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### **A vision of innovative civil service through the lenses of state and business**

**Abstract.** The article considers the key aspects of innovative civil service for representatives of state bodies and private companies on the example of a pilot project of a new remuneration system. Along with the increase in wages depending on the performance of employees, this project launched transformational processes in the pilot bodies.

However, there is a lack of common understanding of the measures that should be taken to improve performance following OECD standards. The analysis showed that since independence, Kazakhstan's civil service has undergone significant positive changes, but most of them were carried out haphazardly, implementing the best foreign practices without a comprehensive strategic vision.

For these purposes, interviews and surveys with project experts were conducted, which allowed finalizing the conceptual model of the study, as well as to determine the main characteristics of innovative civil service. Besides, based on the faced issues recommendations for further improvement of the sphere have been developed, including the improvement of interdepartmental cooperation, the necessity to overcome the apathy of individual employees, reducing bureaucracy and other aspect.

**Keywords:** innovative, citizen-centric government, transformation, public value.

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Different scholars agree that the goal of all sectors of the economy, public and private, is to create or increase the value of contribution. Within a private sector, this goal is fairly clear – to generate private value by generating a profit. Within a public sector environment, the term “public value” describes the contribution made by the public sector to the economic, social and political well-being of a society or nation. Therefore, public value focuses attention on what the public values and not just what the producers value. The relevance of citizen value is based on a circular logic, where citizen value is expected to improve the service quality, make citizens more satisfied, all of which lead to improved legitimacy of the government.

Once again there is no single definition of citizen-centric and innovative government. Each user group has its preferences towards services and channels. At the same time if we consider civil service system modernization separately it should be noted that OECD suggests there types of civil service models, such as professional, strategic and innovative [1, p. 159].

Citizen-centric and innovative approaches through a clear understanding of service needs examine service delivery issues from a citizen's point of view, join up government based on citizen needs organize services around the needs of the citizen ensure that citizens receive all of

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their entitlements, no matter how complex their needs (Ebbers, Pieterse and Noordman, 2008; Gareis, Cullen and Korte, 2004) [2, p. 190; 3, p. 612].

Based on the literature review we can conclude that:

Firstly, citizen-centric and innovative service means many things to many people and is something often noticed more by its absence than its presence in the literature.

Secondly, in the future, rather than technology, the focus is on the value of intervention: how a government can build a new way of working which enables it rapidly and efficiently to adapt to changing citizen needs and emerging expectations.

The context and environment of public services are becoming increasingly complex and the management of change and innovation is now a core task for the successful public manager (Brown et al., 2005) [4, p. 7].

According to Kapoguzov (2015) “Institutional changes that occurred in public administration in the twentieth century, led to a system of transformation of institutions of public administration bureaucratic (Weberian) type (model of Public Administration) to a system of interrelated institutions of managerial type (Public Management) and subsequently – to its modification – the model of social coordination (Public Governance)” [5, p. 30].

Then Kamarck (2004) continues with a statement that «for some countries government reform and innovation involves the reform of an old bureaucracy in the context of a newly democratic state. For other countries, this entails a fight against corruption. For still other countries the challenge is to modernize large, outmoded bureaucracies and bring them into the information age. While countries have come to government reform for very different reasons, government reform and innovation is a global phenomenon. In some countries this movement has been called reinventing government; in other countries, it is referred to as building state capacity or modernization of the state and in still other countries this is named the New Public Management. In all these countries, frustration with the status quo, financial or political crisis, an emphasis on results or the possibilities of new technology have led public sector employees to engage in innovative behavior” [6, p. 3].

Other authors look at organizational structure and culture as well as the characteristics of individual decision-makers as factors that might account for managers’ willingness to engage in innovative practices (Wise, 1999) [7, p. 1].

Besides this, there are also different theories, which is not included concrete measures, but provide some approaches on how to proceed with organizational change (Kotter’s theory, Nudge Theory, ADKAR model, Bridges’ Model, Kübler-Ross Model, etc.).

Although a substantial part of literature identifies similar factors for IT, organizational or other forms of transformation, there is an absence of concrete approach of how to build a holistic system of change management in public authorities.

One of the main strategic documents, which reflects the vision of further development of Kazakhstan, including the civil service, is the National Plan «100 concrete steps». As part of the first institutional reform on the formation of a professional state apparatus, it is envisaged to introduce a new system of remuneration of civil servants. One of the components of this reform is the project of the factor-point scale (grading system), which launched the transformation processes in the pilot bodies.

