnosis, reforms risk being misdirected at symptoms rather than causes, or remaining superficial fixes that do not address underlying issues.²⁶

This Toolkit advocates a problem-driven, evidence-based diagnostic approach, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to establish a full picture of the civil service's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the key diagnostic tools and methods include:

- **Structured Interviews and Surveys:** A standardized interview guide can be used across ministries (and other agencies) and staff levels to systematically gather insights on issues like hiring practices, skills gaps, morale, and workflow bottlenecks.²⁷ By interviewing a range of stakeholders including senior officials, mid-level managers, front-line staff, and even retirees, the diagnosis can capture different perspectives on how the civil service functions. *This qualitative data helps compare experiences across departments and identify common problem themes* (A sample interview guide is provided in Annex One).

²⁶ OECD (2018).

²⁷ World Bank Social Development Department. Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis of Policy Reform (TIPS). Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005.

- **Staff Returns (“Staff Census and Data”):** Quantitative data collection is equally important. A staff returns tool gathers hard data on the number of civil servants in each agency, their positions, qualifications, years of service, vacancies, and payroll information.²⁸ Analyzing this data can reveal structural problems – for example, overstaffing in certain job categories, high vacancy rates in technical roles, or mismatches between qualifications and posts. Such evidence is critical to pinpoint gaps (e.g. too few engineers in the public works department) and inefficiencies (e.g. staff being paid who are no longer at post) (See Annex Two for an example of a staff data collection template).
- **Problem Analysis Matrix:** This is an analytical tool to synthesise findings from interviews, surveys, and data. The matrix links observed problems to their root causes and to the consequences they have on service delivery. For instance, a problem identified might be “delays in teacher recruitment”; the analysis might link this to root causes like overly centralized hiring authority and lack of recruitment planning, and note impacts such as teacher shortages in schools and lower education outcomes. By mapping problems to causes and effects, reformers can prioritize which issues are most urgent and identify leverage points for intervention (See Annex Three for a sample problem analysis matrix format).

The above tools are example of tools that help collection of information backed by evidence. Importantly, the diagnostic process should include stakeholder consultation beyond the civil service itself such as service users (citizens or businesses), civil society, and employee unions. This can help validate the findings and bring in external viewpoints and build broader ownership of the identified problems.²⁹

2.2.2 Reform Design (Developing Solutions)

Once problems are identified, the next stage involves formulating a targeted reform strategy. Reformers define specific objectives, outline required activities, and develop performance indicators with clear baselines and targets. These elements are typically summarised in a strategy or action plan document. Linking interventions directly to identified constraints helps construct a coherent theory of change and ensures the reform agenda remains focused and results-oriented (OECD, 2018). *See Annex Four* which provides guidance on setting Objectives, Indicators, Baselines, and Targets.

2.2.3 Prioritization of Reforms

Given the scope of potential reforms and the limited administrative and political capacity in LMICs, prioritisation is essential. Governments must decide which reforms to pursue first based on urgency, feasibility, and strategic value. Attempting to do too much at once risks failure and overload. OECD (2018) provides tools for ranking reform ambitions using criteria such as potential impact, resource needs, and political support. Prioritisation helps sequence reforms into manageable phases, increasing the likelihood of implementation success.

²⁸ OECD (2018).

²⁹ Ibid.

2.2.4 Costing and Resource Mobilisation

This stage involves estimating the financial and human resources required to implement the reform plan. It includes direct costs (e.g. for IT systems, training, or recruitment), as well as indirect institutional costs. Effective costing aligns reform plans with realistic budget envelopes and helps mobilise domestic and external financing. Reform strategies are often revised after costing to match available fiscal space, avoiding unrealistic or unfunded commitments. *See Annex Five* which provides template of Action Planning and Costing Table.

2.2.5 Implementation

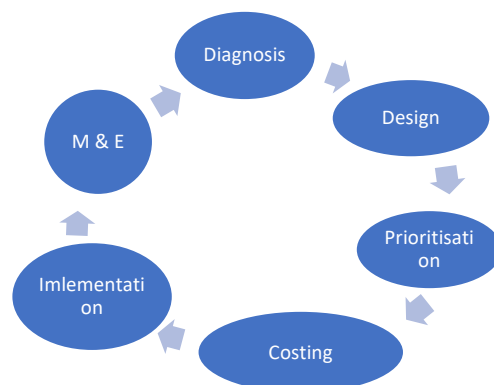
Implementation turns reform plans into action. It requires strong project management, coordination across agencies, and clear accountability structures. Countries may establish reform steering committees or delivery units to oversee implementation (OECD, 2018). Success depends on capable leadership, adequate resourcing, stakeholder communication, and readiness to manage setbacks. Phased or pilot implementation is recommended to allow adaptive learning and build momentum.

2.2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E mechanisms track reform implementation and measure whether objectives are being achieved. Monitoring focuses on tracking inputs, activities, and outputs using the indicators developed in the design phase. Evaluation, on the other hand, assesses whether reforms have produced the intended outcomes and impacts (OECD, 2018). Importantly, M&E should be designed as a feedback loop; providing evidence to adjust, refine, or scale up reforms. *See Annex Six* which provides template of M & E.

To sum up, the reform process is cyclical: it begins with diagnosis and ends with evaluation, which then feeds into the next cycle of reform. By embedding learning, stakeholder engagement, and prioritisation throughout the process, civil service reform can become an iterative journey of institutional strengthening rather than a one-off initiative. The figure below provides a flow chart for the civil service reform process.

Figure 2: Civil Service Reform Cycle



3.0 DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK FOR CIVIL SERVICE CONSTRAINTS

The problem analysis stage described above sets the foundation for examining specific thematic areas of constraint that commonly afflict civil services in LMICs. Based on global experience and research, five core areas are usually at the heart of civil service dysfunction:

1. **Recruitment and Promotion** – Are jobs filled on merit and promotions based on performance, or are patronage and nepotism prevalent?
2. **Professional Development and Capacity-Building** – Does the civil service systematically build the skills of its staff and future leaders?
3. **Motivation, Incentives, and Morale** – Are civil servants motivated to perform well? Do the reward and disciplinary systems encourage productivity and integrity?
4. **Performance Management** – Are there effective systems to plan, monitor, and evaluate employee performance, and do they actually drive improvements?
5. **Organisational Culture and Coordination** – What are the unwritten norms in the civil service? Do agencies work together or in silos? Does the culture support innovation and accountability, or does it entrench resistance to change?

