PUBLIC SERVICE REVIEW OF CHILE

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This document was produced by the OECD for internal use by the Chilean administration.

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Introduction

The public service[1] plays an essential role in effective governance and to ensure that citizens have access to high-quality services. Public administrations, and central administrations in particular, carry the responsibility of developing, implementing and adapting policies that serve the entire population. Meeting this responsibility requires the capacity to address rapid socio-economic and technological change. To address these pressures and expectations, OECD member countries have undertaken reforms to modernise the management of their public service to ensure it has the right skills and ability to deploy those skills flexibly. These efforts all aim to make government more effective, inclusive, and responsive to citizens' needs.

In 2019, OECD member countries adopted the OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability. This Recommendation sets out 14 mutually reinforcing principles across three pillars which all OECD countries have agreed should guide their public service reforms. The Recommendation highlights the need to develop:

- A values-driven public service, where commonly understood values guide a results-oriented and citizen-centred culture, leadership and the design of policies and services.

- A trusted and capable public service with the ability to identify the skills and competencies it needs and to design its employment systems to attract, develop and motivate public servants with those skills and competencies.

- A responsive and adaptable public service with the skills, resources and agility to respond effectively and efficiently to rapidly changing, ongoing and emerging challenges.

Notably, this Recommendation emphasises the need to set the necessary conditions for internal and external workforce mobility and adaptability, in particular by establishing common frameworks for job classification. It also mentions to the need to assess, reward and recognise performance, talent and initiative.

This paper seeks to further inform the ongoing public sector reform debate in Chile. It provides comparative elements and relevant practices from OECD member and non-member countries that could drive reform efforts. The paper highlights different approaches to workforce management, institutional design and policy implementation, offering lessons that could guide efforts to build a more effective and responsive public administration. Its objective is not to prescribe a single model, but to provide insights that can be adapted to Chile's institutional context and long-term reform objectives.

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[1] In this document, the public service refers to the collective group of women and men employed directly by the state, and working at the national public administration. The focus of this paper excludes public servants working at subnational levels (regions or municipalities) or members of specific public sector professions such as teachers, military, doctors and nurses, etc.

1 Developing a job classification in the public service

1.1. A fragmented Chilean public service

1.1.1. Size and scope of public employment in Chile

Governments across OECD member countries depend on a skilled and effective workforce to design and deliver policies and services. However, the size and composition of public employment differ from a country to the other, reflecting institutional arrangements, policy priorities and historical legacies (Figure 1.1). These differences are reflected in public employment shares, with Nordic countries seeing close to a third of their total employment in general governments, whereas it represents less than 10% in Chile, Japan and Korean. Such variation has direct implications for the role of government as an employer and the way it is structured.

Figure 1.1. Employment in general government as a percentage of total employment, 2019 and 2023
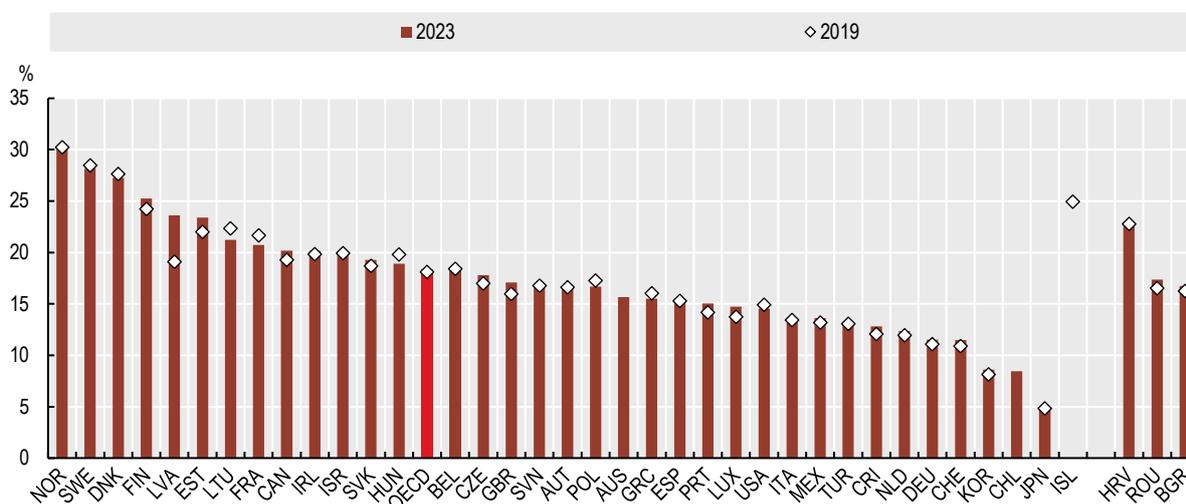
Source: OECD (2025), *Government at a Glance 2025*; OECD National Accounts Statistics (database). Data for Australia, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Türkiye and the United States are from the International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT (database), Public employment by sectors and sub-sectors of national accounts. Data for Chile for general government were provided by national authorities (based on Budget Directorate data).

General government employment covers employment in all levels of government (central, state, local and social security funds) and includes core ministries, agencies, departments and non-profit institutions that are controlled by public authorities. However, this report focuses specifically on central government employment, despite many of the challenges discussed here also applying at other levels of government.

1.1.2. Fragmented contractual modalities making for a hybrid public employment system

Different human resource management (HRM) models exist across OECD member countries. Career-based and position-based systems represent two conceptual poles. Career-based systems are anchored in competitive examinations, where individuals join the public service as a whole, early in their careers and progress along established career paths and hierarchies. These systems provide stability, institutional knowledge and continuity. Typical examples of these models can be France or Spain, where public service remains predominantly a career public service with a dedicated status and a distinction made between belonging permanently to the public service and belonging temporarily to a position – although more recent reforms have diluted the model in both cases. Position-based systems, on the other hand, recruit staff for specific roles, with contracts that are more flexible and adaptable to short to medium-term or specialised needs. Typical examples of these models can be found in Nordic countries, where both internal and external applicants are competing to specific positions within the public service.

In practice, most OECD member countries combine elements of both systems, tailoring contractual frameworks to their institutional legacies, labour markets and reform priorities. This translates in most OECD member countries having several employment modalities available to respond to different workforce needs. While career-based employment has relied on open-ended contracts offering tenure and predictable career paths, governments are increasingly experimenting with more flexible mechanisms. Shorter-term employment can provide public services with the capacity to hire for specific projects, attract technical expertise that may not be available internally, or offer relatively more competitive remuneration packages. This can help public services address immediate gaps and evolving demands without constantly reshaping the existing career structures. Meanwhile, countries with traditionally position-based systems are implementing structured development and career paths and, through various collective agreements, often offer similar levels of job stability.

Many OECD member countries are therefore rebalancing contractual modalities to combine the advantages of tenure with those of flexibility. Permanent staff ensure continuity, help preserve institutional knowledge and contribute to long-term policy development and implementation. Temporary contracts can bring role-specific skills and allow governments to adjust their staffing to shifting policy priorities. For instance, France recently reformed its public service, through the public service transformation law of 6 August 2019 to address competitive examination attraction challenges. The reform broadened access to contract-based employment, including for senior management positions and more permanent roles in the administration. This change sought to increase flexibility and responsiveness while maintaining the strengths of a career-based model.

The Chilean public service reflects both career and position-based elements, but its contractual modalities remain fragmented and reveal a gap between legal frameworks and practice. In principle:

- The Chilean Constitution guarantees a civil service career and the technical and professional principles on which it must be based. It also ensures equal opportunities for entry, as well as the training and professional development of its members. Likewise, the law establishes that entry into tenured positions must be carried out through public competitions, and that the selection of applicants must be conducted using technical, impartial, and suitable procedures that ensure an objective assessment of their skills and merits. These posts were intended to represent the majority of staff, ensuring a professional public service with secure career trajectories. The number of planta staff is defined for each public sector employer in the organic law of each public entity. This means that it is a very rigid kind of employment as organic laws are not changed and updated on a regular basis.

- To introduce greater flexibility, legislators developed the *contrata* category, defined in the Article 3(c) of the Administrative Statute (*Estatuto Administrativo*) as transitory employment lasting until December 31st each year. The law limits the *contrata* to a maximum of 20% of the total employment in any entity.

- Other contractual modalities exist in the Chilean public service, such as *honorarios* staff under Article 11 of the Administrative Statute, for short-term jobs that are exceptional and beyond the routine or usual tasks of the institution. For example, when a very specific expertise is needed in a time-bound project.

- Finally, there is also a smaller group of political "trust" (*de confianza)* appointments, who are political appointees selected directly by the government to occupy leadership or advisory roles, in order to align management with the political priorities. These posts are however tied to political cycles.

However, the situation differs quite largely in practice:

- First of all, the planta has become increasingly rigid. Because staffing levels are determined by law, creating new positions or adapting structures requires amendments to the organic law of the concerned entity, which greatly limits flexibility. This rigidity has undermined the responsiveness of the planta and encouraged relying on alternative contractual modalities. This has led to a sharp increase in the use of *contrata* employment, which represented 68.3% of the public workforce in 2023 instead of the intended 20% of the workforce set out in the Administrative Statue. The annual budget law explicitly authorised this expansion, citing the need to attract qualified personnel with competitive pay.

- Second, *contrata* has shifted from a temporary to a *de facto* permanent contractual modality. Although contracts legally expire on December 31st, renewals tend to be routine. The Comptroller General has reinforced this evolution through jurisprudence establishing the principle of "legitimate trust" (*confianza legitima*), according to which two renewals generate an expectation of continuity. Once this expectation is established, administrations cannot terminate employment without clear justification, effectively transforming *contrata* into a permanent contract. However, unlike the *planta*, there is no guarantee of merit-based recruitment or career progression for this category of staff.

- Finally, the use of *honorarios* has also evolved in ways that diverge from its original purpose. *Honorarios* are now often used as the original *contrata* was envisioned, instead of covering exceptional or project-specific tasks. Until 2016, administrations could even exceed authorised staff members by resorting to *honorarios*, using it as a way to adjust personnel levels. This also resulted in public servants having spent several years in the public service as *honorarios*. The 2017 Budget Law introduced a limit on the use of *honorarios* per public sector employer, as well as provisions to transform a limited number of *honorarios* contracts into *contrata*, but the category remains widely used as a flexible tool for employment.

This fragmented reliance on *planta*, *contrata* and *honorarios* has created misalignments between the original intention of the law and the practice. The rigidity of the planta, the transformation of *contrata* into permanent employment through implied continuity, and the intensive use of *honorarios* for regular functions illustrate the contractual challenges the Chilean public service is facing. Whereas the public employment system was intended as a career-based public service, it actually became a hybrid arrangement where most staff do not benefit from tailored HRM, considering their legally transitory nature but their functionally permanent practice. Aside from inequities among staff, this imbalance leads to several HRM challenges, notably related to career management, horizontal mobility, and performance management.

Such strong fragmentation among staff with different contractual modalities remains quite unique across OECD member countries. Most countries with hybrid systems are seeking to develop dedicated HR policies to manage temporary staff more strategically.

Box 1.1. Diversifying contractual modalities in the French career-based public service

The French public service has historically been organised as a career-based public service. Entry is primarily done through competitive examinations, which grant successful candidates the status of civil servant, with tenure and vertical mobility opportunities along defined corps and hierarchies. This approach seeks to guarantee equality of treatment in access to public employment and sustains long-term workforce management. However, the French Supreme Audit Institution noted back in 2020 that this process is long and costly, prioritising fairness and continuity over adaptability to immediate needs. The challenge has grown more acute with declining interest in competitive examinations. The number of candidates fell from 650 000 in 1997 to 228 000 in 2018, reducing selectivity and sometimes leaving budgeted openings vacant.