From a theoretical perspective, expert interview and survey, the paper aims to contribute to responding to different calls for research and to explore the model of public authorities’ transformation to improve the effectiveness of state apparatus towards innovative civil service.

Numerous studies are conducted on the issue of civil service transformation which is inextricably linked to public administration system modernization. Most scientists and researchers present various models and case studies of different countries. However, a literature review has shown a lack of successful implementation of proposed conceptual models.

Thus, this paper has potentially an exploratory nature. That means during the research phase any specified theory of change management will not be tested. Rather the study will conduct a new approach to develop an empirically proven citizen-centric model of public authorities' transformation. This model was developed in a frame of doctorate research. The Conceptual framework includes the following factors, which are important during the transformation of any organization: Strategy; Human Capital (People); Organization and Resources [8, p. 51].

These factors are common to many models and theories on the issue of organizational and another kind of transformation. However, there is an absence of concrete answer on a question: What are similarities and differences in a vision of innovative civil service from the state and business viewpoint?

To address this question the study aims to define a vision of innovative civil service of Kazakhstan from the public and private sector perspective.

To achieve this, the following research objectives are identified:

1. Based on previously developed conceptual framework conduct an interview and survey with managerial representatives from target organizations (the selection criteria, as well as the name of organizations, will be shown in the next part of the paper);

2. The proposition of policy suggestions and discussion of preliminary results of recommendation implementation.

#### **Research of the design and methods**

The analysis is based on interviews and a survey of experts of new remuneration by results project selected according to the judgment method. This method, as well as pilot bodies and respondents, were selected based on their direct participation in the project as major players and stakeholders because the effect of the project depends on their activities.

In general, this method, as well as the results of the study, are part of a larger study that involves the collaboration of various tools. In particular, taking into account the results of this work, the adjusted questionnaires will be distributed to civil servants of the pilot bodies through the snowballing method. Also, based on the improved conceptual framework, a cost-effectiveness analysis of the interim results of the pilot project will be conducted.

Therefore, interviews and surveys were conducted with the management of the two pilot bodies, in which organizational and other changes were made, as well as with the project managers from the public and private sectors.

The participation of respondents is voluntary. The appropriate notes were mentioned in the Interview request letter, as well as in the Interview consent form, and mentioned by the instructor during the interview. The interviewees conducted in the Russian language as an interethnic common language in Kazakhstan.

After receiving the Interview confirmation letter, the researcher contact respondents. Generally, the interviews were divided into two phases. The first section includes in-depth questions about their expert opinion on the innovative civil service of Kazakhstan. The second section asked to review a preliminary version of the Survey questionnaire and ask the questions. One of the parts of questionnaire indicates to what extent a respondent agrees or disagrees with the listed statements, according to the five-point Likert-scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree", 2 - "Disagree", 3 - "Neutral or No opinion", 4 - "Agree", 5 - "Strongly Agree".

Ethical issue. Survey and interview professionals must protect each participant's well-being to prevent harm and to get accurate information. Therefore, the ethical principles which guide data gathering are rooted in two inalienable human rights: free speech and privacy.

Additionally, there are several ethical codes, which provide the main ethical parameters for a researcher for conducting surveys or interviews. However, guidelines across different professionals are usually similar. Hence, it was decided to accept the Ethical Code of the NIH Office of Extramural Research.

To ensure the compliance of ethical principles the researcher completed the Protecting Human Research Participants course (NIH Office of Extramural Research) by receiving the appropriate certificate.

Moreover, to ensure the voluntary participation and protection of individual data the researcher mentioned the appropriate notes in covering letters both of the interview and survey, as well as in the Interview consent form and Survey guidelines for respondents.

Once again, all interviewees represent stakeholders of new remuneration by results project, which is a subject of the doctorate study. However, to achieve the representativeness of the target population, it was decided to choose the respondents with different occupations. Therefore, the profile of the interviewees can be described as follows:

- head of the country office of Hay Group company (a consulting company which conducted the project);
- civil servants from central and local public authorities (participants of the pilot project, where organizational and other forms of transformation happened);
- project manager from the Agency for Civil Service Affairs. A profile of respondents is shown in the table below.