Each of these areas is discussed below, including typical issues to diagnose, relevant evidence or international standards, and examples from countries that have attempted reforms. When conducting a country-specific diagnostic, these sections guide the kinds of questions to ask and data to gather.

This problem analysis stage sets the foundation for the five thematic areas below, each corresponding to a core set of civil service constraints commonly observed across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

3.1. Recruitment and Promotion

Recruitment and promotion practices determine the quality, professionalism, and motivation of the civil service (World Bank, 2018). If a government can't attract and retain talent, or if promotions reward loyalty over performance, the entire public sector will struggle to function effectively. A **meritocratic, transparent** system for hiring and advancing civil servants is widely considered a cornerstone of an effective bureaucracy, often described as part of the "Weberian" ideal type of public administration, which emphasizes competitive selection and predictable career paths.³⁰ Conversely, patronage-based systems erode fairness, diminish competence, and demoralize talented staff.

³⁰ Evans & Rauch (1999) conducted a cross-national analysis with 35 developing countries, agencies. The study found that meritocratic recruitment and predictable, rewarding long-term careers hallmarks of "Weberian" bureaucracy were strongly associated with higher economic growth even after controlling for wealth and educational variables.

In many LMICs, getting a government job may depend more on “who you know” than what you know. Studies show nepotism and political connections play a significant role in entry to civil service in numerous countries (World Bank, 2018; Finan, *et al*, 2017; Evans & Rauch, 1999). This undermines the competence of the workforce and public trust. Similarly, promotions often follow tenure or personal loyalties rather than merit (World Bank, 2018).

One study of the Indian Administrative Service, for example, found that mid-career promotions were nearly automatic with time, and only the very top appointments involved true competition. This created a scenario where only reaching the senior-most “glittering prize” posts offered incentive for excellence, while lower ranks became complacent, knowing that promotions would come with time barring major misconduct. When hard-working staff see no reward for performance or worse, see unqualified individuals promoted due to connections, morale and retention of high performers suffer.³¹

The figure below highlights reform initiatives of some countries that have adopted various approaches to strengthen merit-based recruitment and promotion in their civil services.

- **Ghana:** In 1994, the Public Services Commission in Ghana was empowered to oversee and regulate hiring across the civil service to insulate it from political interference. In recent reforms, Ghana introduced standardized recruitment processes and merit-based guidelines. Early outcomes show mixed results. Procedures on paper improved, but enforcement remains a challenge and patronage persist in some pockets (Williams and Yecalo-Teclé, 2019; Nzamba and Oguz, 2025). This shows that creating a central guardian of merit (a strong civil service commission) is a good step, but it needs political backing to truly bite.
- **Indonesia:** In the 2013, Indonesia moved its civil service entry examinations to an online, computer-based testing system and introduced an e-recruitment portal. This reform was explicitly aimed at curbing the collusion and favoritism that often-marred manual, decentralised hiring processes. By using technology, Indonesia increased transparency and made it much harder for local patrons to rig the outcomes. The examination results are easily observed (by agency officials or civil society) with scores posted outside the examination room in real time. The early results of the reforms are promising as the pool of new recruits show better qualifications and the perceptions of nepotism in hiring has reduced (World Bank, 2018; Virindra, 2022).
- **Rwanda:** Rwanda has tied promotion and retention tightly to performance through a system of performance contracts. Since 2006, many senior officials (like district mayors) sign Imihigo – public performance contracts with clear targets. Those who meet or exceed their targets are publicly recognized and rewarded, while under-performers can be sanctioned or removed (World Bank, 2018). This has reinforced a culture where advancement is connected to results. Although Imihigo applies at higher leadership levels, it cascades a performance mindset throughout the civil service, signalling that promotions are linked to delivering on development goals.

³¹ Bertrand et al. (2019) conducted a study to understand how incentive structures and promotion processes within the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) affect bureaucrat motivation, behavior, and effectiveness.

³¹ Sigman, et al., 2021. Civil service management practices for a more motivated, committed and ethical public service in Ghana: Evidence from a survey with over 1,600 public servants in Ghana. University of Nottingham.

From these cases, we see various reforms: independent hiring bodies, digital exams, educational pipelines, and performance-linked promotions. Each country's context dictates what mix of reforms is feasible, but the overarching goal is the same; to ensure the civil service is staffed and led by competent, motivated individuals chosen on merit.

To assess the extent of meritocracy in recruitment and promotion, the following diagnostic questions can help identify both formal rules and actual practices across the civil service.

Key diagnostic questions:

- *How meritocratic and transparent are current recruitment and promotion processes?* (What formal rules exist, and are they followed in practice?)
- *What is the prevalence of patronage or nepotism in hiring?* (E.g., proportion of hires believed to be via personal or political connections.)
- *Are entry exams or competitive selection processes in place for civil service jobs?* If yes, how effective are they? If not, what criteria determine hiring?
- *On promotions:* Are there clear criteria for advancement? Do promotions tend to be based on seniority, political influence, or performance? How common are merit-based promotions vs. automatic seniority promotions?

These questions aim to uncover gaps between policy and implementation, as well as the influence of patronage, transparency, and performance in hiring and advancement decisions.

3.2. Professional Development and Capacity-Building

In addition to a merit-based recruitment and promotion of the civil service, there is need to promote professional development and capacity building. Effective capacity-building ensures that employees at all levels have the competencies to perform and advance. It also contributes to motivation and retention; civil servants are more likely to stay and excel if they see opportunities for growth and learning. Conversely, if training is ad hoc, outdated, or disconnected from real needs, it can become a perfunctory exercise with little impact on performance.

In many LMICs, training for civil servants is fragmented and sporadic. Without a central strategy, different ministries might conduct their own short workshops that are not part of any career development path. Often, training becomes a perk or a routine activity (“tick the box” seminars) rather than a targeted capacity-building tool. The World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) found in a 2016 review that many civil service training programs lacked proper needs assessment.³² The assessments were not based on analysis of what skills were missing and thus had limited impact on job performance.

³² World Bank Group (2017). Results and Performance of the World Bank Group 2016: An Independent Evaluation.