In response, the proportion of *contractuels* has grown steadily. By 2018, they represented 17.8% of the State civil service, and 22% by 2022. Unlike career civil servants, these *contractuels* are hired through job specific merit-based processes, in a large majority of cases on a fixed-term basis, to provide administrations capacity to fill the gaps. In 2019, a civil service reform (*loi de transformation de la fonction publique*) further broadened their role in the public service. Notably, it opened contractual recruitment to leadership positions and most permanent jobs across the administrations, while improving employee rights and creating clearer pathways to permanent contractual employment. In particular, fixed-term contracts on permanent positions that were not filled by career civil servants can now convert into open-ended contracts after six years of service, if the employee has worked within the same ministry or agency. In some cases, direct recruitment into open-ended contracts is also possible, notably when no equivalent *corps* exists or when specialised expertise is required.

Despite these possibilities, this contractual modality remains unevenly applied. Cultural and administrative barriers often limit the potential of *contractuels*. Managers sometimes lack adequate support or training to recruit effectively, despite the available guidance. Most importantly, recruitment of *contractuels* is rarely part of a clear workforce strategy, particularly in terms of budgetary planning or career pathways.

Managing a dual system of civil servants and *contractuels* can pose challenges for coherence, fairness, and sustainability. Differences in pay, career opportunities, and job security can fragment the workforce and undermine engagement. Heavy reliance on short-term contracts can also weaken institutional knowledge, with *contractuels* being underused or leaving the public service prematurely without the appropriate support.

In France, the main challenge is therefore to strike a sustainable balance between the stability of the career-based model and the adaptability offered by contractual recruitment. This involves clarifying the role of both *contractuels* and civil servants and reflecting on the content of competitive examinations.

1.1.3. A fragmented and heavily decentralised HRM ecosystem

Across OECD member countries, public employment policies must strike a balance between flexibility at the ministry level and central co-ordination across government. Ministries need space to tailor recruitment or learning and development to their missions, but common oversight is also necessary to ensure fairness, coherence in pay, and consistency in employment practices. This differentiation between centralised and decentralised governance varies largely depending on the task (Figure 1.2). Attraction, recruitment and onboarding are the most frequently delegated functions, as this allows ministries to respond more quickly to operational needs while still operating within broader frameworks. On the other hand, budget, pay and benefits tend to be more centralised as budgetary decisions remain usually between the hands of the Ministry of Finance.

Figure 1.2. Distribution of HRM activities between centralised HRM bodies and ministries or teams, 2024
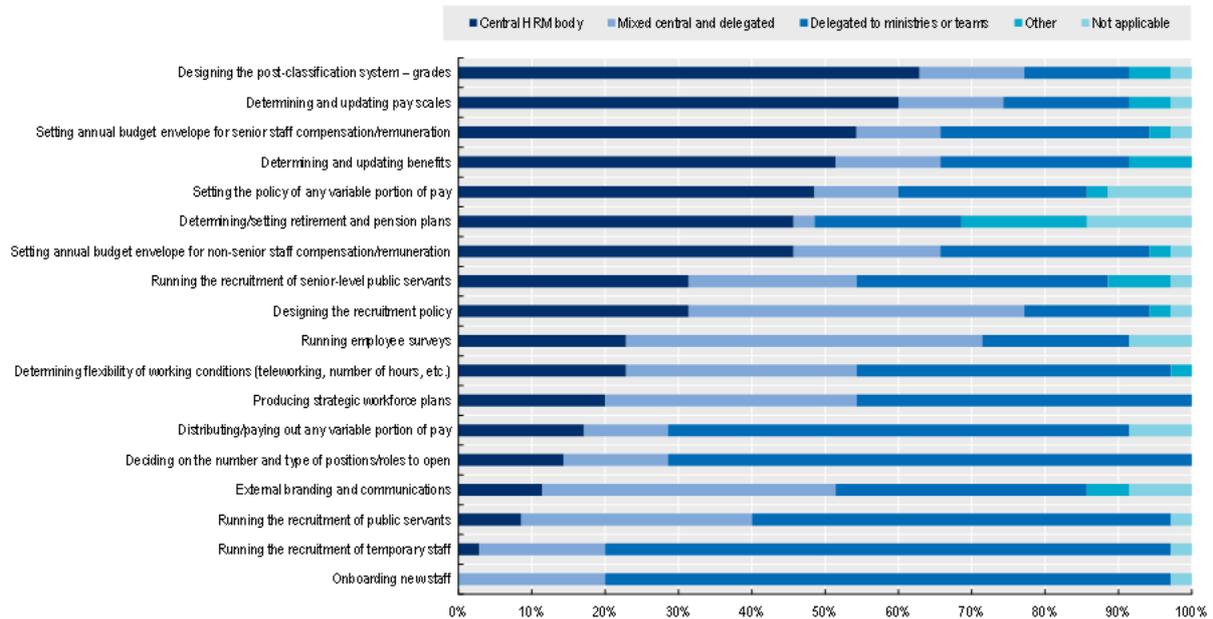
Note: N=35. Data for the Colombia, Iceland and the United States not available. Original question: "Which institution carries out each of the following activities?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Additionally, many HR areas overlap across institutional stakeholders. This makes it challenging to paint an accurate picture of the HR function 'ecosystem' or value chain responsible for developing high-performing public workforces. However, across OECD member countries, the following institutions play a key role in managing human resources:

- **HRM bodies/units within individual line ministries/departments:** delegated structures embedded in specific ministries or government departments, usually responsible for implementing specific aspects of human resource management activities at the operational level. These HRM units usually operate within the framework set by the central HRM authority, except in some countries where HRM units at Ministry level have substantially more autonomy to address ministry-specific human resource management, like in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

- **Central HRM body within a Ministry or Centre of government:** usually serves as the principal institution responsible for designing human resource management policies across the public service. When it exists, its main role is usually advisory: it can set standards for recruitment, job classification frameworks, salary/rewards, learning and development, and other HR practices. In some contexts, the central HRM body also carries out some of these tasks – for example, e.g. the Government Recruitment Service (GRS), part of the Government People Group that sits under the UK Cabinet Office. Central HRM bodies often lead public sector HR reforms, co-ordinate with ministries to support workforce planning and development, and may also manage centralised systems such as payroll, HR information systems, and civil servant databases.

- **The Ministry of Finance:** beyond their traditional budgetary functions, they are often responsible for authorising position allocations, approving headcounts, and setting pay framework across the administration. This gives them significant influence over workforce planning and compensation policies, with direct implications for recruitment, retention and mobility.

- **A specialised ministry or agency dedicated primarily to HRM:** Where this exists, it tends to focus on the development and oversight of human resource policies and programs for the public sector – for example, the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia or the Directorate-general for the administration and public service in France. Similarly to central HRM bodies within a Ministry or Centre of Government, specialised institutions can lead strategic initiatives in workforce planning, employee benefits administration, civil service reform, and transformation of HR systems.

- **A specialised body or institution for senior-level public servants**: this is a specific body established to manage the careers and development of senior officials within the public service. Depending on country, it typically has roles overseeing the selection, training, performance assessment, and succession planning for senior public servants. In France, the 'DIESE' is a specialised department that oversees strategic HR management for senior leaders, including through modernising recruitment and training, promoting inter-ministerial mobility, supporting leadership development, and embedding a shared managerial culture aligned with major societal transitions. In Estonia, the Top Civil Service Excellence Centre within the Government Office specifically focuses on the recruitment, selection, and development of senior public servants.

- Apart from these institutions, **managers** play a growing role in public workforce management through aspects such as recruitment and staff development. So do **trade unions** that negotiate with the public service on aspects such as working conditions and pay.

Chile's public employment and management system remains largely decentralised. Even though the Budget Directorate of the Ministry of Finance (DIPRES) plays a key role in authorising resources, setting pay and benefits, and certifies that *servicios* have the appropriate resources to open competitive examinations for permanent civil service posts, most HRM responsibilities are dispersed across institutions. Additionally, despite the creation of *Servicio Civil*, co-ordination mechanisms remain relatively weak. The result is a system that combined elements of central oversight with a high degree of fragmentation across *servicios*, limiting the coherence of workforce management policies.

First of all, most of the HRM practices in place are developed at the service level. *Servicios* are subdivisions of ministries, and there are 256 *servicios*, that all manage their own workforce relatively independently. They are formally expected to follow the *normas* developed by *Servicio Civil*, even though compliance is uneven and monitoring limited. *Servicios* often interpret rules autonomously and there are no strong enforcement mechanisms to ensure consistency across the administration. This leads to *servicios* being in charge of many areas including recruitment of *contrata* staff, performance management, and mobility opportunities. This level of decentralisation means that HR practices vary widely, even within the same Ministry or Agency, depending on the capacity, priorities, and leadership of individual *servicios*. Additionally, the pay structure of a *servicio* is set by law. Base pay represents only about 20% of total compensation, resulting in some variation in pay structures across *servicios* and reinforcing the fragmented nature of HRM.

Second, *Servicio Civil* was created in 2003, in order to introduce greater professionalism and coherence into public workforce management. *Servicio Civil's* mandate (and structure) is two-fold: it manages the Senior Executive Service (*Alta Direccíon Pública*), in which it runs end-to-end recruitment processes for senior positions; and it focuses on the broader workforce, issuing HRM guidelines, co-ordinating HR policies, monitoring the implementation of presidential instructions in HRM, promoting HR reforms and advising *servicios*. While the management of the Senior Executive Service requires technical and operation functions, the work on the broader workforce remains primarily advisory and co-ordinative rather than compliance focused. However, due its limited capacity and lack of implementation and monitoring mandate, *Servicio Civil's* influence on broader workforce issues depends largely on case-by-case collaboration, leaving implementation choices in the hands of the 256 *servicios*.

Third, the Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance (DIPRES) plays a narrower but essential role. Its involvement remains primarily financial, ensuring that staffing decisions remain consistent with budgetary orientations and constraints. For example, when *servicios* seek to recruit candidates at a higher-than-expected level, DIPRES must authorise the adjustment.

Finally, trade unions also play an important role in the HRM ecosystem, by negotiating directly with each service.

This set-up results in a public employment system that, in theory, is steered through DIPRES and *Servicio Civil*. However, in practice, most key HR decisions are dispersed among the 256 *servicios* of the Chilean public service, all operating with substantial autonomy. The absence of strong co-ordination, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms leads to HRM remaining fragmented. While this can be beneficial to adapt employment modalities and HR practices to the realities of each service, it also limits the government's ability to design and implement strategic and coherent workforce policies. Notably, this creates different job architectures, performance management systems and pay structures for each service, that also have to take into account the diversity of contractual modalities existing in the Chilean public service. This likely leads to various inefficiencies. For example, it creates barriers to staff mobility which limits the governments' ability to align workforce capacity to changing needs across *servicios*. It also creates operational inefficiencies, whereby each *servicio* has to design and implement their own structures and processes, reducing opportunities to take advantage of economies of scale. This is particularly pertinent in areas of job classification and architecture, discussed in the next section of this paper.