Table 1

### Profile of interviewees

Parameter	Project manager from the public sector	Project manager from the private sector	Central government representative	Local government representative
<b>Occupation</b>	Deputy Director of the Civil Service Department at the Agency for Civil Service Affairs	General Director of the Hay Group company's branch in Kazakhstan	Head of Division of the Public Services Delivery Department at the Agency for Civil Service Affairs	Head of the Unified service for personal management of the office of the mayor of Nur-Sultan city
<b>Date of interview</b>	November 4, 2019*	June 11, 2019	November 5, 2019*	June 3, 2019
<b>Age</b>	29 years	35 years	36 years	30 years
<b>Total work experience</b>	5 years 5 months	More than 10 years	13 years	8 years
<b>Work experience in the occupied positions</b>	4 months	2 years	4 years	1 year 6 months
<b>Education</b>	Master	Master	Bachelor	Bachelor
Note: developed by the author based on the survey * the interview and survey were conducted later due to the reorganization of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption to the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and the Agency for Anti-Corruption. The successor of the pilot project is the Agency for Civil Service Affairs.				

### Survey results

As table 2 shows, many of the answers are similar. However, on the first question, it is proposed to take into account leadership, namely the quality and style of management, as an additional factor. This factor is also emphasized during the interview. All respondents noted the importance of the effective distribution of tasks in structural units, as well as the need to take into account the views of employees by management.

Also, the focus of the representative of the Company and the Central authority on the leadership factor (top-down approach), while the employee of the Akimat and the project Manager from the Agency – on the initiative of subordinates (bottom-up approach).

Table 2

**Analysis of preliminary questions**

<b>Interview questions</b>	<b>Project manager from the public sector</b>	<b>Project manager from the private sector</b>	<b>Central government representative</b>	<b>Local government representative</b>
In Your opinion, what factors influence the increase of the effective activity of the state apparatus?	A) Public authority strategy B) Human capital (personnel) C) Organizational structure and culture	A) Public authority strategy B) Human capital (personnel) C) Organizational structure and culture E) Other-Leadership (management styles and quality)	A) Public authority strategy B) Human capital (personnel)	A) Public authority strategy B) Human capital (personnel) C) Organizational structure and culture
What motivates you most to work in public service?	B) the Strategy and objectives of your public authority	A) social protection of public servants (benefits package and ongoing initiatives of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs for its expansion)	A) social protection of public servants (benefits package and ongoing initiatives of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs for its expansion)	D) Public service and the possibility of self-realization
What would you like to change in your state body?	C) distribution of tasks in structural divisions	C) distribution of tasks in structural divisions	C) distribution of tasks in structural divisions	C) distribution of tasks in structural divisions
What working conditions do you think the maximum efficiency of employees is achieved?	A) When each employee knows for what area of work is personally responsible	B) When your opinion is taken into account by the management	E) When the results of the work affect the welfare of the population/ economic situation in the country	B) When your opinion is taken into account by the management

What is the determining factor for transformational transformations in the system of public administration?	C) initiatives on the part of employees, their commitment to the values of the public service and the objectives of the public authority D) the needs of society (including as a result of citizens' appeals)	B) support of the initiative by the first head of the state body and its ability to change (transformational leader)	A) political will of the Head of state	C) initiatives on the part of employees, their commitment to the values of the public service and the objectives of the public authority
Note: developed by the author based on a survey				

Besides, according to the results of the sociological survey, the employee of the Akimat gave recommendations for improving the questionnaire, for example, to exclude as an answer – “freezing” of vacancies, since this tool is used today only by the Agency.

Next, the interviewer asked questions about the conceptual model of the study (Table 3). The similarity of the answers lie on the prioritization of factors. Also, respondents note, first of all, the importance of the factor “Strategy” and “Human capital (People)”, and then “Organization” and finally – “Resources”.

If we consider the sub-factors, the respondents agree on the importance of systematic achievement of the strategy, mission and purpose of the state body, as well as the presence of an effective organizational structure.

The differences are in the evaluation of other sub-factors. For example, if the institutional memory of the state body is important for the civil servant, in other words, to prevent a high turnover of personnel, then from the representative of the company, this sub-factor is the least important in a comprehensive assessment of “Human capital (People)”.