Another issue is that some training focuses too much on rules and procedures, and not enough on problem-solving or innovation. A study of Nigeria's civil service, provide evidence on this point. The study measured how different management practices affected project implementation by bureaucrats. Interestingly, they found that training systems only promote formal rules and controls without improving problem-solving or initiative. That is greater autonomy for civil servants correlated with more effective project completion, while overly rigid monitoring and incentive systems correlated with worse outcome (Rasul & Rogger, 2018). The implication is that capacity-building should develop not just technical skills but also management approaches that empower staff to innovate and solve problems.

Notable examples of countries that have tried various approaches to promote professional development and capacity building.

- **Singapore:** Singapore has invested heavily in structured training for public officers for decades. The government established a Staff Training Institute in 1971 (now the Civil Service College) and made continuous training a requirement at various career milestones. New hires undergo induction, and as officers progress, they attend mid-career programs and executive leadership courses. The curriculum is constantly updated to match the evolving needs of governance. This systematic approach has helped Singapore maintain a highly skilled and adaptable civil service (National Library Board Singapore, 2015). The case for Singapore demonstrates the value of institutionalising training.
- **Kenya:** In 2012, Kenya revamped its civil service training system by strengthening the Kenya School of Government (KSG). KSG offers a range of courses, from mandatory programs for those about to be promoted, to specialised courses in areas such as ethics, problem solving skills, devolution (important after Kenya's 2010 devolution reform), and customer service (Kenya School of Government, 2023). By linking certain trainings to promotion (e.g., one must complete a Senior Management Course before elevation to a higher grade) and updating curricula to focus on practical skills and values, Kenya aims to ensure training is both relevant and taken seriously by civil servants.
- **Rwanda:** Rwanda has introduced innovative approaches to develop future leaders. One is a Leadership Fellowship program that fast-tracks young talent, placing them in rotations across different agencies and under mentorship of top officials. Additionally, Rwanda's annual National Leadership Retreat (Umwiharero) brings together top officials, including the President, to candidly review progress and challenges in government. These efforts create a culture of continuous learning and collective problem-solving at the leadership level (Iyer, 2012). They also signal to mid-level civil servants that creative thinking and learning are valued. As a result, Rwanda is deliberately grooming its civil servants to tackle complex problems through teamwork and innovation, not just routine administration.

From these examples, key insights emerge: effective capacity-building is demand-driven and institutionalised. "Demand-driven" means it is tailored to actual job requirements and priority competencies. "Institutionalised" means it's built into the regular career development process (not optional or once-off).

A robust civil service requires continuous learning and skill enhancement at all levels. The diagnostic questions below help assess whether professional development efforts are

strategic, relevant, and institutionalized. They examine the existence and quality of training programs, alignment with skill needs, institutional capacity, and mechanisms to evaluate the impact of training on performance. Below is a box with some sample questions for diagnosing promote professional development and capacity building challenges.

Key diagnostic questions:

- *What training and professional development programs exist for civil servants, and are they used strategically? (Is there an induction training for new recruits? Mid-career training? Leadership development for senior managers?)*
- *Are training offerings aligned with actual skill gaps and government priorities? (Or are they generic workshops that don't address day-to-day job challenges?)*
- *Do civil service agencies have training plans or budgets, and how much utilization is there? (E.g., % of staff who received training in the past year.)*
- *Is there a central civil service training institution (e.g. a Civil Service College), and is its curriculum up to date?*
- *How are training outcomes measured? (Do agencies evaluate if training improved performance or service delivery, or track whether trainees apply new skills?)*

3.3. Motivation, Incentives, and Morale

In many LMICs, civil servants operate in environments where motivation is undermined by systemic issues. Low pay, limited recognition, poor working conditions, and stagnant career progression are common challenges (UNDP, 2010; World Bank, 2021). Salaries at lower grades are often barely livable, prompting some employees to take on secondary jobs or depend on informal “allowances” that can lead to corrupt practices. Poor performance may go unpunished, and excellence often goes unrecognized, contributing to a culture where the incentive to exceed expectations is minimal (World Bank, 2017).

Yet, research highlights that *public service motivation (PSM)*, the intrinsic desire to serve society, can be a powerful force for improving civil service performance when effectively nurtured.³³ PSM reflects values such as compassion, civic duty, commitment to public interest, and self-sacrifice. It plays an especially critical role in low-resource contexts where financial rewards are modest or inconsistent. Civil servants with high PSM tend to demonstrate stronger work ethic, ethical behavior, and resilience in the face of institutional constraints (UNDP, 2010).

The above underscores the need for a balanced incentive framework that combines financial and non-financial elements. Simply paying salaries, especially if they are low and not linked to performance,

³³ Empirical evidence supports this. A cross-country study by Perry, Hondeghe, and Wise (2010) demonstrated that individuals with high PSM are more committed to their organizations and less susceptible to absenteeism or corruption, even in challenging work environments. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann (2016) found that PSM is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance across public sector contexts. These findings highlight that civil service reform efforts should not only focus on extrinsic incentives like pay, but also on nurturing intrinsic motivation.

can lead to complacency. In contrast, even symbolic rewards such as public praise, certificates, or career development opportunities can substantially boost morale.³⁴

A compelling example is a field experiment by Ashraf, Bandiera, and Jack (2014) in Zambia, which compared the effects of monetary versus non-monetary incentives for community health workers. They found that offering public recognition (e.g., merit certificates and ceremonies) to high performers actually outperformed larger cash bonuses in motivating these health workers. The non-monetary “social” reward tapped into intrinsic motivation and pride, especially for those passionate about the job. Importantly, financial rewards did not crowd out intrinsic motivation as those highly motivated to begin with responded well to both social recognition and money.