1.2. Developing a common job classification in the public service

1.2.1. Defining job classification in the public service

In most OECD member countries staff are contractually employed by individual ministries or agencies. Only 20% of countries use a central employer model with a single framework covering the public service as a whole, as in Costa Rica or the Netherlands. Other countries tend to apply mixed systems. In Spain for instance, civil servants in the general corps are employed centrally, while specialised corps are employed under the authority of ministries. In Canada, employees in core ministries share a common employer, while specialised agencies employ their own staff.

Despite this prevalence of separate employers in government, most OECD countries still have common job classification systems (Figure 1.3). These ensure that the jobs public servants are named and described in the same way across ministries and agencies, making functions more transparent and comparable. Most OECD member countries have such systems in place. Portugal, for instance, recently merged thousands of fragmented careers into three transversal ones. In Italy, classifications are standardised through law and collective agreements.

Job classification provides a structured way of defining roles in a clear and transparent way. It establishes a common language for workforce management, enabling public administrations and services to align organisational needs with employee career development. By creating a well-designed job architecture, administrations can, amongst others, strengthen both vertical and horizontal mobility opportunities and support strategic workforce planning to better anticipate emerging or missing roles within the workforce.

Figure 1.3. Use of standardised job classification in the public service

Percentage of OECD member countries
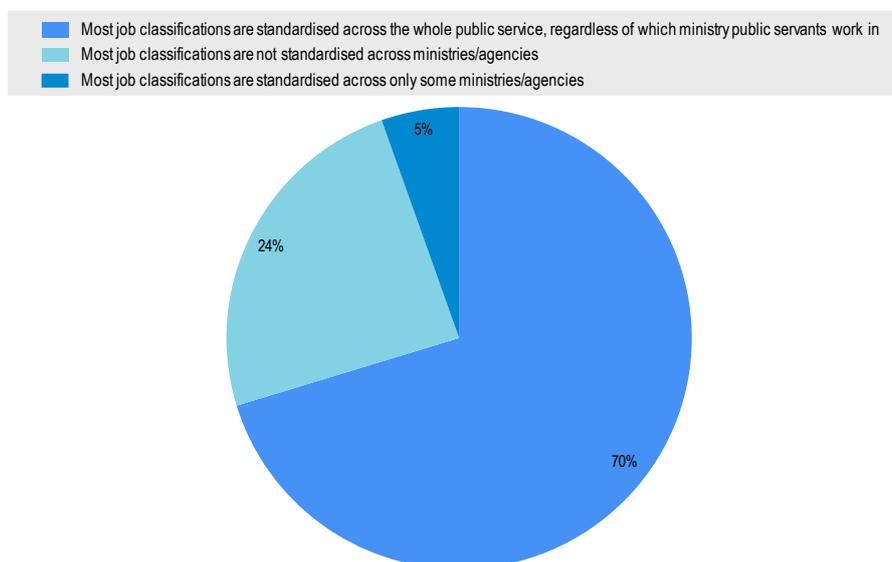
Note: N=37. Data for the United States not available. Original question: "To which extent are job classifications standardised across the central/federal public service?".
Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

1.2.2. Embedding job architecture into HRM

Embedding job architecture into HRM can help public administrations be more transparent and strategic. It creates a coherent framework that links individual roles with organisational objectives, and equips governments with tools to manage their workforce more effectively. More specifically:

- Job architecture strengthens the attractiveness of public service careers. Clearly defining categories, fields, roles and levels can help administrations offering transparent career paths and opportunities, and make expectations explicit at each stage of progression. This visibility can help public servants or candidates to the public service know that opportunities for growth and advancement exist in the public service, and perceive public service job opportunities as an attractive option. This is particularly important as a recent OECD survey of 57 000 public servants in Europe identifies professional growth as the strongest driver of employee engagement, and hence productivity and resilience.

- Job architecture enables both vertical and horizontal mobility across the public service. Vertical mobility is supported by mapping out the skills, experiences and performance standards needed to progress from one level to the next. Horizontal mobility is also supported by a common language across occupations and services, allowing employees to transfer to different organisations or functions based on the recognition of their skills. This flexibility makes it easier to redeploy talent to priority areas, helps staff broaden their experience, and fosters collaboration across institutions.

- Job architecture provides a fairer and more objective basis for managing performance. Detailed descriptions of roles and associated skills can help managers better set expectations, monitor progress, and evaluate performance against objective criteria. It also helps public servants better understand what is required at their current level and what they need to develop for future roles. This creates a fairer framework for appraisals, promotions and rewards, reducing reliance on subjective judgement and strengthening accountability.

- Job architecture supports more evidence-based workforce planning. A structured framework provides administrations with a systematic overview of current roles and the skills linked to them, making it possible to identify gaps, overlaps, and emerging needs. This evidence base informs upskilling and reskilling strategies, helps align recruitment with long-term goals, and ensures that resources are directed where they are most needed.

However, in practice, few OECD member countries have developed such a holistic approach. Job architecture is often designed or updated on a case-by-case basis, addressing specific occupational groups or reform needs rather than the system itself. This approach can deliver short-term improvements and could be a useful way to begin towards a more holistic job architecture.

1.2.3. How to develop a common job classification

Regardless of the institutional arrangement, job architecture is typically organised as a hierarchical framework, moving from broad and generic categories to role fields, specific roles, and levels. The structure functions as a tree, with each layer offering greater detail over the specificities and the requirements of each role level (Infographic 1).

- The first generic categories often help differentiate the nature of the job (leadership, management, policy support, administrative functions, etc.). These categories set the overall boundaries of the workforce and provide a high-level picture of where different jobs fit. The role fields help group jobs with similar purposes or functional orientations. This may include fields such as human resources, finance, or information technology. This level creates coherence within domains of expertise, facilitates career mobility and helps administrations identify where new function areas may need to be developed. These may be further divided into specific specialisation streams, depending on the level of complexity of the particular field,

- The next level is communities of practice, capturing the main subdivisions with a field and reflect growing technical complexity. For example, in the digital field, these specialisations may include cybersecurity, data science, software development or user experience design. These provide a more precise framework for career pathways and skills development.

- The specific roles describe the actual positions within each field. These roles define the main responsibilities expected of someone in the job in a generic way so as to applicable across many different contexts. They should also include the skills and competencies required to do the job. This provides clarity to both employers and employees by ensuring that expectations are well understood across the organisation.

- Finally, the levels within each role set out the progression pathway. These levels often range from entry-level to senior expert. They define both the degree of autonomy and the level of skills required at each stage. This allows employees to see how their careers can evolve and provides managers with a transparent basis for recruitment, promotion and workforce planning.

The set-up of job architecture varies considerably across OECD member countries. For instance, in France, this structure is the result of different normative and regulatory tools. For instance, the first generic categories are defined by the General Code of the Civil Service (*Code général de la fonction publique*), while the other levels are defined both through the Interministerial Depository of State Jobs (*Répertoire interministériel des métiers de l'État*) and the Interministerial Dictionary of Skills of State Jobs (*Dictionnaire interministériel des compétences des métiers de l'État*) (Box 1.2). On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, only specific job fields have a dedicated job architecture. It is for instance the case of the Government Digital and Data Profession (Box 1.3).

Infographic 1.1. Illustration of a potential job architecture for business architects
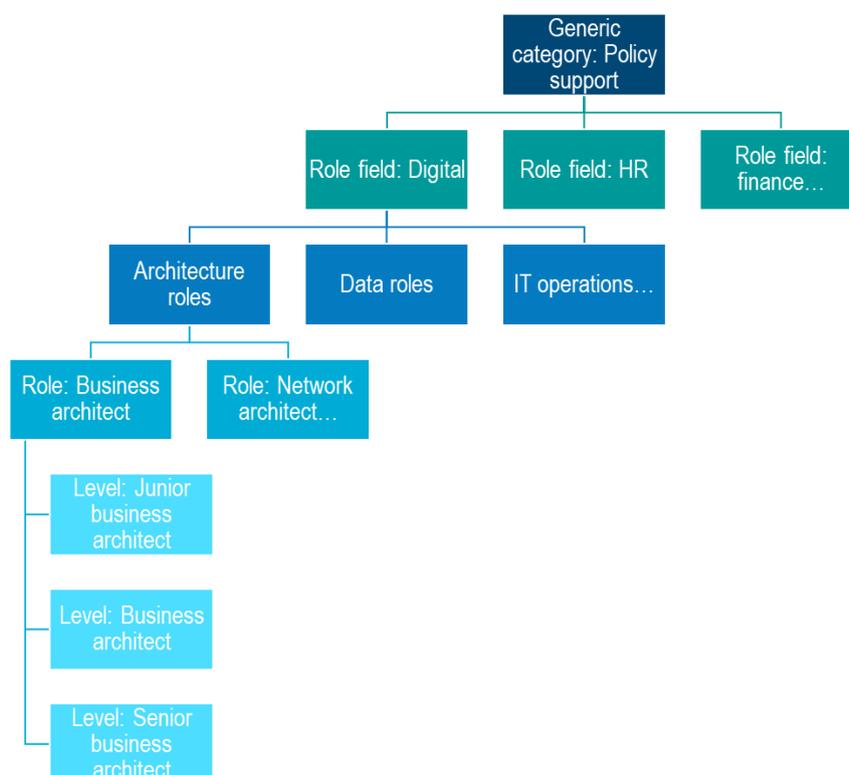
Source: Authors' elaboration.

Box 1.2. Job architecture in the French public service

The French public service is structured hierarchically around categories, corps, grades and steps. This layered structure seeks to ensure transparent classification, clear career progression, and consistent management across the public service.

The first layer classifies jobs into three categories, defined by recruitment level, responsibilities and required qualifications. Category A covers strategic, managerial and design functions, generally requiring at least a bachelor's degree (3 years of study after obtaining the high school diploma). Category B covers application and drafting roles, accessible with the high school diploma or 2 years of study after obtaining it. Category C covers execution and operational support jobs, often filled without diplomas or with vocational certificates. These categories define hierarchical levels and salary bands across the French public service. Promotion between these categories is possible either through internal mobility or through competitive examination.

Within each category, career civil servants from the State civil service belong to a corps. Each corps corresponds to a set of functions and a specific statutory regime. Corps group civil servants performing similar duties under identical rules.

Almost all corps contain multiple grades, which structure hierarchical progression. Grades represent distinct career stages and determine eligibility for certain functions. Within each grade, multiple steps

define incremental steps, mostly used to calculate compensation. Civil servants typically start at the first echelon and advance automatically over time based on seniority.

Aside from this statutory architecture, France also uses the Repertory of jobs in the public service (*Répertoire des métiers de la function publique, RMFP*), and the Interministerial Dictionary of State Competencies (*Dictionnaire interministériel des compétences de l'État, DiCo*). The RMFP is the reference framework for jobs across the French central, hospital and territorial administrations. It was developed in 2023 to replace fragmented ministerial repertories and the former Interministerial Repertory of State jobs (*Répertoire interministériel des métiers de l'État, RIME*). The RMFP provides a unified and consistent description of public service jobs, ensuring coherence in workforce management across administrations and the public service in general.

The RMFP identifies a set of job references that represent job archetypes. Each job reference includes a definition of the main activities, examples of tasks, and the expected level of responsibility. This helps administrations structure recruitment profiles, align job descriptions with statutory categories, and improve the overall understanding of the system for both external and internal candidates.

The RMFP has also been integrated into digital HR tools and recruitment platforms. For example, the portal *Choisir le service public*, that centralises all job opportunities in the public service in France, uses the repertory to classify vacancies in a consistent way. The RMFP is also gradually being adopted in HR information systems, which allows workforce data to be aggregated and analyses across administrations and the public service.