Table 3

### Answers to questions on the draft conceptual model

№	Statement	Project manager from the public sector	Project manager from the private sector	Central government representative	Local government representative
1.	<i>Strategy</i>				
-	It is important to clearly define the strategy/mission/ purpose of the public authority	5	5	5	4
-	It is important to systematically achieve the strategy/mission/ goal of the state body	4	5	5	5
-	Joint responsibility for the achievement of the strategy/ mission/ goal of the state body is important	3	4	5	5
2.	<i>Human capital (People)</i>				

-	Important qualitative characteristics of the staff (level of education, knowledge of languages, etc.)	5	4	5	5
-	It is important to take into account the competence approach in the appointment (matching the abilities and knowledge of the employee to the position)	4	5	5	4
-	It is important for the rational distribution of workload	3	3	4	4
-	Important staffing of the state body (timely filling of vacant positions)	1	3	5	3
-	It is important to avoid high turnover of staff (preservation of institutional memory)	2	2	5	4
3	<i>Organization (state body)</i>				
-	An effective organizational structure is important (ratio of Executive and managerial staff in departments/offices, number of employees in structural units, etc.)	5	4	5	4
-	It is important to create conditions to increase the attractiveness of the employer	3	4	4	3
-	It is important to have a properly organized organizational culture in the state body	4	5	5	3
4.	<i>Resources</i>				
-	It is important to have the necessary budgetary resources	4	3	4	4
-	Important material and technical security of the state body (office equipment, office furniture, etc.)	3	4	4	4
-	It is important to have sufficient space (for example, a separate office, a separate building)	2	3	4	4
-	Important centralization of support functions (accounting, legal support, public procurement)	1	4	4	3
Note: developed by the author based on the survey					

### Interview results

Also, the experts discussed the vision of innovative public service (i), the factors forming it (ii), as well as the obstacles faced by civil servants or business and citizens in interaction with the public sector (iii).

*(i) If we talk about the innovativeness of service, the experts agree that this implies the proactivity of employees, providing an opportunity to introduce innovations and ideas. Also, it is important to plan correctly, predict the results of political decisions, as well as digitalization.*

Nowadays, these aspects are important for the transition to a service “hearing” state. For example, relatively few employees are interested in offering innovations because of the risk of being punished (“initiative is punishable”).

Also, a kind of “disease” of the state apparatus is urgent orders that go down for execution often in the evening by the end of the working day and must be performed until the morning. Experts also noted that a lack of understanding of the overall end goal leads to employee apathy. Tasks planned at the beginning of the year are often irrelevant by the end of the first quarter. And plans, instructions for their implementation remain under control.

Besides, all decisions are reduced to the decision of the first head, who is often in meetings in higher bodies. This often creates a collapse and a lack of efficiency.

The available information technology is obsolete, business processes are bureaucratic. Even the initiative of the authorized body for digitalization to create the architecture of the state body, which should contribute to the restructuring of the work on the way to its optimization and automation, has not yet been completed.

*(ii) The role of the leader as a factor for innovation and transformation processes was also noted.*

If we consider the experience of the pilot bodies, due to the proactive role of the first head, transformational processes were launched in the former unified Agency and the mayor’s office of the capital.

Thus, the number of departments in the akimat has been reduced from 30 to 21, all control functions are concentrated in one Department, a single service for personnel management and development has been created, a situation center for monitoring and rapid response has been opened, etc.

The Agency established common service centers for HR functions, budget, and accounting, which allowed optimization of the back office staff and refocus them on the main functions of the state body.

At the same time, with the introduction of a new system of remuneration in the pilot mode in the Mangistau region and the Ministry of Justice, significant changes in organizational processes have not occurred.

*(iii) The difficulties include avoidance of personal responsibility, lack of understanding of the overall task (performers are limited to their functional responsibilities) and synchronization of goals in structural units, as well as the problem of goal-setting and corporate culture.*

Despite material (bonuses on KPI) and non-material (Competition “The Best Civil Servant”, a set of youth to the Presidential Personnel Reserve, charitable actions, etc.), the majority of civil servants little interested not only to offer and introduce initiatives (as it is noted above) but also to take responsibility for everyday routine work. The reason, according to the experts, lies in the avoidance of responsibility at all levels of government, including political.

As one of the experts noted, the punishment for untimely, poor quality and other processing of the order is mainly borne by the executors. Disciplinary liability in respect of such employees is considered at the Interdepartmental Commission, which includes middle managers (Directors of departments), and headed by the Executive Secretary or Head of Apparatus. Thus, people who decide on punishment are not interested to take responsibility for themselves.



Also, bureaucracy has generated shifting responsibility between structural units. Usually, orders redirected from one department to another closer to the deadline.

All these and other problems, according to experts, occur due to the lack of a common unifying mission and strategy of the organization, as well as lack of corporate culture based on mutual assistance and joint responsibility.