Beyond this study, several countries have implemented broader incentive reforms in the civil service, offering additional lessons on what works and why:

- **Bangladesh** - Annual Performance Agreements (APAs): As part of its transition to Results-Based Management, in 2015 Bangladesh piloted APAs with select ministries and divisions, particularly those under the Prime Minister's Office (Rahman, et al., 2021). The contracts outline annual performance targets aligned with national development goals and cascade down to directorates and teams. Ministries meeting or exceeding their goals received non-monetary awards, including internal recognition and greater visibility during national review processes. While the APA system is still evolving, it has contributed to a culture of goal-setting, accountability, and healthy competition among government institutions (Bhuiyan & Jahan (2017). It also illustrates how reputation and institutional pride can serve as effective motivators, especially where fiscal space for bonuses is limited.
- **Rwanda** - Imihigo and Public Recognition Model: Rwanda provides one of the most institutionally embedded examples of leveraging non-financial motivation. The Imihigo system, performance contracts signed by district mayors and senior officials, creates a clear line of accountability for service delivery outcomes (Government of Rwanda, 2018). What distinguishes Rwanda's model is its use of public recognition and social accountability. Each year, top-performing district leaders are publicly honoured at a national ceremony attended by the President, while underperformers face reputational consequences through national rankings. In a sociocultural context where public honour and shame carry significant weight, this status-based incentive system has proven highly effective in motivating civil servants to outperform peers (Iyer, 2012).

From the above, a key lesson on how to improve civil service morale and motivation is that reform design and implementation in low-resource settings require the adoption of hybrid incentive schemes. These schemes should combine modest financial rewards with non-monetary motivators such as public recognition, awards, and symbolic honours to appeal to both intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of performance. This is also supported by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG, 2021), which indicates that blended incentive models yield the best results.

Civil service administrations should therefore undertake regular motivation diagnostics to assess civil servant morale and perceptions of incentives, using surveys or interviews. This

³⁴ Independent Evaluation Group (2021). Motivating Public Servants: What Works? Washington, DC: World Bank.

allows reforms to be tailored effectively and ensures alignment with staff motivations and organizational culture. The box below provides sample diagnostic questions under motivation, incentives and morale.

Key Diagnostic questions under motivation, incentives and morale

- What motivates civil servants in this context, and what demotivates them? (e.g., Is pay so low that staff must seek secondary income? Do people feel recognized for good work? Are there any performance bonuses or awards?)
- How does the compensation structure compare to cost of living and private sector opportunities? (Is the civil service wage bill sufficient to live on reasonably? Are there pay disparities causing frustration?)
- Are there performance-based incentives or is pay essentially fixed regardless of effort?
- What non-monetary incentives exist? (Such as employee of the month awards, public recognition by leaders, opportunities for training or advancement for high performers).
- How is under-performance handled? (Do people face any consequences for poor performance or misconduct, or is there an impression of impunity?)

3.4. Performance Management

Performance management is the system by which an organization plans, monitors, and evaluates the work of its staff to achieve strategic goals. In the public sector, a robust performance management system aligns individual duties with the organization's objectives (and by extension, national development goals), provides timely feedback to employees, and holds individuals accountable for results. When well designed and implemented, such systems promote a culture of performance, accountability, and continuous improvement. Conversely, if poorly implemented, they can become a "tick-box" exercise that breeds cynicism and erodes motivation (World Bank, 2018).

Civil service performance appraisal systems have been widely introduced across many countries in Africa³⁵, Asia, and other developing regions since the 1990s, often with support from international donors. However, in most cases, these systems have not led to significant improvements in service delivery (Schiavo-Campo, 1999; World Bank, 2017). One of the key shortcomings is the absence of *genuine accountability*. High-performing civil servants are rarely rewarded or formally recognized, while poor performers typically face no meaningful consequences. This lack of differentiation results in inflated performance ratings, with most staff consistently marked as "satisfactory" or "excellent" regardless of their actual contributions (World Bank, 2017).

Several factors contribute to this widespread grade inflation. These include:

³⁵ According to Mutahaba (2011: 23), in 2011, 30 out of 54 African public services were implementing performance management systems. These reforms were driven by public concerns that African public services were underperforming, bloat-ed, corrupt, unresponsive and unaccountable, hence the thrust of these reforms were to establish profession-al, meritocratic and high performing African public services.

- Supervisors often avoid giving negative feedback due to discomfort with confrontation or a desire to maintain collegial relationships.
- Political interference undermines the objectivity of assessments, especially where staff are perceived to have powerful connections.
- Performance evaluations frequently carry little weight in management decisions such as promotions, contract renewals, or training opportunities (OECD, 2015).
- Overreliance on input- and activity-based metrics such as attendance, number of meetings held, or reports submitted. Although these metrics are easy to track, they provide limited insight into the actual impact of a civil servant's work. Leading institutions, including the OECD and the World Bank, recommend shifting toward outcome-based measures that capture results for citizens; for example, reduced processing times for services or improved satisfaction among service users (OECD, 2015; World Bank, 2018).
- Disconnection between assessments of organizational performance and evaluations of individual staff. While many public institutions are evaluated using agency-wide scorecards or performance contracts, these assessments are not always reflected in how individual staff members are appraised. This disconnect weakens the alignment between institutional goals and personal responsibilities and diminishes the motivational value of performance-linked incentives (World Bank, 2017; Republic of South Africa, 2021).

The box below provides some example of countries and their promising innovations and persistent implementation challenges.

Chile's Performance Management Reform: Chile is often cited as a regional pioneer in performance-based public management. In 2003, the Chilean government introduced a comprehensive, results-oriented performance system targeting senior executives across ministries. Under this system, ministries and their top officials signed **Individual Performance Agreements** that outlined measurable objectives aligned with national goals. These agreements were evaluated annually by **independent performance committees**, ensuring credibility and limiting internal bias (Leite, 2023).

One of the most notable features of Chile's model was the use of **collective performance bonuses**. High-performing ministries became eligible for these financial rewards, which fostered team-based accountability and institutional motivation. Oversight was provided by the **Alta Direccion Publica (ADP)**, an autonomous body responsible for managing senior civil service appointments and evaluations. Beyond linking rewards to performance, Chile's approach also emphasized capacity-building. Agencies that failed to meet targets were not merely penalized but were offered diagnostic support and technical assistance to improve their systems. This dual-track strategy of pressure and support helped establish the legitimacy of the reform and encouraged continuous improvement across institutions (Velarde et al., 2014).

South Africa's Performance Contracts: South Africa adopted performance agreements for senior civil servants and political principals as part of efforts to enhance public sector accountability and align leadership performance with the National Development Plan (NDP). By 2020, the majority of senior officials including Directors-General and Ministers, had signed these performance contracts. The contracts established strategic outcomes and departmental delivery targets, thereby creating a framework to hold top leadership accountable for results.