Additionally, the RMFP is complemented by the DiCo, which focuses on the skills and competencies required to perform public service jobs. It provides a structured vocabulary to describe three main dimensions: knowledge, practical skills, and behavioural competencies. These are broken down into detailed competencies that can be used across ministries and functions. The DiCo currently includes more than 180 competencies, covering areas such as digital literacy, financial management, teamwork or innovation. Each competency is defined clearly and associated to different proficiency levels. This tool allows managers and employees to assess capability in a consistent way, supporting recruitment, mobility, performance evaluation and training.

The RMFP and the DiCo are designed to be used together. The RMFP defines the jobs, while the DiCo specifies the competencies needed to perform them effectively. For each job reference described in the RMFP, the DiCo provides the corresponding competency profile. This articulation allows administrations not only to describe the jobs of the public service, but also to understand the skills required, the proficiency levels expected, and the possible pathways for career development.

Additionally, the RMFP and the DiCo complement, rather than replace, the statutory architecture of categories, corps, grades and steps. The traditional framework defines the legal status, career progression and pay scales of civil servants, while the RMFP and the DiCo focus on the functional content of jobs and the competencies required to perform them. The combination of statutory rights and professional practices strengthens workforce planning by aligning career structures with evolving job requirements and competency needs.

Box 1.3. Government Digital and Data Profession Capability in the United Kingdom

The British public service is a relatively decentralised and position-based public service, where departments act as employers of the public servants. This organisation limited consistency across technical digital roles. To address since, the Civil Service commissioned the development of a Digital, Data and Technology Profession in 2017. This brought together over 600 professionals from across departments and the digital, data and technology communities to create a shared framework and common language on the matter. The aim was to make career paths clearer, improve job visibility, describe roles more effectively for external candidates, and provide departments with a consistent method to assess capability.

Since its launch, the framework has been revised, most recently in 2023 under the leadership of the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO). Key updates focused on introducing mechanisms for continuous review, informed by cross-government consultation, to reflect evolving skills and roles. The framework was renamed to the Government Digital and Data Profession Capability Framework to highlight its broader scope and institutional role.

As of August 2025, the framework defines eight families of roles: architecture, chief digital and data, data, IT operation, product and delivery, quality assurance testing, software development, user-centred design. These are further broken down into 52 roles, each with detailed job descriptions, levels and associated skills. A total of 188 skills are defined, each with four proficiency levels: awareness, working, practitioner and expert. This provides a granular and transparent view of expected competencies for these highly technical roles.

The framework is also integrated into workforce planning. Departments map individual jobs against the framework using regular workforce surveys. Additionally, each role is linked to indicative grades, based on how role levels are distributed across civil service grades across departments. A single grade is assigned when more than 85% of a people in a given role level are associated to it. Two or more grades are assigned when over 15% of people in a specific role level are associated to it. This seeks to ensure fair compensation from a department to the other.

Additionally, a job architecture must remain flexible to respond to emerging skills and evolving roles in the public service. Technological change new service delivery models or shifting citizen expectations continually generate demand for new job profiles that do not always fit neatly within pre-existing classifications. Rigid job architectures can lock the workforce into outdated roles, creating gaps in emerging areas such as digital transformation. This calls for a regularly updated job architecture, striking a balance between long-term stability and capacity to develop new profiles. In the United Kingdom, this is for instance done through the possibility to develop new professions (Box 1.4).

Box 1.4. Keeping the United Kingdom's Professions up-to-date

The United Kingdom Civil Service has structured its workforce around the concept of professions, recognising that a flexible job architecture is essential to developing capability and coherence across government.

The Professions Best Practice Framework provides a consistent approach while allowing for adaptation to different contexts and needs. Within this model, a function is defined as a grouping aligned across government that delivers a cross-cutting set of services to departments and the Civil Service as a whole. Functions set out what needs to be done and how it should be achieved, providing stability in service delivery. A profession, by contrast, is a community of individuals with shared skills and expertise that offers civil servants a career anchor, access to training, and clear progression pathways. Professions can also overlap, as individuals may belong to more than one, reflecting the transversal nature of skills and the need for flexibility in how careers are developed and managed across government. Importantly, the British model reflects its own administrative tradition: each ministry is a separate employer, and professions were not initially structured in common ways across government. These professional structures were later superimposed to bring greater coherence. Reporting relationships reman primarily vertical, to the permanent secretary, with a "dotted line" connection to the head of profession, highlighting the challenge of balancing coherence with ministerial autonomy.

Four types of professions exist in the United Kingdom: operational delivery, policy, functional professions, and specialist professions. For instance, there are 30 function and specialist professions. These include varied roles such as HR or legal professions, as well as intelligence analysis or planning inspections.

Professions are structured around six foundations that ensure consistency and impact:

- Governance guarantees accountability, inclusiveness, and transparency, creating trust within and outside the Civil Service.
- Leadership is embodied in a Head of Profession, who, amongst others, acts as a senior advisor, cultivates talent pipelines, and strengthens partnerships.
- Strategic workforce planning requires professions to collaborate across departments to assess current capacity and anticipate future needs.
- Standards and competencies define professional conduct, inclusive behaviours, and technical capabilities, complementing the broader Civil Service Success Profiles.
- Curriculum and qualifications ensure continuous professional learning, from entry-level training to advanced degrees, aligning education with evolving business needs.
- Finally, networks play a critical role in promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, and raising the profession's profile within government and beyond.

Together, these foundations ensure that professions not only anchor careers but also strengthen organisational capability and resilience to address emerging needs across government.

The framework for establishing new professions ensures that these professions are adaptable and the public service is capable of addressing emerging needs. The process begins with developing a full business case, which must cover the six foundations of the framework. Proposals are first reviewed by the People Peer Group (PPG), a monthly forum of senior capability leads that focuses on the Civil Service People Agenda. If endorsed, the proposal is then considered by the Civil Service Board (CSB), chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and composed of permanent secretaries. The CSB holds final authority for approving new professions, ensuring strategic alignment across the Civil Service. In some cases, applicants may conclude that forming a full profession is not the most effective approach, in which case alternatives such as job families or communities of practice can provide other mechanisms to share expertise and build skills.

Chile's public service operates with a limited and fragmented job architecture, based on its fragmented public employment system. The only whole-of-government job architecture in place are the generic job categories. The system is structure around five broad categories, or *estamentos*:

- Directors, representing 4.5% of central government staff[2] on the first quarter of 2024 (DIPRES, 2024)[3]: senior officials responsible for leadership and management, including setting strategic priorities, overseeing teams, and ensuring alignment with institutional objectives.
- Professionals, representing 49.6% of central government staff: staff with higher education qualifications who typically carry out specialised tasks, policy design, or technical expertise. They represent the core knowledge base of the administration.
- Technicians, representing 24% of central government staff: staff with specified technical or vocational training who typically support service delivery and provide essential applies skills across different areas.
- Administrative staff, representing 17.5% of central government workforce: staff responsible for clerical and support functions.
- Auxiliary staff, representing 4.3%: staff performing support roles such as maintenance, logistics, or operational assistance.

These categories apply to both *planta* and *contrata*, except the Directors category which can only encompass planta staff. However, this level of classification remains largely linked to academic qualifications rather than the actual content or profile of the jobs. If not associated to other job architecture levels, this presents the risk of creating a weak connection between the categories and the functions described or the skills needed in practice, reducing their usefulness as a basis for workforce planning.

The group of the Senior Executive Service is an exception to this fragmented job architecture. This group is largely managed by *Servicio Civil*, based on a framework providing greater coherence for top management positions across the public service. Some exceptions do exist, such as the Directors of the Office of the President, undersecretaries, the State Defense Council, or the National Intelligence Agency, amongst others. These however represent a very small minority of cases.

Beyond these practices, there is no common job architecture for the wider Chilean public service. This means that each of the 256 *servicios* is in charge of designing and describing its own jobs, leading to highly diverse and sometimes inconsistent approaches. This inconsistency can result in two main setbacks. First, similar jobs can be described in different ways, undermining the emergence of a common language, and thereby limiting horizontal mobility. Second, it has direct implication on public servants' remuneration. Despite the existence of a formal common pay scale ranging from 1 to 25 (with Professionals being between 4 and 19), individuals with similar background and experience can be assigned to different grades for a similar position depending on the service. Additionally, this common pay scale is used by most *servicios*, but many institutions have their own salary scale. These elements undermine equity across the public service and fuels internal competition for talent, leading to mobility being pursued for salary gains rather than skill or career development.

Servicio Civil has developed some minimum standards to guide *servicios* in defining jobs, particularly for the *contrata* staff, which could provide a first step towards defining common job architecture. The Standards for General Application of Management Materials and Personal Development (*Normas de Aplicación General en Materias de Gestión y Desarrollo de Personas*) call for jobs profiles to include objectives, functions, context, and necessary characteristics for effective performance. However, as

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[2] These numbers reflect the central government workforce as being the Central government, with the exception of personnel from health services and "Servicios Locales de Educación", which are Central Government services that manage schools.

[3] Informe trimestral de los recursos humanos del sector público.

mentioned above, *Servicio Civil*'s role remains largely supportive, without the capacity to enforce compliance. Implementation of these standards across *servicios* remains uneven, and there is little evidence that *servicios* consistently use these standards when developing positions. This situation further reinforces the absence of a unified approach to job architecture, despite the potential for these Standards to provide a relevant tool for *Servicio Civil* to ensure some degree of consistency between job profiles across the administration.

This results in a system where high-level job classification and pay structures exist formally but fail to provide the coherence and transparency expected from a forward-looking public employment system. This has direct implications in Chile's difficulty to create common career paths, align skills with roles, and support workforce mobility.

1.3. Recommendations to develop a whole-of-government job architecture

1.3.1. Strengthening governance

- Give *Servicio Civil* a clear mandate to design and enforce a whole-of-government job architecture. This requires adjusting its current legal and institutional framework so that its norms are not just advisory but binding.
- Build the technical and analytical capacity of *Servicio Civil* to develop a job architecture. Establish a dedicated team with expertise in job analysis, competency frameworks, and workforce planning to ensure sustainability of reforms.
- Engage *servicios* in the design process. Co-designing the job architecture with practitioners ensures that the framework reflects actual operational needs and remains flexible enough to accommodate sector-specific realities.
- Create an inter-institutional steering committee to strengthen collaboration and co-ordination. Bringing together *Servicio Civil*, DIPRES, and *servicios* would ensure co-ordination on this matter and put a structure in place to update the architecture accordingly.

1.3.2. Piloting and scaling gradually

- Begin with transversal areas such as HR or digital professions. These fields exist across all *servicios* and offer a natural entry point for developing common job fields and skills.
- Test the framework with a limited number of *servicios*. Pilots could be run in large ministries with diverse workforces to validate the model before scaling up.
- Develop guidance and tools for *servicios*. Provide templates and job description models to support consistent implementation across *servicios* and limit administrative burden.
- Evaluate pilots and refine. Collect feedback from HR departments, managers and employees to adjust categories, fields and competencies before rolling out the framework to all *servicios*.

1.3.3. Linking it to HRM processes

- Integrate job architecture into recruitment processes. Standardise job descriptions and categories to make vacancies more transparent in the eye of applicants.
- Embed job architecture in mobility processes. Use categories and fields to support both vertical progression and horizontal moves across *servicios*.

- Link to performance management. Align appraisal systems with the skills and expectations defined in the architecture to improve fairness and objectivity.
- Use for strategic workforce planning. Map existing positions and competencies against the architecture to identify gaps, emerging needs, and reskilling priorities.

