2015

Policy paper summary

Civil service onboarding

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This guide was formulated as part of the "Tree of Knowledge" program for the formulation and writing of policy in civil service human capital.

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Executive summary

This guide is based on the policy paper which examined the need for updating the existing policy regarding civil service onboarding, while establishing, structuring and standardizing the process of absorbing a new employee in the civil service.

An onboarding program has several main goals (Brown, 2005). First of all, onboarding programs streamline the initial stage of the employee's career track, because they help the employee "get the hang of things" faster, thus reducing the onboarding costs of new employees in the long run. Secondly, they have the power to reduce the natural anxiety felt by new employees by allowing them to understand exactly what their job is about, and what their place in the organization is. Moreover, reducing anxiety helps the new employees get absorbed in the organization faster. Third, good onboarding programs may reduce dropout levels among employees shortly after joining the organization. Fourth, programs such as these reduce the resources required from people within the organization, such as colleagues and managers, for the onboarding of the new employee. Finally, they allow expectation management, and development of a positive attitude and emotional commitment of the new employee towards his job and workplace.

Presently, **there is a large disparity between government offices regarding onboarding programs** aimed at new employees in the civil service. The disparity is evident in three main aspects:

- **Process perception** – There are offices which treat the onboarding of a new employee merely as a technical procedure, based mainly on procedural onboarding and form filling with the aim of "getting started"; other offices treat the onboarding stage as part of a whole process which begins at the moment the employee is informed he is hired, and continues along several points in time within his first year of employment**.**
- **Investment in a new employee** – There is large disparity in the scope of resources assigned by the office to the process, ranging on a scale beginning with giving forms and onboarding kits, up to advanced training and guidance processes.

- **Value-based connection to the civil service** – Most office onboarding processes which were examined are aimed at office/unit onboarding and not at creating an onboarding process for the civil service as a meta-organization.

In the new work process proposed here, a uniform onboarding ladder was built for the onboarding of new employees in the civil service. "Milestones" were incorporated in the scale, in order to create a connection to the civil service ethos and values, while using educational software, a uniform onboarding kit as well as orientation days which will be developed by the CSC. The onboarding ladder creates standardization in the onboarding processes of employees in the different offices, and is expected to improve the effectiveness of employee job entry, enhance the mobility of employees between offices, while developing employee professionalism.

The work Process

Stages in the new work process:

1. **Procedural onboarding** – Begins upon designating an employee for a position. Within this stage the following actions are made:
   - **Forms** – The employee must fill the forms relevant to his onboarding, including security clearances.
   - **Office approval** – Upon completing the forms, office approval of the employee and approval by the CSC is required.

2. **A week / two weeks before arrival – Pre-boarding:**
   - **Organizational office preparation (two weeks before arrival)** - A meeting with a HR unit representative in order to initiate the onboarding process, and with the direct supervisor for general information on the position and the unit. The employee will receive an onboarding kit.
   - **CSC (up to a week before arrival)** – The CSC will diagnose training and mentorship needs of particular populations, such as: senior staff and government-wide roles.
   - **Organizational office preparation (up to a week before arrival)** – Verifying logistical preparedness for employee onboarding, including a work station and any required equipment, holding preparation talks towards the direct supervisor's and the supervising mentor's onboarding talks, and checking all employee forms and contracts in order to verify they are in order and have been approved by all relevant parties.

3. **On-boarding:**
   - **Day one** – Dedicated to reception and to building the employee's initial connection with the absorbing office. The HR unit will verify the completion of forms, updating the employee in the computer system and issuing a worker card. The direct supervisor and head of the absorbing unit will hold introductory talks and will introduce the employee to the onboarding program, and then lead a tour of the office facilities**.** The office

administration will send two emails: A signed welcome from the Civil Service Commissioner, and another signed welcome from the Office Director.

- **Personal and professional integration (first month)** – This month is dedicated to the employee's professional and personal integration and to identifying professional needs in accordance with the onboarding program. Additionally, the employee will introduce himself to key administrative staff (training, welfare, wages, women's rights, information systems). After the first month is completed, the first paycheck will be examined (responsibility of the employee, with assistance from the HR unit and wage unit).