However, there have been implementation challenges. One of the challenges is that only about two-thirds of senior officials underwent end-of-cycle performance evaluations (Public Service Commission, PSC, 2021). This shortfall in execution undermined the integrity of the system. The PSC emphasized that for performance contracts to be effective, evaluation processes must be rigorously implemented and used to inform personnel decisions and organizational learning. The South African experience underscores a common pitfall: establishing a performance management framework is only the first step while ensuring its consistent application is equally crucial.

Uganda's Results-Oriented Management (ROM): Uganda was an early adopter of Results-Oriented Management (ROM) in 1997, aiming to improve public sector performance through better planning, monitoring, and accountability. Under ROM, each ministry and department was required to articulate strategic objectives aligned with national development priorities. These objectives were cascaded down through organizational units and individual staff work plans, creating a framework that connected personal responsibilities with institutional goals (Wenene, 2016).

In its initial phases, ROM was credited with improving clarity of roles and introducing a culture of performance planning. However, over time, several challenges emerged. Implementation became uneven across ministries, and there are persistent difficulties in objectively measuring performance. More critically, performance data has not been consistently used to inform human resource decisions such as promotions, sanctions, or training allocations. As a result, the system's influence on behavior and outcomes diminished (ibid). Uganda's experience reflects a broader challenge faced by many governments: even well-designed performance systems may stagnate if not reinforced by consequence management and routine use of performance information.

These examples above show that performance management works when leaders care about the results and when the public sector has the capacity to collect and use performance data.

Research has shown that in public service settings where many employees are intrinsically motivated by mission rather than money, performance management systems that rely solely on rigid, monetary incentives can have unintended negative effects. Besley and Ghatak (2005) argue that such systems may crowd out intrinsic motivation, particularly when professional discretion and autonomy are constrained. For instance, giving a school principal some

flexibility to innovate is often more effective than tying a large bonus strictly to test scores, which may incentivize gaming or narrow teaching.

The following box outlines key guidelines for conducting a performance management diagnostic assessment:

Key Diagnostic questions under motivation, incentives and morale

- Existence and design of the system: Are there guidelines, and what do they entail?
- Implementation fidelity: Are performance appraisals done on schedule? Is documentation properly maintained (or is it perfunctory)?
- Usage of results: Do appraisal outcomes influence anything (pay, promotion, coaching)? Or are they filed away unused?
- Credibility: Do employees perceive the system as fair and useful, or as political/irrelevant? (Staff surveys can reveal if people think the best workers are recognised or if favoritism still dominates.)

In summary, the goals of performance management are to steer, motivate and enable staff to achieve organizational mandates. Identifying gaps here will direct reforms, such as simplifying appraisal forms, training managers in evaluation, introducing rewards for top performers, or strengthening oversight of the process.

3.5. Organisational Culture and Coordination

Beyond formal systems, civil service performance is profoundly shaped by organisational culture, the shared norms, values, and unwritten rules that define *how things are done*. A culture of complacency or tolerance for corruption can undermine even well-designed policies, while a culture of integrity, collaboration, and initiative can drive performance improvements even under resource constraints (OECD, 2016).

Effective coordination among ministries and agencies is essential for delivering cross-cutting public functions such as healthcare, education, or disaster response. However, in many LMICs, historical, political, and institutional legacies have entrenched siloed and hierarchical administrative cultures, which often lead to fragmented policy implementation and reduced government effectiveness. Ministries tend to guard their mandates and operate independently, a tendency exacerbated by patronage networks (with ministries aligned to different political actors) or the absence of formal coordination mandates.

Decision-making is frequently concentrated at senior levels, with junior officials expected to follow instructions rather than take initiative. This creates a culture where compliance is rewarded more than innovation, and risk-taking is discouraged. Such systems not only stifle creativity and responsiveness but also weaken adaptive problem-solving capacities at lower administrative levels. Evans and Rauch (1999) demonstrates that bureaucracies that are

professionalized but isolated can deliver technically but fail to coordinate strategically.³⁶ Similarly, Andrews and Bategeka (2013) show how Uganda's reform trajectory was undermined by siloed implementation and lack of political coherence across agencies.³⁷ These findings echo broader literature and diagnostics that highlight how fragmentation across ministries and between administrative levels impairs whole-of-government responses.

The examples below showcase how different countries have implemented reforms to foster collaboration, break down bureaucratic silos, and build cultures that value innovation, shared accountability, and unified direction.

- **Botswana's Whole-of-Government Approach:** Botswana has aimed to improve horizontal coordination by creating a **National Strategy Office** under the President, which aligns sectoral strategies with a national development plan. It also convenes high-level forums where ministry leaders regularly meet to discuss progress and troubleshoot collaboratively. This kind of central strategy unit fosters a sense of unified direction and accountability across ministries. Botswana's Vision 2036 explicitly promotes a "One Government" ethos with shared values. This is cited as a case where strong central coordination improved planning and reduced duplication of efforts.
- **Chile's Government Innovation Lab (LabGob):** Recognising that traditional bureaucracy was risk-averse, Chile in 2015 established the **Laboratorio de Gobierno** (Government Lab). This is a safe space for civil servants to experiment with new solutions (using design thinking, agile methods, and direct input from citizens). Crucially, LabGob is backed by top political leaders and involves multiple ministries in its projects. By endorsing this, Chile signaled that calculated risk-taking and creative problem-solving are valued. Over time, such initiatives can nudge the broader culture to be more innovative and user-centered. The OECD documented LabGob as a leading example of building a culture of innovation in the public sector.
- **The Philippines' Reform Champions Network:** The Philippines employed a strategy of identifying and empowering "reform champions" within agencies to overcome inertia. Mid-level officials known to be progressive were tasked with spearheading reforms like streamlining services and fighting red tape. They were connected across departments through networks under initiatives like the Open Government Partnership (OGP). This peer network allowed them to share ideas and support each other, effectively creating a sub-culture of reform-minded officials that could push change from within. It helped break silos because champions from different agencies worked together on common problems.
- **Rwanda's Leadership Retreats and Imihigo (again):** Rwanda appears again as an example: the annual leadership retreats (Umwiyerero) gather top officials from all ministries to jointly review the country's progress. This not only enhances coordination (since everyone is literally in the same room focusing on national goals) but also reinforces a collective culture – a sense that "we, the government, are all accountable together." Likewise, performance contracts (Imihigo) cascading through levels force coordination, as many targets require multi-sector contributions. Rwanda also emphasizes a shared national vision which ministries must rally around, reducing silo mentality.