1.3.4. Ensuring legal and regulatory alignment

- Develop job architecture on top of the already existing regulations. Clarify how *estamentos* and contractual modalities map onto the new framework.
- Ensure remuneration scales are compatible. Provide advice related to compensation levels for each grade and level in the job architecture, while maintaining some level of flexibility across *servicios*.

2 Strengthening mobility in the Chilean public service

As administrations face increasingly complex and fast-changing demands, mobility increasingly appears as a core feature of effective public employment and management systems. Ensuring that people can move to the right roles at the right time enables administrations to maintain long-term capacity, address emerging priorities, and potentially respond to crises. At the same time, mobility gives public servants access to varied and fulfilling career experiences, helping them remaining engaged and building skills throughout their whole careers.

Mobility can take many forms, and understanding its different dimensions is required to design policies that both meet organisational needs and support employees' career development. These categories range from vertical promotions to lateral moves across ministries, from functional or geographic shifts to transitions beyond the public service altogether. They can also be temporary, allowing employees to return to their original role, or permanent, reflecting longer-term changes (Box 2.1). This paper focuses mostly on horizontal mobility, but also provides insights into vertical mobility.

Box 2.1. Different types of mobility in the central administration

The mobility of public servants can be a valuable asset in achieving greater flexibility and adaptive capacity in public sector organisations. Broadly defined, employee mobility can consist of any of the following dimensions:

- Horizontal: lateral moves within the same job classification system or between classification systems for positions recognised as equivalent.
- Vertical: an ascension in job responsibilities, usually a formal promotion, (but can refer even to a demotion or downward mobility).
- Functional (or 'inter-professional'): marked by a transition to a new field or profession.
- Geographic: moving cities, regions, etc.
- Internal: taking up another post within the same organisation or broader public service.
- External: a transition outside the public service – e.g. to another sector, level of government or international organisation.
- Temporary: where the public servant retains their original position and is expected to return to it after a period of time.
- Permanent: such as a permanent transfer or new position.

Source: OECD (2023), *Public Employment and Management 2023: Towards a More Flexible Public Service*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/5b378e11-en.

2.1. Reinforcing horizontal mobility in the public service

Horizontal mobility can therefore be defined as a lateral move within the same job classification system or between classification systems for positions recognised as equivalent. From an organisational point of view, this type of mobility allows to transfer good practices, encourage innovation, and develop a more agile and resilient workforce. From a public servant point of view, it allows to develop new skills, broaden their experience, and strengthen collaboration across the public service.

However, developing horizontal mobility requires having the appropriate system in place. It calls for a public service capable of breaking down organisational siloes and offer relevant mobility opportunities to public servants. To this end, the OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability states the need for Member countries to set the necessary conditions for internal and external workforce mobility and adaptability to match skills with demand. This can be done by:

a. Establishing common frameworks and/or vocabulary to identify transversal job requirements and competencies (for example, through common job architecture, as discussed in the previous section).

b. Enabling and encouraging short- and medium-term assignments within and outside of the public sector, while ensuring conflicts of interest are avoided, in order to encourage learning and exchange of information or to occasionally meet short-term labour demands.

c. Valuing mobility as an asset for merit-based and transparent job promotion.

2.1.1. Defining the objectives of horizontal mobility

Horizontal mobility is often overlooked as a strategic objective in public service management. While horizontal mobility is possible in all OECD member countries, it is mandatory or expected for most public servants in only 9% of them (Figure 2.1). In 60% of OECD member countries, horizontal mobility is possible but not encouraged or recommended. This tends to create systems where horizontal mobility happens haphazardly, rather than being organised strategically.

Figure 2.1. Expectations around horizontal mobility in central administrations, 2022
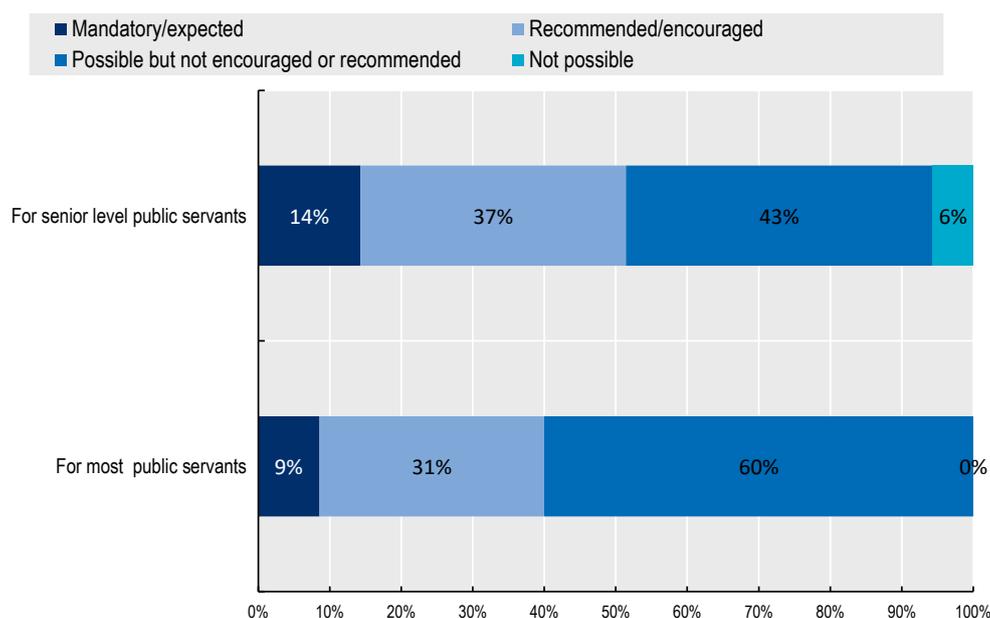
Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

A well-balanced approach to mobility requires clear objectives and structured processes. Mobility can generate significant benefits, but requires oversight to avoid creating instability, diminishing institutional knowledge, or disrupting service delivery. Policies and tools are therefore needed to guide transitions, ensure continuity, and ensure that mobility strengthens resilience rather than undermines it (Box 2.2).

Box 2.2. Strategic mobility framework

The OECD recently developed a framework on what strategic mobility is and looks like. It seeks to strike a balance between the negative effects of not enough mobility and too much mobility.

	Not enough mobility	Strategic mobility	Too much mobility
Length of time in role	People staying in their positions long after they have mastered their tasks, to the point where they see few opportunities to change the way they do things and fail to bring new approaches, ideas or perspectives to tackle challenges.	People stay in one role long enough to learn about its depth and complexity, to see projects through to completion and to pass on their insights to others before moving on.	People move before they can really learn the role and see the results of their work.
Individual perspective	Employees remain in their jobs because they do not think mobility will be rewarded, are afraid of negative consequences, or do not want to leave their comfort zone. Employees tend to see few opportunities for career development, leading to complacency and/or boredom and low engagement and retention rates of best employees. Lack of transversal skill development.	Employees move to logical next steps in their career (lateral and vertical) – to work on interesting projects and develop their skills and capabilities. Higher levels of engagement due to opportunities to learn new things while also seeing results of efforts. Employees balance the development of transversal skills with deeper knowledge required of specific positions.	People move because they are unhappy, or to get salary increases, or as a result of political instability. Not linked to personal development since they do not stay long enough to learn a new role deeply. Employees tend to feel overwhelmed and stressed, as they rely on generalist skill sets without developing the depth of expertise needed in complex policy areas. Low engagement since employees do not see results of their efforts.
Team perspective	Managers hold onto their best staff for fear of not being able to achieve goals without them. High levels of stability may lead to stagnation and group think – no new energy or ideas.	Mobility is used to generate new energy in teams, moving one member at a time.	Whole teams are moved and reconstituted resulting in little continuity or institutional memory (unless team is meant to be temporary) which can reduce rates of project completion.
Organisation perspective	Organisations do not promote or value mobility. Some may even punish mobility – often unintentionally. Reinforces organisational silos, and group think, which results in lower levels of innovation.	Organisations enable mobility to achieve specific and well thought out objectives – addressing complex problems and emergencies, developing staff. This helps increase innovation, productivity, employee engagement, and develop learning cultures.	Often the result of instability at the political levels, or bad working cultures and not linked to organisational development objectives.

Employee Supports	No support since there is no mobility.	Highly supported – employees are well prepared for their new role with appropriate training and regular check-ins.	Often not well supported – sink or swim mentality.
Managerial supports	No support since there is no mobility.	Highly supported – managers are guided through the process and provided the needed tools to onboard new employees and manage any institutional memory problems.	Not well supported – managers avoid using mobility strategically as they see it as disruptive to achieving their objectives.
Use of data	Not tracked.	Tracked using both administrative data and survey data to ensure a balance.	Often not tracked.

Source: OECD (2023), *Public Employment and Management 2023: Towards A More Flexible Public Service*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/5b378e11-en.

Developing such strategic mobility in the public service can be helped by developing an associated strategy or policy document. This strategy can help shape horizontal mobility as a strategic tool to better manage the public workforce and address emerging organisational challenges. It provides a structured framework that reduces reliance on informal networks or *ad hoc* arrangements, strengthening the transparency and predictability of mobility decisions. Moreover, it signals to both employees and managers that mobility is valued and rewarded, potentially encouraging participation. Finally, it strengthens workforce planning, by making horizontal mobility another tool that can be used to support capability across institutions.

However, across OECD member countries, 24% of countries do not have a single central mobility strategy and less than 50% of their administrations have a strategy in place (Figure 2.2). In countries with a strategy, these typically take the shape of enabling legislation or general policy principles rather than detailed strategies. Australia provides one of the most advanced examples of a framework in place specifically dedicated to horizontal mobility (Box 2.3).

Figure 2.2. Existence of mobility strategies or policies

Percentage of OECD member countries
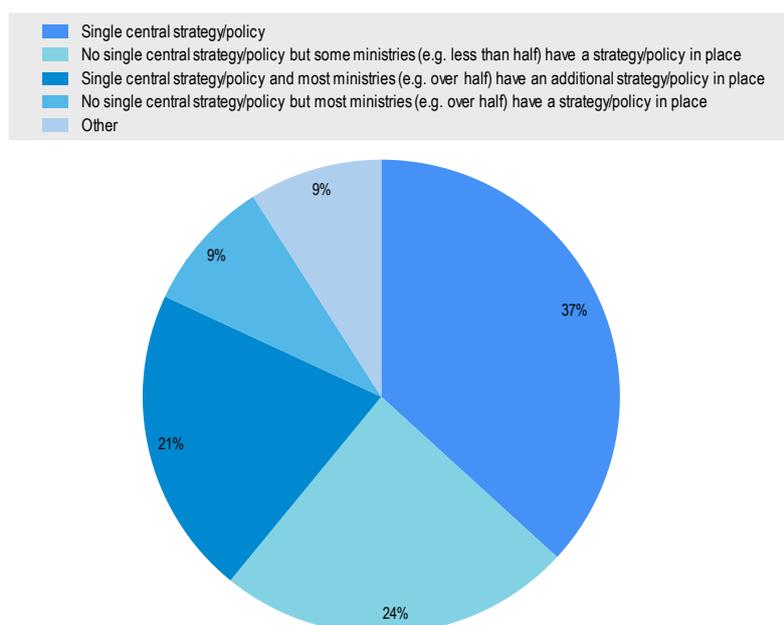
Legend:
- Single central strategy/policy
- No single central strategy/policy but some ministries (e.g. less than half) have a strategy/policy in place
- Single central strategy/policy and most ministries (e.g. over half) have an additional strategy/policy in place
- No single central strategy/policy but most ministries (e.g. over half) have a strategy/policy in place
- Other

37%
24%
21%
9%
9%

Box 2.3. Australia's Public Service Mobility Framework

Australia developed, in 2021, a comprehensive Public Service Mobility Framework, designed to embed mobility as a core element of workforce management. The Framework is grounded in the Public Service Act 1999 and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, emphasising co-operation within and across agencies. Within this framework, the Mobility Framework positions mobility as a workforce tool that strengthens both organisational capacity and employee development. It promotes a "One Australian Public Service" mindset, encouraging agencies to use temporary moves not only to service their own priorities but also to deliver outcomes for the whole public service. This systematised approach highlights the sustained benefits mobility can bring. Importantly, the strategy acknowledges that excessive or poorly targeted mobility can weaken expertise, highlighting the need to balance flexibility with continuity.