- **Deepening civil service onboarding and integration (two-three months past beginning)** – These months will be dedicated to deepening the employee's integration. It is the office's responsibility to hold civil service and office onboarding seminars for all new employees twice a year[1]. Following this period the HR unit and the employee's direct supervisor will hold an evaluation of the onboarding and mentoring process.

- **Professionalization, independence and strengthening the bond to the organization and the civil service (six months to a year)** – These months will be dedicated to professionalization and the building of professional independence, following which the employee will receive an evaluation and feedback talk regarding the trial period[2]. During this period job responsibilities will be expanded, the employee will be included in decision making processes, and will build a personal work schedule including more complex assignments. From the training perspective, the employee will be incorporated in the "new employee course"[3]. During the second half of the period the training department will answer the employees training and professional qualification needs, as part of a continuous needs analysis.

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[1]Office seminars will be held according to guidelines specified by the CSC.

[2]See target audience guide referring to trial periods.

[3]Courses for new employees will be under the office's responsibility according to the guidelines defined by the CSC, while incorporating unique office subjects. The offices will be committed to a minimal amount of training for new employees. The scope of the activities will be defined in accordance with the criteria defined by the CSC.

Background for the Change

In 2013, the government decided to accept the tenets of the Reform Committee report for the improvement of human capital management mechanisms in the civil service (decision No. 481). The reform report dictates that in the context of human capital development, an organizational culture based on vision and values is to be created, while developing the civil service ethos. The creation of a value based "identity card" for civil servants has crucial importance for their initial steps in the organization and their integration in it. First of all, onboarding programs streamline the employees initial time in the organization, because they help the employee "get the hang of things" faster, thus reducing onboarding costs of new employees in the long run. Secondly, they have the power to reduce the natural anxiety felt by new employees, by allowing them to understand specifically what their job is about, and what their place in the organization is. Moreover, reducing anxiety helps the new employees get absorbed faster. Third, good onboarding programs may reduce dropout levels among employees shortly after joining the organization. Fourth, programs such as these reduce the resources required from people within the organization, such as colleagues and managers, for the onboarding of the new employee. Finally, they allow expectation management, and the development of a positive attitude and emotional commitment of the new employee towards his job and workplace[4].

Regarding onboarding in the civil service, the reform report stated the required end products are:

- An implementation system for civil service onboarding, establishing basic knowledge, values and a joint organizational language.
- An efficient and effective training system built towards the accomplishment of office goals.

- [4]Brown, 2005

Today, **there is a large disparity between government offices regarding onboarding programs** aimed at new employees in the civil service. The disparity is evident in three main aspects:

- **Process perception** – There are offices which regard the onboarding of a new employee merely as a technical procedure, based mainly on procedural onboarding and form filling with the aim of "getting started"; other offices regard the onboarding stage as part of a whole process which begins at the moment the employee is informed he is hired, and continues along several points in time within his first year of employment**.**

- **Investment in a new employee** – There is a large disparity in the scope of resources assigned by the office to the process, on a scale beginning with giving forms and onboarding kits up to advanced training and guidance processes.

- **Value-based connection to the civil service** – Most office onboarding processes examined are aimed at office/unit onboarding and not at creating an onboarding process for the civil service as a meta-organization.

> Apart from a few, no training and qualification processes for the creation of a connection to the civil service ethos and values were found. There is an existing onboarding protocol but it is not standardized for all offices.

In order to examine the issue of onboarding in the civil service, the Civil Service Commissioner appointed a team whose aim is to formulate a policy paper on the matter. The team was required to address:

1. The formulation of a doctrinal approach for building a generic and uniform process for the onboarding and accompaniment of new employees in the civil service, with an emphasis on connecting the employee to the civil service ethos and ethical code.

2. Formulation of a proposal for uniform implementation tools in the onboarding in the civil service (onboarding kit, training and mentorship processes).