³⁶ Evans & Rauch (1999) conducted a cross-country statistical analysis of 35 developing countries, measuring the relationship between bureaucratic meritocracy and economic performance. They found that more meritocratic civil services were positively correlated with higher economic growth, but warned that without coordination and cohesion, even professional bureaucracies can be limited in their developmental effectiveness.

³⁷ Andrews and Bategeka (2013), through qualitative case analysis of Uganda's budget and education sector reforms, the authors argue that reform efforts often stall due to "reform as signals" rather than real institutional change. They emphasize how siloed agencies, lack of cross-ministry collaboration limits the depth and sustainability of reform.

The country examples reveal several common lessons on improving organisational culture and coordination in the civil service.

1. Central leadership and strategic direction are essential for aligning ministries around shared goals.
2. Institutional mechanisms that promote regular cross-ministerial engagement, such as forums, peer networks, and performance contracts, help break silos and foster collaboration.
3. Cultural change is most effective when paired with empowerment of internal reformers such as mid-level champions or frontline innovators who can drive change from within.
4. Finally, countries that promote collective accountability and innovation, while backing reform with political support, are more likely to shift bureaucratic norms toward teamwork, responsiveness, and results.

The following box outlines key questions for diagnosing organisational culture and coordination within the civil service. These help uncover hidden behaviors, incentives, and collaboration practices that influence reform success.

Key Diagnosis Questions

- *Are junior and mid-level officials encouraged to share ideas, or is decision-making strictly top-down?*
- *Are staff rewarded for problem-solving, or only for compliance?*
- *How are mistakes treated; institutional learning opportunities or grounds for blame?*
- *Are there safe spaces for experimentation (e.g., innovation labs, pilot programs)?*
- *Are there functioning inter-ministerial coordination platforms or taskforces?*
- *Do these platforms result in joint planning or implementation, or are they symbolic?*
- *Is there a culture of mutual respect and trust across ministries, or does competition dominate?*
- *Do performance goals require inter-agency contributions, and are responsibilities clearly shared?*
- *Does political leadership visibly promote whole-of-government coordination?*
- *Are collaborative behaviours embedded in performance evaluations or incentives?*

In summary, shifting organisational culture takes time, but it is critical to sustaining reform. Coordination and culture should be viewed as enablers of reform, not peripheral concerns. Without progress in these areas, even the best-designed technical systems may fail to deliver lasting impact.

4.0 POLICY DESIGN AND REFORM OPTIONS

Civil service reforms must be tailored to local contexts. Reforms should be piloted, monitored, and adapted through iterative learning processes informed by political economy analysis (Andrews et al., 2017). Another key guide is that to start with “quick wins” such as payroll cleaning before undertaking broader reforms like decentralisation and performance contracts (USAID, 2023). This section outlines key policy options for civil service reform in LMICs. Each reform strategies must be tailored to context.

A. Pay and Compensation Reform. Low and compressed salary structures are a widespread challenge in LMICs, often demotivating staff and encouraging rent-seeking behaviour (IMF, 2019). Pay reform aims to establish a competitive, equitable wage structure within fiscal constraints. Common actions include:

- Decompressing pay scales
- Introducing cost-of-living adjustments
- Piloting performance-linked bonuses.

Bangladesh’s 2015 civil service salary reform reportedly improved applicant quality (Schuster et al., 2018), while Ghana and Sierra Leone have applied selective top-ups to retain technical talent. However, global experience cautions that pay reform alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by accountability mechanisms and safeguards against corruption (Evans & Heller, 2015).

B. Digital HRM and HRMIS Implementation

Digitalising HR functions improves transparency, efficiency, and data-driven decision-making. Many countries have introduced Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS) to:

- Clean payrolls
- Eliminate ghost workers
- Monitor deployment and performance trends

The Philippines launched an integrated, web-based HRMIS across government agencies to support workforce planning (World Bank, 2016). Nigeria and Tanzania conducted biometric payroll audits, identifying thousands of ghost workers (Repucci & Tsekpo, 2020). Successful implementation, however, hinges on adequate infrastructure, cybersecurity, and training, among other things (OECD, 2017).

C. Decentralisation of HR Authority. Transferring certain HR powers to ministries or local governments can increase responsiveness to frontline service needs. Indonesia’s decentralisation in the early 2000s allowed regional hiring, better aligning staffing with local requirements (World Bank, 2008). Similarly, Kenya’s 2010 Constitution empowered counties to manage local civil servants. To avoid politicised appointments, decentralisation should be accompanied by central oversight and

standards. Chile's hybrid approach of allowing agency-level discretion within a merit-based framework, is a promising model (Schuster et al., 2018).

- D. Performance Contracting and Performance Management.** Implement performance contracts can enhance accountability by linking civil service officials' responsibilities to measurable outputs. In Pakistan, performance-based bonuses were piloted among tax officials, resulting in revenue gains (IMF, 2019). Countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia have also adopted KPI-based appraisals. Rwanda's Imihigo system requires district mayors to sign annual contracts with the president.

Crucially, success of performance management depends on:

- Linking KPIs to citizen outcomes;
- Avoiding data manipulation; and
- Embedding capacity-building (e.g., training based on appraisal results). Andrews et al. (2017) stress that performance systems must also support learning and adaptation, not just compliance.

- E. Merit Protection and Strengthening Civil Service Commissions.** Independent commissions play a critical role in upholding meritocracy. For example, Indonesia's ASN Law established the KASN to enforce open, competitive appointments (Virindra, 2022). Bangladesh and India rely on constitutionally mandated commissions for competitive exams. However, commissions must have legal backing, operational autonomy, and enforcement capacity. OECD (2017) recommends linking legal mandates to administrative courts and appeals systems to reinforce credibility.