As for recommendations it is offered to strengthen interdepartmental coordination of the purposes and priorities before the statement, in open dialogue; involvement (and not only control) of higher bodies (Presidential Administration, Office of the Prime Minister), reduction of the state apparatus and functions.

When performing official duties, a civil servant is obliged to be guided by two rules. The first is the observance of state interests, optimal reduction of financial expenses, and assessment of the feasibility of any planned activities. The second is the care of people, maximum facilitation of relations between the population and government agencies, the exclusion of all red tape, ambiguous provisions and prerequisites for corruption.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the interview and survey involve the following recommendations and suggestions:

1) the vision of innovative civil service as a proactive, digital, initiative, forecasting activity is obtained;

2) the leadership factor added to the four existing factors (Strategy, Organization, Human Capital (People), Budget) is recommended to include the conceptual framework of the research;

3) the question about vacancies' "freezing" to exclude from the questionnaire is suggested.

Since the author is currently a civil servant the results of this study are practice-oriented and will be recommended to the authorized body for civil service affairs

The author hopes that this study will be useful both in practical terms for those who are directly engaged in civil service transformation in the Republic of Kazakhstan as well for those who will explore the topic of academic interest.

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### **Мемлекет пен бизнес призмасы арқылы инновациялық мемлекеттік қызметті пайымдау**

**Андатпа.** Мақалада жаңа еңбекақы төлеу жүйесінің пилоттық жобасы мысалында мемлекеттік органдар мен жеке компания өкілдері тұрғысынан инновациялық мемлекеттік қызметтің негізгі аспектілері қарастырылған. Қызметкерлердің нәтижелілігіне байланысты жалақыны арттырумен қатар, аталған жоба пилоттық органдарда трансформациялық процестерді іске қосты.

Сонымен қатар, ЭЫДҰ стандарттарына сәйкес жұмыс тиімділігін арттыру үшін қабылдау қажет шараларды бірыңғай түсінудің жоқтығы байқалады. Талдау бойынша тәуелсіздік алған сәттен бастап Қазақстандық мемлекеттік қызмет айтарлықтай оң өзгерістерге ұшырағанын, алайда олардың көпшілігі кешенді стратегиялық көзқарастың болмауымен үздік шетелдік тәжірибені имплементациялай отырып, жүйесіз жүргізілген.

Осы мақсаттар үшін жоба сарапшыларымен сұхбат және сауалнама жүргізілді, бұл зерттеудің тұжырымдамалық моделін пысықтауға, сондай-ақ, инновациялық мемлекеттік қызметтің негізгі сипаттамаларын анықтауға мүмкіндік берді. Бұдан басқа, қызмет атқару процесінде кездесетін проблемалық мәселелерге сүйене отырып, саланы одан әрі жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстар әзірленді, оның ішінде, ведомствоаралық өзара іс-қимылды жақсарту, жекелеген қызметшілердің апатиясын еңсеру қажеттілігі, бюрократизмді қысқарту және басқалар.

**Түйін сөздер:** инновациялық, азаматтарға бағдарланған үкімет, трансформация, қоғамдық игілік.

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### **Видение инновационной государственной службы сквозь призму государства и бизнеса**

**Аннотация.** В статье рассмотрены ключевые аспекты инновационной государственной службы с точки зрения представителей государственных органов и частной компании на примере пилотного проектановой системы оплаты труда. Наряду с повышением заработной платы в зависимости от результативности служащих данный проект запустил трансформационные процессы в пилотных органах.

Вместе с тем отмечается отсутствие единого понимания мер, которые следует принять для повышения эффективности работы в соответствии со стандартами ОЭСР. Анализ показал, что с момента обретения независимости казахстанская государственная служба претерпела значительные позитивные изменения, однако большинство из них проводились бессистемно, с имплементацией лучших зарубежных практик, но с отсутствием комплексного стратегического видения.

Для этих целей проведены интервью и опрос с экспертами проекта, что позволило доработать концептуальную модель исследования, а также определить основные характеристики инновационной государственной службы. Помимо этого, исходя из проблемных вопросов, с которыми приходится сталкиваться в процессе несения службы, выработаны рекомендации по дальнейше-

му совершенствованию сферы, в том числе по улучшению межведомственного взаимодействия, необходимости преодоления апатии отдельных служащих, сокращению бюрократизма и другое.

**Ключевые слова:** инновационное, ориентированное на граждан правительство, трансформация, общественное благо.

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