3. Building control guidelines for the onboarding process.

The benefits of implementing the new policy

The establishment of the employee onboarding process has several benefits, which can be categorized into two main fields:

1. Benefits for the civil service
2. Benefits for the employee

Benefits for the civil service

- **Improving the public service's image** – Implementing the new onboarding policy, including personal and professional treatment, making onboarding forms more accessible, early checking of needs for specific populations and building a government-wide onboarding kit will greatly enhance the image of the civil service in the eyes of the employees and the public, establishing it as a leading organization in the development and management of human capital, positioning it alongside other leading companies in the economy.

- **Emotional connection of the employee to the civil service** – executing government-wide onboarding to the civil service, will constitute the beginning of the employee's emotional connection to the civil service and its values, thus strengthening "*esprit de corps*" and his will to join the civil service.

- **Enhancing effectiveness** – Optimal utilization of the employee's onboarding period towards swift job entry, while clearly coordinating expectations as were defined in the initiation program created in the beginning of the process, will enhance the effectiveness of the employee's entry into their new position.

- **Cutting costs** – When considering the resources required for the development of onboarding support tools**,** educational software, onboarding and training kits, the investment during initial development stages is expected to show a high return of investment (ROI), while saving the costs of independent development processes in offices. Additionally, the employee's swift job entry will also help reduce costs.

- **Creating synergy in office activities** – this process will assist in building processes of sharing and maintaining knowledge while creating professional connections and discourse between the different offices.

- **Added motivation for mobility between offices** – Since the onboarding implementation process leads to building a strong meta-organizational identity as opposed to merely office identity, motivation for mobility of high level employees between offices may grow.

Benefits for the employee

- **Developing employee professionalism** – A structured onboarding process will best answer the new employee's needs, will shorten the learning curve and produce professional outputs. Early needs identification[5] will enable improvement of personal capabilities, faster integration and will enhance the employee's self-efficacy.

- **Increasing efficiency** – Increasing performance effectiveness by getting the employee up to speed faster through initiation programs, civil service training programs etc.

- **Emotional connection to the civil service** – A government-wide onboarding program will initiate the employee's emotional connection to the civil service and its values, thus strengthening his "*esprit de corps*" and his desire to belong to the civil service.

- **Added motivation for mobility between offices** – Since the onboarding implementation process leads to the building of a strong meta-organizational identity as opposed to merely an office identity, this alternative might strengthen office mobility motivation.

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[5] By the CSC

What's changed?

In this segment we will review the main changes made, moving from the previous work process to the new one, regarding civil service onboarding:

Subject	Current situation	Expected situation
Onboarding process	An onboarding protocol exists, but it is not aimed at creating a joint connection and does not include milestones indicating pre-defined steps and timetables in the process. Since the protocol was written a long time ago, it is not suitable any more due to many changes in various fields (such as technology).	An organized and uniform onboarding protocol obligating all offices, creating uniformity, with an emphasis on improving the civil service's image and creating "*esprit de corps*" for all civil servants.
Civil service protocol	The civil service protocol instructions are general and open to interpretation.	Updating the civil service protocol so there are detailed instructions as to the required onboarding process for new employees.
Supporting technology	Antiquated work methods – manual form filling and insufficient use of technological aids which could assist in making the onboarding process more efficient and more user-friendly.	Creating new online forms for employee onboarding, formulating structured training modules relying on technological tools suitable for use by the civil service. Subsequently, time and paperwork will be saved, and the civil service image will improve by aligning itself with technological progress.
Supporting resources for	The quality of onboarding is affected by office resource and	Standardization will assist in reducing gaps in onboarding quality

The process	size, and by the perception of the onboarding process as essentially technical.	between offices, and will contribute to the perception of the onboarding process as a meaningful part in the employee's career track.

Tool kit

Onboarding "Gantt" chart and generic milestones – A planned and continuous process beginning with the employee's selection, to the commencement of his work and his activity during the first year at work.

New employee educational software – Educational software for new employees was developed, which will assist in creating job entry uniformity and will make the process more accessible for the employee.

Online forms – Making forms accessible on the web, towards making the onboarding process more efficient.

Orientation days for the civil service – Creation of civil service-wide orientation days by the CSC in order to create exposure to the civil service (including orientation for unique populations).

Onboarding kit – A uniform onboarding kit for the entire civil service.

A modest gift and welcome letter – The employee shall receive a modest gift and a welcome letter from the Office Director and the Commissioner.