5.0 CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above policy options and lessons from international practice, the following are cross-cutting recommendations to guide LMIC governments in designing and executing successful civil service reforms:

- 1. Secure High-Level Political Commitment.** Strong political will is consistently identified as a decisive factor in reform success (World Bank, 2008; The Policy Practice, 2023). This involves cultivating reform champions, aligning reforms with political priorities, and building a coalition that includes parliamentarians, civil society, and the media. Countries such as Rwanda and Georgia benefited from strong presidential support for reform.
- 2. Institutionalise Meritocracy and Accountability.** Legal frameworks should embed merit-based recruitment, open competition, and disciplinary mechanisms. Indonesia's ASN law illustrates how legal reform can codify accountability (Virindra, 2022). Enforcement must be strengthened through audits, sanctions, and independent appeals bodies. Argentina's experience shows that pay increases alone do not reduce corruption unless paired with strong enforcement (Evans & Heller, 2015).

- 3. Invest in Civil Servant Capacity and Incentives.** Training should align with needs assessments and be linked to promotion paths. Malaysia's competency-based training and promotion exams for senior officials offer a model (McCourt, 2013). Incentive packages must combine fair pay, recognition awards, and structured career paths. In addition to financial incentives, governments should institutionalise non-monetary forms of compensation such as awards, public recognition ceremonies, and exposure to professional networks. This reinforces motivation and pride in public service. Evidence from Singapore and South Africa shows that such non-monetary incentives can be highly effective.
- 4. Foster Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency.** Inclusive consultation improves legitimacy and sustainability. Georgia's public reporting of ministry performance and Kenya's agency performance league tables are examples of how transparency builds external accountability (GSDRC, 2016). Engagement with civil servants, unions, and civil society helps identify reform bottlenecks and build trust.
- 5. Adopt Adaptive, Iterative Implementation.** PDIA principles recommend starting with pilots, using M&E to adapt, and adjusting strategies in response to feedback (Andrews et al., 2017). Dedicated reform units or delivery teams can coordinate and refine implementation based on frontline feedback and data.
- 6. Conduct Political Economy Analysis and Plan for Sustainability.** Understanding vested interests and resistance is crucial. Reformers should sequence changes, build support coalitions, and plan sustainable financing beyond donor support (DFID, 2014; The Policy Practice, 2023). For example, Ghana's approach of reassigning redundant staff during payroll reforms helped reduce backlash.
- 7. Leverage Digital Platforms for Service Accountability.** Digital platforms offer powerful tools to enhance performance accountability, citizen engagement and transparency in public service delivery. When integrated with service charters and feedback mechanisms, such platforms can empower users while enabling real-time oversight of institutional performance.

A notable example is the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA), which in 2022 launched the Integrated Regulatory Information Management System (IRMIS) to digitize its core regulatory functions. The system incorporates a real-time, client-facing service charter that allows applicants to track the status of services such as licensing and product registration. Additionally, IRMIS also generates automated compliance reports used internally to monitor staff performance against service benchmarks.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this Civil Service Reform Toolkit provides policymakers and practitioners with a comprehensive roadmap to initiate and sustain reforms. The importance of an effective and efficient civil service cannot be over emphasized as it forms the backbone of public administration, enabling governments to deliver essential services (such as education, health, infrastructure, and social protection services) that directly influence social equity, national resilience and economic growth.

Throughout the Toolkit, the emphasis has been on being **adaptive, evidence-based, and context-specific**. The Toolkit then offered a logical model (Theory of Change) to connect reform inputs to tangible impacts, and a diagnostic framework to ground any reform in real data and problem analysis. Building on that foundation, we have expanded the Toolkit with policy options and recommendations that draw from international experience and research.

A few key themes emerge across all sections: **meritocracy, accountability, and adaptability**. Effective civil services are built on merit-based practices and integrity, which require both good systems (rules, pay structure, training) and strong political and social support (leadership commitment and citizen engagement). Reforms must be driven by local problems and opportunities, not by importing foreign models wholesale. They should be iterative – reformers should **“learn by doing,”** using feedback to adjust course, rather than assuming a perfect plan from the outset. And importantly, reforms should be inclusive, considering the needs and inputs of those inside and outside government. This adaptive and inclusive approach is not just theory; it has been shown in practice to produce more sustainable improvements in governance and service delivery.

The value of this Toolkit lies in its practical guidance on *how* to navigate the complex journey of civil service reform. It encourages users to craft a reform strategy that fits their nation’s context; whether that means starting with quick wins like a payroll audit or embarking on a comprehensive civil service law overhaul and to sequence, and implement those changes thoughtfully. The Toolkit’s guidance on managing political economy realities is crucial, as technical solutions alone will not suffice. Likewise, it stresses on monitoring, adaptation, and learning to creates a culture of continuous improvement.

To sum up, building a more professional, performance-oriented civil service is a long-term endeavor, but it is achievable with the right approach. By combining international best practices with local insight, fostering broad stakeholder ownership, and remaining open to adjustment, governments can transform their civil services into engines of effective governance. This Toolkit is designed to help guide that journey, ensuring reformers are equipped with both the knowledge of what to do and how to do it in their unique context.

To assist reformers in operationalizing these principles, the toolkit’s annexes provide sample tools and templates, from diagnostic questionnaires to implementation and monitoring, which can be adapted to country contexts.

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APPENDIX

Annex One: Sample Questionnaire

JUNIOR CIVIL SERVANTS

Section A: Background Information

1. Please introduce yourself and your current role in the civil service.
2. How many years have you worked in the civil service?
3. What are your educational and professional qualifications?

Section B: Recruitment and Promotion

4. How did you learn about your current position?
5. How would you describe the recruitment processes within the civil service or your Ministry?
Is the recruitment process clear and transparent?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Somewhat
6. Do you believe the current recruitment system hires the most qualified candidates?
7. Have you experienced or observed bias in promotions or appointments?
8. What improvements can be made to the recruitment process to ensure that motivated and qualified individuals are hired in the civil service?

Section C: Professional Development

9. Have you received any training since joining the civil service?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. If yes, how relevant was the training to your current role?
11. Are there sufficient opportunities for professional development and career growth within the civil service? Please elaborate.
12. What types of training do you feel are needed to improve your work?

Section D: Motivation, Morale, and Incentives

13. How would you describe morale of staff in your institution?
☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low
14. What motivates you most in your current job?
☐ Salary ☐ Recognition ☐ Opportunities to grow ☐ Job security
15. Do you believe that the current salary structure reflects the responsibilities and workload associated with your position?
☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Are there performance-based rewards in your ministry either monetary or non-monetary?