The strategy rests on three interrelated objectives highlighted this added value. First, mobility is used to address surges in demand, whether planned (such as seasonal peaks during census collection) or unplanned (such as natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic). Enabling quick reallocation to priority areas can help APS responding with grater agility and resilience. Secondly, mobility provides a means to solve complex policy or operational challenges, where temporary teams or expert secondments combine diverse perspectives and accelerate problem solving. Finally, mobility is framed as a high-impact learning tool for employees, offering opportunities to build new skills, broaden perspectives, and strengthen collaboration across agencies. Taken together, they create a model where mobility contributes simultaneously to organisational resilience, problem-solving capacity, and individual career development.

The Framework also provides tailored operational guidance for the different stakeholders involved in horizontal mobility. The guidance clarifies responsibilities and outlines practical steps, to ensure that mobility becomes a routine and supported feature of workforce management rather than an *ad hoc* practice. For employees, it frames mobility as a career development opportunity, with practical advice on how to prepare, navigate, and reflect on assignments. For managers and executives, it highlights their role in enabling mobility, balancing team needs with system-wide benefits, and modelling openness to temporary moves as part of longer-term capacity building. Finally, HR practitioners are given tools to integrate mobility into broader workforce systems, increase transparency, and facilitate smoother processes for all parties involved.

The Framework also includes specific tools to reinforce implementation. For instance, a surge capacity mechanism ensures that staff can be mobilised rapidly in emergencies. The system gives the APS the ability to redirect skilled employees toward high-priority areas in a structured and co-ordinated way.

Additionally, the Framework relies on metrics drawn from the APS Employee Census, the APS Employment Database, and qualitative case studies to monitor effectiveness. Tracking participation rates, employee satisfaction, and organisational impact helps the Australian Public Service Commission refine the Framework over time.

For this type of document to be strategically relevant, they should encompass the specific objectives of horizontal mobility. Specifically, while building organisational flexibility and developing talent remain underlying objectives, these can be complemented by more specific objectives. Across OECD member countries, most strategies emphasise the role horizontal mobility plays in employee development (64% of OECD member countries with such strategy), better allocating specific expertise or skills in short supply

(60%), or developing a more responsive and adaptive workforce (48%) (Figure 2.3). However, only a third of OECD member countries with such strategy perceive the relevance of mobility to attract talent and strengthen employee engagement, despite the clear linkages between these elements and horizontal mobility.

Figure 2.3. Stated objectives of horizontal mobility strategies

Percentage of OECD member countries
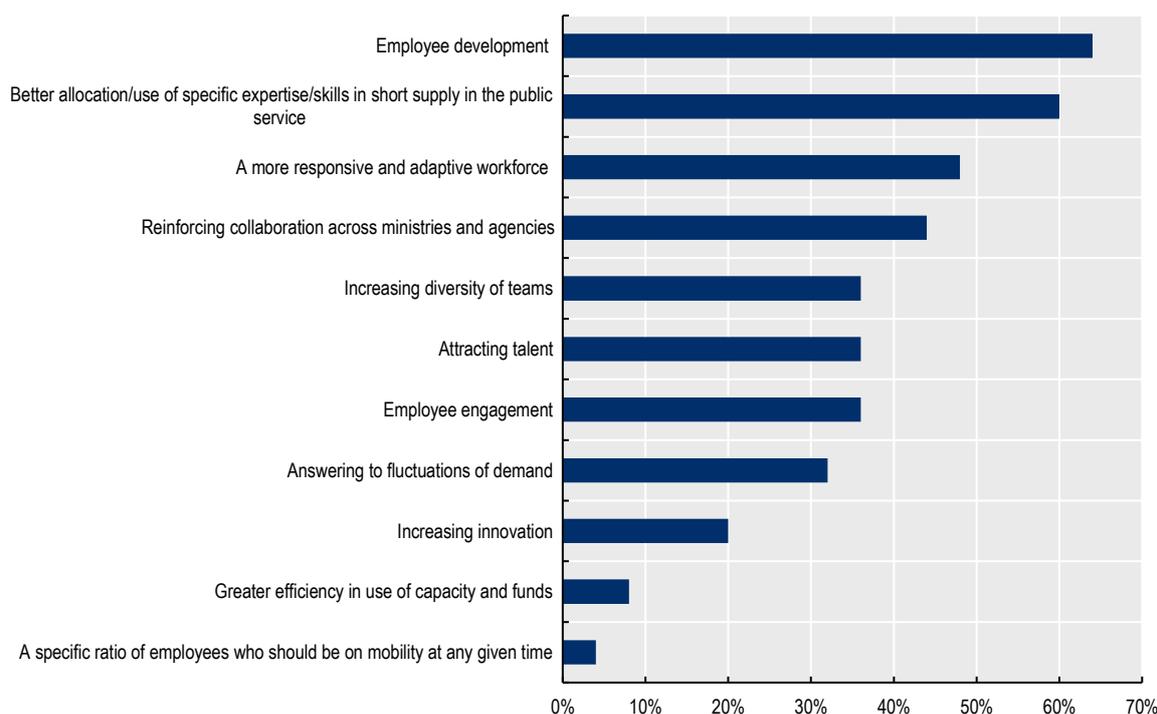
Note: N=25. Original survey question: "Do the stated objectives of the strategy/policy include:"
Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

In contrast, Chile does not have a comprehensive mobility strategy or set of guidelines. This situation is threefold. First, and as mentioned, the public service remains fragmented, with each *servicio* managing its own workforce under different contractual modalities. The lack of a common job architecture makes it difficult to define equivalent roles across organisations limiting opportunities for horizontal movement. Without any clear framework or incentive horizontal mobility depends largely on ad hoc arrangements or personal networks rather than on structured career pathways. The development in 2016 by *Servicio Civil* of Guidelines for the Development of an Internal Mobility Procedure for *Contrata* Staff seeks to define principles for mobility of *contrata* staff, but there is no evidence they are being applied by *servicios*. Second, the limited mandate of *Servicio Civil* does not grant it authority to establish or enforce mobility policies across the administration. Third, Chile has not yet succeeded in developing a culture of mobility.

2.1.2. Putting the right structures in place

Making horizontal mobility a meaningful part of public workforce management requires putting the right structures in place. This requires both a common language to describe jobs consistently across institutions, and mechanisms that enable employees to move smoothly from a job opportunity to the other. Together, job classification systems and well-defined mobility mechanisms provide the foundation for a public service

where public servants can move with clarity, managers can plan ahead, and institutions can benefit from a more agile and capable workforce.

Establishing a common language to embed mobility into career management

A shared job classification system is particularly helpful for effective mobility. Such common language to describe roles and skills helps public organisations recognise equivalencies, making it easier to organise moves across entities (see Chapter on job classification). A consistent job classification helps establish clarity about what jobs entail, how they compare, and how employees can move laterally within the system. It also builds transparency, enabling public servants and managers to see mobility as a viable and fair option rather than a source of uncertainty.

In Chile, the absence of a harmonised classification system poses a significant barrier. Job categories differ across *servicios*, meaning that roles with similar functions are not easily recognised as equivalent. This lack of shared understanding reduces trust in mobility processes and often discourages both managers and employees from pursuing opportunities outside their own entity.

A first step to embed mobility into the career management of some public servants in such fragmented system could be to establish a few specific centrally managed transversal careers. Such systems can set up a set of skill requirements and career pathways for a set group of people working in a particular function, and assign them to roles across the administration, enabling smoother moves between entities. For example, the *Servicio Civil* or another central agency could recruit a set of experts in key areas, (e.g. policy evaluation, middle management or digital transformation) and place them in individual *servicios* for a certain amount of time, moving them every few years as needed for the projects they are supporting. They also make equivalencies from an organisation to the other more explicit, therefore reducing uncertainty and promoting a culture where mobility is both made easier and more valued (Box 2.4).

Another step can be to develop competency-based frameworks providing the common language needed for mobility. While it does not allow to create direct equivalencies between jobs, it helps better understand the skills needed that public servants from other parts of the public service might have or seek to develop in the context of a mobility opportunity.

Box 2.4. The impact of transversal careers and their impact on mobility

Brazil's Specialist in Public Policy and Government Management career path

Brazil's public career system is highly structured and core to managing the federal workforce. It is composed of 117 careers (*carreiras*) and 43 groups of jobs (*planos de cargos*), with around 87% of public servants belonging to these. The entry into these careers gives public servants civil service status, and embeds them into a dedicated professional path. Most of these careers are narrowly defined and linked to specific entities, professions, or functions, such as tax auditors or health inspectors. While this ensures strong professionalisation and technical expertise, it can also generate siloes for more generalist profiles, limiting cross-cutting collaboration and mobility. Only a small number of transversal careers exist, designed to provide flexibility and a broader set of opportunities across ministries and agencies.

Among these, the career of Specialist in Public Policy and Government Management (*Especialista em Políticas Públicas e Gestão Governamental, EPPGG*) appears as a relevant example of transversal workforce design. The EPPGG was established in 1989 to strengthen the government's policy and management capacity. Its purpose is to bridge the gap between political demands and technical expertise, developing highly trained professionals who can design, implement, and evaluate public

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policies across diverse areas of government. This model is managed by the Secretariat of Management (Seges), allocating public servants belonging to this group to ministries, in line with national priorities.

The management of this career follows three objectives:

- improve the quality of information for decision-making and streamline recruitment and mobility processes
- increase the impact delivered by professionals in these careers
- improve the recognition of the performance of some dedicated careers.

The access to the EPPGG career requires a competitive entrance exam, followed by a common induction and training programme that prepares candidates to work in a variety of policy contexts. Once recruited, staff in the EPPGG staff can be allocated to ministries or autonomous agencies to assume roles related to government management, strategic advisory functions, or policy formulation. Their assignments are not restricted to a single entity, making the EPPGG one of the few careers explicitly designed for transversal mobility.

This transversal nature of the EPPGG offers opportunities for both horizontal and vertical mobility. Horizontal mobility is made possible by the flexible nature of the career and the shared skills, allowing individuals to move laterally across ministries and agencies while bringing their skills to new contexts. Vertical mobility is also embedded through a formal progression and promotion system defined by law and regulation. The career counts 13 grades, and promotion requires not only experience and tenure but also the completion of at least 120 hours of training provided by the national school of government, Enap. This dual emphasis on performance and continuous learning links vertical mobility to merit and capability.

Between 2019 and 2022, more than 6 000 authorised movements were registered for EPPGGs and other transversal careers managed by Seges.

Ireland's Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES)

Ireland's Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) provides another example of how transversal career frameworks can strengthen mobility and develop new capabilities across the public service. IGEES was established in 2012 to enhance the State's analytical capacity by creating a common career path for policy analysts and economists. Its approach combines recruitment, structured training, and regular mobility to develop technical expertise while fostering cross-government collaboration. Since 2012, over 200 analysts have been hired through IGEES.

IGEES operates along three main axes. First, it recruits 20 to 30 graduates per year through a dedicated competition, targeting candidates with backgrounds in economics, statistics or social sciences. These graduates are hired as graduate policy analysts and economists and participate in a one-year programme that provides some core competencies for working in the public service. Second, it runs a 3-month internship programme for undergraduates and master's students, offering exposure to government work and practical experience. Finally, IGEES supports continuous learning and professional development through training, policy seminars and peer-learning opportunities.

Mobility is a central feature of the programme. Graduate analysts rotate every two years across or within departments, gaining insights in diverse policy areas and organisational culture. This rotation system creates a workforce capable of transferring knowledge across government, and provides a pathway for vertical mobility by developing their skills base, policy experience, and visibility across institutions.

Developing different mobility mechanisms to support a whole-of-government approach to horizontal mobility

Different mobility mechanisms exist across OECD countries, ranging from moves within the same entity to transfers across the wider public service or even to the private and non-for-profit sectors (Figure 2.4, Box 2.5). Each of these mechanisms serves different purposes, from addressing immediate workforce shortages to supporting professional development or fostering collaboration. They also have different consequences for public servants, as distinctions should be made between temporary and permanent mobility.

Figure 2.4. Types of horizontal mobility existing in central administrations, 2022

Percentage of OECD member countries
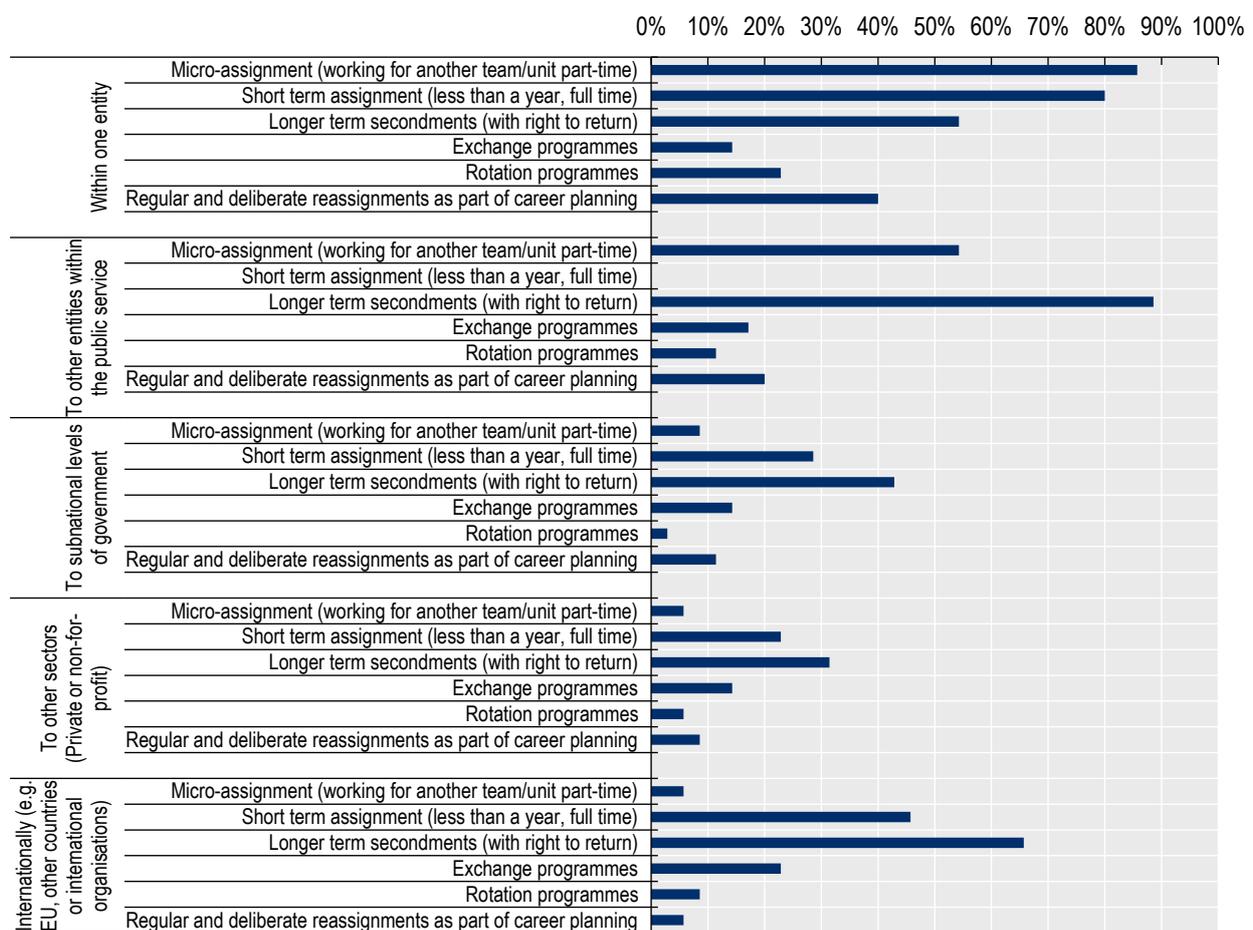
Note: N=35. Original survey question: "Which types of modalities are used for mobility in central administrations?"
Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Box 2.5. Mobility mechanisms across OECD member countries

Belgium's Talent Exchange is a mobility programme for Belgian public servants from all levels of government, mostly used by federal entities. Talent Exchange allows participating organisations to exchange talent for specific initiatives or projects with a duration of between 6 and 12 months, thereby giving public servants new challenges aligned with their skills and competencies. In 2021, 199 exchanges were published.

In **Canada**, there are a variety of rotation programmes which may be offered by departments or functional communities. One example of a centrally managed rotation programme is the Mosaic Leadership Development Programme. The targeted population is employees a level below the Executive ranks belonging to the four Employment Equity groups (women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and members of racialised groups) and/or the 2SLGBTQI+ community. The approximate size of the first cohort is 40. Experience-building assignments within the ministry or others within the public service is a required part of the programme.

The **Nordic Exchange Programme** (NORUT) provides civil servants with the opportunity to learn how things are done in another Nordic country. The annual scholarship amount is distributed between the countries by a group consisting of a contact person from each country. Two important conditions for the exchange are that the applicant is allowed to keep his salary during the exchange and the applicant must apply for exchange in another Nordic country. The typical length of an exchange period is 1-2 months, but periods of up to 6 months occur. The Nordic Council of Ministers contributes a stipend of DKK 14 000 for each month of service. In addition, the Council of Ministers reimburses the costs of travel to and from the place of employment. The approximate size of the programme for Iceland is up to 10 candidates per year.

Japan conducts exchange between the public and private sectors, and between levels of government, although these programmes are not necessarily two-way exchanges. 35 national public servants were dispatched to the private sector in 2021, while 308 private sector personnel were newly appointed to the government. In addition, 1 788 employees transferred from the national government to local governments, and 3 031 local government employees were accepted by the national government (as of 1 October 2020).

The **European Union**'s (EU) Public Administration Cooperation Exchange (PACE) initiative is a unique opportunity for civil servants of EU Member States' national administrations to experience the working methods and culture of other EU public administrations in selected areas. Participating Member States will be paired to host administrations according to their expertise, interests and capacity, in order to share good practices and gain necessary knowledge to implement specific reforms in the home Member State. The programme is organised by the European Commission's DG REFORM and is currently in a pilot phase under the 2023 Technical Support Instrument, with 18 Member States and over 300 civil servants participating.

Slovenia's Partnership for Change programme is carried out by the Ministry of Public Administration and the American Chamber of Commerce Slovenia, which is a programme for the exchanges between the public and private sector. Every year the employees in both the public and private sector are offered the opportunity of a maximum five-day exchange. It is available for everyone and is voluntary based. Upon the call from the Ministry of Public Administration at the beginning of the year, the candidates submit a letter of motivation stating what they do, and where and why they wish to complete an exchange. Once validated, the representative from the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia contacts private companies, the project manager from the Ministry contacts the public institutions and if suitable for each party, the employee and the organisation are connected.

Mobility within an entity

Mobility within one entity (e.g. ministry or agency) remains the most common form of horizontal mobility in the public services of OECD member countries. It allows employees to broaden their skills, test themselves in new contexts, and respond to emerging organisational needs without leaving their ministry or agency. For organisations, it is a useful mechanism to reallocate talent to priority areas while retaining institutional knowledge. This form of mobility is also less disruptive, as it does not involve adapting to a new employer or administrative framework, making it more accessible and appealing in practice.

Internal mobility is also the easiest type of mobility to structure. As roles share the same classification language, structures and pay scales, opportunities can be designed more efficiently and require less co-ordination than other types of horizontal mobility. This explains why 83% of OECD member countries make use of micro-assignments for internal mobility, offering short-term opportunities that strengthen skills and increase workforce flexibility without requiring a comprehensive whole-of-government framework.

In Chile, horizontal mobility within a service is possible, given the common job architecture/classification and remuneration framework. However, it remains largely discretionary and practices vary significantly across *servicios*. There is little evidence of it being used or promoted systematically as a workforce management tool, which limits its potential to strengthen employee development and help organisations address shifting priorities. Furthermore, since *servicios* are significantly smaller than Ministries, there may be fewer mobility opportunities within entities in the Chilean context.

Mobility between *servicios*

Mobility between *servicios* could support the management of the public service as one coherent employment system rather than as a collection of separate entities. For employees, this type of mobility would open up opportunities to work in new institutional contexts, develop diverse skills, and gain a broader perspective on how government functions as a whole. For organisations, it would help to reduce siloes, foster collaboration and ensure that expertise can be deployed where it is most needed. In a context of increasingly cross-cutting policy challenges, horizontal mobility between services could be an extremely valuable tool to build collective capacity and strengthen the adaptability of the public service.

Across OECD member countries, this form of mobility usually takes the shape of both short-term (86%) and longer-term (69%) assignments, designed to respond to temporary surges in demand, complex problem-solving, or professional development. These mechanisms often rely on clear frameworks that define how employees can be seconded to another organisation while maintaining their rights, career progression, and compensation. Such arrangements require co-ordination between public service employers but, as mentioned above, can be facilitated by shared job classification systems and common HRM processes.

In Chile, horizontal mobility between *servicios* remains possible but relatively limited in scope. The *comisión de servicio* regulated under articles 75 and 76 of the Administrative Statute, provides a formal mechanism for temporary mobility, initially for up to three months per calendar year, with the possibility of renewal for equal periods up to a maximum of one year, and exceptionally up to two years by presidential decree. It therefore plays an important role in supporting short-term operational needs and enabling the transfer of expertise between *servicios*, but its duration and procedural requirements mean that it is generally used for targeted, time-bound assignments rather than a tool for longer-term capacity-building or sustained collaborative projects.

To expand the development and collaboration of mobility, *Servicio Civil* launched the *CoLabora* programme, a pilot initiative aimed at expanding temporary mobility opportunities across the public service. *CoLabora* introduces two types of collaboration: agile collaboration, for low-complexity tasks of 1 to 5 hours per week to for up to 12 months, agreed between direct managers, and flexible collaboration, for more complex projects of 6 to 44 hours per week for up to 12 months, formalised through a commission of service. As the assignments are temporary, they do not modify employment contracts. Although

geographic bonuses could theoretically, differ, this has not created issues in practice. The programme is structured around a network of collaborators that can volunteer their expertise and be matched to temporary challenges.