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. Can performance-based incentives effectively motivate civil servants? How

18. What measures do you believe could be implemented to enhance employee satisfaction and retention through improved remuneration and incentives?

Section E: Job Clarity and Performance Feedback

19. Were you inducted when you joined the civil service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Do you have a written job description?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21. How does your job description translate in your day-to-day activities?

22. Do you prepare an individual work plan (IWP) with your supervisor?

☐ Yes ☐ No

23. How often is your performance reviewed?

☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually ☐ Never

24. Do you receive feedback after performance reviews?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

Section F: Organisational Culture and Coordination

25. How would you describe the work culture in your department?

26. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 indicates the most agreement and 1 the least, how much do you agree with the following statement:

- i. The culture in the department is conducive to the introduction of new ideas and approaches.
- ii. I feel comfortable expressing disagreement with others' views.
- iii. Credit and accountability are appropriately assigned.

27. How well does your department collaborate with other departments?

28. Are there any specific policies that hinder the efficiency of operations within your Ministry/ institution? If yes, please share examples.

29. What do you think the organization could do to improve work culture?

Lessons Learnt and Conclusion

30. Based on your experience and observations, what changes or reforms would you recommend to enhance the efficiency and/or effectiveness of the civil service?
31. Is there anything you would like to share with us that we have not covered in the questions above?

SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS (DIRECTORS AND PERMANENT SECRETARIES)

Section A: Background Information

1. Please introduce yourself and your current role in the civil service?
2. How many years have you served in the civil service?
3. Which ministries or departments have you worked in?

Section B: Recruitment and Promotion

4. How effective is the current recruitment process?
5. What weaknesses exist in identifying and hiring top talent?
6. Is there a structured promotion policy, and what parameters guides promotion?
7. What improvements can be made to the recruitment process to ensure that motivated and qualified individuals are hired in the civil service?

Section C: Professional Development

8. What challenges hinder professional development?
9. Are continuous training and career progression encouraged in your ministry?
10. Is there a staff training needs assessment conducted regularly?

Section D: Remuneration and Incentives

11. How would you describe morale of staff in your institution?
☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low
12. Do you believe that the current salary structure reflects the responsibilities and workload associated with the various positions (junior and senior officials)?
13. Are there any non-monetary benefits that you believe should be introduced or improved to better meet the needs of civil servants?
14. Can performance-based incentives effectively motivate civil servants?
15. What measures do you believe could be implemented to enhance employee satisfaction and retention through improved remuneration and incentives?

Section E: Role Clarity and Performance Management

16. Are job descriptions up-to-date and aligned with actual duties?
17. Do staff develop Individual Work Plans at the beginning of the year?

18. Are review outcomes used to guide staff development or promotions?

Section F: Organisational Culture and Coordination

19. How would you describe the organizational culture in your department?

20. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 indicates the most agreement and 1 the least, how much do you agree with the following statement:

- i. The culture in the department is conducive to the introduction of new ideas and approaches.
- ii. Credit and accountability are appropriately assigned.

21. What do you think could be changed to improve work culture in civil service?

Section G: Policy and Systemic Constraints

1. Are there outdated policies or bureaucratic hurdles that hinder delivery?

2. What reforms would you recommend to improve structural efficiency?

3. Are there sufficient opportunities for professional development and career growth within the civil service? Please explain your answer

Lessons Learnt and Conclusion

4. Based on your experience and observations, what are the top three actionable reforms that could strengthen the civil service?

Annex Two: Staff Returns Tool Template

Employee Name	Employee ID	Position/Title	Department	Appointment Date	Duty Station	Highest Qualification	Training Attended (Y/N)	Employment Status (permanent or Not confirmed)	Salary Scale	Payroll Number	Supervisor	Remarks

The staff return tool should be updated regularly by Ministries and Agencies to maintain accurate workforce data. This helps to identify critical gaps within the institution labor force.

Annex Three: Problem Analysis Tool Template

Problem Area	Immediate Issue	Root Cause(s)	Impact on Service Delivery	Evidence Source (Interviews/Data)	Priority (High/Medium/Low)	Proposed Intervention(s)
Recruitment						
Promotion						
Morale/Incentives						
Professional Development						

Performance Management						
Organizational Culture						

The problem Analysis Tool above is a matrix linking immediate issues to root causes and impacts, supporting prioritization and targeted intervention design.

Annex Four: Setting Objectives, Indicators, Baselines, and Targets Template

Objective	Strategic Priority	Indicator	Baseline	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3	Remarks
Strengthen human resource planning	Workforce optimization	% of positions filled with qualified staff					
Enhance compensation structures	Employee motivation and retention	Staff turnover rate					
Improve operational efficiency	Service delivery improvement	Average processing time per service					
Strengthen governance and accountability	Transparency and anti-corruption	Number of reported corruption cases					
Accelerate digital transformation	Innovation and modernization	% of services available online					
Promote citizen engagement	Participatory governance	Citizen satisfaction score (survey)					

Annex Five: Action Planning and Costing Table Template

Reform Area	Proposed Intervention	Key Activities	Responsible Institution	Timeline	Estimated Cost (USD)	Funding Source (s)
Recruitment	Digitize recruitment process; simplify procedures	- Design and deploy e-recruitment system - Train HR staff on new system - Map and streamline current recruitment processes	Public Service Management Agency, National Digital Transformation Agency, Ministry of Finance, Line Ministries	Q1-Q4 2026	\$60,000	National Budget
Promotion	Standardize criteria; establish oversight mechanisms	- Develop objective promotion criteria and guidelines - Form promotion oversight committees - Conduct sensitization sessions	Public Service Management Agency, Ministry of Finance, Line Ministries	Q1-Q4 2026	\$15,000	National Budget

A template for translating reform objectives into actionable steps, with timelines, responsibilities, and budget estimates.

Annex Six: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Template

S/N	Reform Area	Expected Results	Indicator	Definition of Indicator	Baseline	Target	Data Source	Reporting	Responsible
	Key Result Area	Expected results after the Reform	Measurement of the indicator	Detailed definition of the indicator	Status before the Reform	Status of the indicator after the implemetation	Source of information used to track and assess progress	Frequency of Reporting	TWG or Steering Committee etc
1.0									

A framework for tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and informing decision-making through defined indicators, baselines, and reporting cycles.

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