CoLabora represents an innovative attempt to formalise cross-service mobility, however implementation remains challenging. Around 40 to 50% of mobility requests through *CoLabora* were reportedly declined by employees' managers, often due to concerns about losing staff capacity. This reluctance reflects broader cultural and structural barriers: without clear safeguards, managers may perceive mobility as a risk rather than an opportunity. The experience suggests that mobility initiatives require more than technical tools. They must be embedded into broader HRM frameworks, supported by leadership commitment and underpinned by mechanisms that reassure managers their teams will not be weakened.

Mobility to other sectors

Finally, mobility to other sectors, such as subnational government, the private sector or internal exchanges, can also enrich both employee development and institutional capacity. For employees, it provides opportunities to gain new perspectives, strengthen their skills, and bring back valuable experiences that improves their professional growth. For public administrations, it enables the transfer of good practices and fosters innovation through exposure to different organisational cultures and ways of working. Subnational mobility is particularly useful in countries where policies are implemented across multiple levels of government, helping ensure consistency and co-ordination. Mobility to the private sector can strengthen expertise in areas where government may lack specialised knowledge, even though it should be carefully designed to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Finally, international exchanges support knowledge transfer across borders and strengthen the public service's ability to address global challenges.

Across OECD member countries, mobility to these other sectors is less common than internal or cross-service mobility. Where it exists, it is often supported by targeted programmes such as secondments, fellowships, or exchange schemes. These mechanisms usually require formal agreements to ensure that public servants retain their employment status and benefits during their assignment, reducing risks for both employees and employers. Although still relatively limited in scale, such initiatives can play an important role in strengthening government capacity to address cross-cutting issues.

In Chile, no formal system exists to enable mobility to other sectors. Public servants remain bound to their employing service, and there is no systematic arrangement to support these kinds of temporary assignments. This limits the ability of Chile's public service to draw on external expertise or to expose its employees to diverse professional environments. It also reduces opportunities for cross-sector collaborations, which are increasingly needed to tackle complex challenges such as digital transformation or climate adaptation.

Differentiating temporary mobility and long-term mobility

These different types of mobility should also be analysed based on whether they are temporary or permanent. Temporary moves strengthen organisational agility and develop transversal skills, while permanent moves provide career anchors and long-term workforce renewal. Together, they can create a more dynamic and resilient public service, if supported by the right mix of incentives, frameworks, and recruitment practices. Countries that combine a broad set of mechanisms are better able to align mobility with both immediate operational needs and longer-term workforce strategies.

Temporary horizontal mobility is core to enable flexibility and responsiveness within the public service. Most OECD member countries rely on these temporary schemes, such as micro-assignments or short-term assignments to address shifting priorities. These tools allow administrations to address surges in demand, address potential crises, and provide employees with targeted development opportunities. Even though they usually do not significantly alter career trajectories, they give participating public servants exposure to new teams, perspectives and skills, that can be reused in other collaborative contexts.

Permanent mobility represents a deeper career shift, with lasting consequences for both the individual and the organisation. This form of movement is often linked to attraction, retention and long-term career development, as it provides employees with variety and a sense of progression over the course of their working lives. Some systems, usually career-based as France's or Spain's, tend to rely more on internal movement as a key feature of their workforce management, deliberately embedding permanent reassignments into career planning every 5-7 years. On the other hand, position-based system, such as the ones in the Nordic countries, emphasise open competition to posts. In practice, hybrid models are increasingly common with countries reserving some vacancies for internal applicants before opening them externally, striking a balance between internal opportunities and access to external talent.

In Chile, horizontal mobility remains most often permanent, as public servants typically move to another institution in search of better salaries or conditions. This pattern reflects the fragmented nature of the public service, where differences in pay across *servicios* make lateral moves primarily compensation-driven rather than development-driven. As a result, permanent mobility tends to dominate, especially across institutions, despite the efforts of the *Colabora* programme.

2.1.3. Creating a culture of mobility

Creating a culture of mobility requires both leadership commitment and the right system of incentives. Leaders must recognise the value of horizontal mobility for building resilience, fostering collaboration, and strengthening workforce capability across the entire public service. At the same time, employees need to see that mobility is rewarded and supported, rather than perceived as a personal risk. Together, these elements can make horizontal mobility a core feature of a dynamic public service.

Enabling cultural shifts by convincing leaders of the need for horizontal mobility

Promoting mobility in the public service requires a deep cultural shift to better emphasise the benefits of it. Indeed, mobility should not be exclusively perceived as a disruption, but as a normal and valuable feature of both career development and organisational resilience. The Australian experience shows how this shift can be encouraged by embedding mobility in the broader identity of the public service (Box 2.6). This framing positions mobility as a collective contribution to government outcomes, rather than an individual loss for a specific team.

Box 2.6. Embedding a One APS mentality through cultural change in Australia

Australia has recognised that embedding mobility into the public service requires more than procedures and rules, but also requires a cultural shift. The Public Service Mobility Framework was developed not only as a set of tools, but also as a catalyst for changing behaviours and attitudes. Its central principle is the promotion of a One APS mentality, where agencies and individuals view mobility as a collective good rather than a zero-sum transaction. This shift reflects the understanding that mobility strengthens resilience, builds capabilities across the system, and fosters collaboration beyond organisational silos. For this to take root, the framework provides targeted guidance not only for employees but also for managers and executives, who are on the first line to enable mobility.

For managers, the framework encourages a mindset change from guarding talent within teams to seeing temporary moves as investments in the wider service. The guidance highlights the tangible benefits of mobility: developing new capabilities, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and ultimately building a more adaptable workforce. It calls on managers to practice *"generous collaboration"*, approaching requests for mobility not as a loss of capacity but as a contribution to the resilience of the public service as a whole. Practical questions are provided to help managers plan ahead, support outgoing staff in preparing for their move, and integrate incoming secondees effectively. In doing so,

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managers are encouraged to build mobility into their workforce planning and succession strategies, signalling a shift towards treating mobility as a normal and strategic element of career development.

For executives, the guidance positions mobility as a long-term investment in capacity rather than a short-term response to staffing needs. Executives are asked to set the tone for cultural change by modelling openness to temporary moves and embedding mobility into the objectives of their agencies. This means identifying clear priorities where mobility can add value: whether by strengthening strategic capabilities, addressing emerging challenges, or broadening the experience of high-potential staff. By framing mobility as core to organisational strategy, executives reinforce its legitimacy and create an environment where temporary moves are both expected and supported. In practice, this cultural shift requires leadership to embrace mobility as a shared responsibility and to view the circulation of talent across the APS as key to future readiness.

In Chile, such cultural transformation is still at an early stage. The fact that 40 to 50% of *Colabora* requests are rejected by managers reflects a deeper perception that mobility is secondary or even detrimental to core tasks. Overcoming this requires not only better tools and strategies, but also efforts to change how mobility is valued across the public service. Recent success stories from *Colabora*, highlighting the skills and networks gained, and linking mobility to broader public service goals are essential to foster acceptance. Shifting the culture will mean reframing mobility as part of the identity of being a public servant and a practice strengthening both individual careers and the public service capacity.

Putting the right incentives in place

Public servants also need to perceive clear value in undertaking a mobility assignment. Moving outside their comfort zone often involves risks: leaving behind a role they already master, adapting to a new team, or taking on tasks they may not have done before. If these efforts are not acknowledged and rewarded, horizontal mobility can appear more as a burden than a career opportunity. Well-designed incentives are therefore essential to encourage employees to see mobility as a step forward in their career rather than a detour.

Across OECD member countries, the most advanced systems are those where mobility is explicitly valued and integrated into career structures. This can take different forms: formal recognition in promotion processes and performance evaluations, career accelerator, or increased compensation (Figure 2.5). All these elements however should be carefully implemented. For example, promotion opportunities are by nature limited and also take into account other features such as tenure, while financial incentives may strain on public budgets. This requires striking a right balance to encourage mobility without generating unintended consequences. Korea is trying to strike this balance, by making mobility a key step of developing leadership potential (Box 2.7). Additionally, moving across ministries is often a prerequisite for reaching senior management, sending a strong signal that mobility is not optional but part of building a successful career in the public service.

Figure 2.5. Promoting internal and external mobility in the central administration

Percentage of OECD member countries

Note: N=36. Original survey questions: "How is internal lateral mobility promoted and/or facilitated?" and "How is external mobility promoted and facilitated?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Box 2.7. Promoting mobility in Korea

The Korean government provides a wide range of incentives for civil servants assigned under regular personnel exchange programmes (i.e. programmes between central government ministries, between central and local ministries, between ministries and public agencies or universities). The Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) establishes personnel exchange plans and guidelines to operate such programmes in a systematic and organised manner and evaluates each ministry and agency's level of mobility by conducting a personnel management innovation diagnosis. Ministries and agencies with excellent results are provided with certain incentives such as privileges for education and training. Civil servants assigned via personnel exchange programmes are provided with the following incentives:

- Promotion: In order to be promoted to the Senior Civil Service, candidates are required to have work experience at different ministries and agencies before they can take the required examinations. In addition, experience in personnel exchange programmes can help for promotion to middle management levels, and can accelerate career trajectories.

- Performance evaluation: when determining civil servants' work performance rating and performance based annual salary and bonuses, personnel exchange experience gives civil

servants a higher grade, thus personnel exchange experience gives preferential performance-based compensation.

- Assignment: after returning from exchange programmes, civil servants can be assigned to positions they want to be in, and they can always return to their original positions after completion of an exchange programme, regardless of job openings.

- Compensation: Exchange allowances are provided to those under personnel exchange programmes. If civil servants have to move to a different location to do a personnel exchange, the government reimburses their housing expense or covers the costs of longer commutes.

In Chile, in contrast, no systemic incentive is in place to promote mobility. The main motivation for employees to move remains linked to compensation, with public servants independently seeking better pay by moving *servicios*. This individual-driven approach limits the development potential of mobility and reinforces structural inequalities between *servicios*. This leads to mobility remaining an underused tool.

2.2. Clarifying the conditions for vertical mobility

2.2.1. Identifying the right criteria for promotion

Identifying the right criteria for vertical mobility – or promotion – is essential to ensure that career development in the public service is transparent and merit-based. Promotion systems vary across OECD member countries, reflecting different traditions of public employment. In most cases, step increases within a grade are either automatic or related to performance assessments, while promotions to higher positions require candidates to apply for vacancies. This distinction highlights an important question for administrations: should career progression be guaranteed through automatic advancement emphasising tenure, or should it rely on competitive processes emphasising merit and performance? The balance between these approaches shapes the types of criteria analysed to decide on a promotion.

These criteria therefore vary widely across OECD member countries. Some systems emphasise tenure, providing predictable progression but potentially limiting the recognition of high performers and resulting in more senior positions than junior positions (upside down pyramid). Other systems rely more heavily on performance evaluations, participation to training or demonstrated competencies. However, performance evaluations remain imperfect tools that often struggle to differentiate among employees, and participation to training a proxy of actual job performance. Therefore, a growing number of countries are seeking a balance, maintaining some tenure-based progression while introducing stronger performance-based features (Box 2.8). The way these criteria are defined and applied therefore can have important consequences for engagement and performance.

Box 2.8. Grade increases in the French civil service

Grade increases in the French civil service follow strict statutory rules that vary across each *corps.* Each *corps* has its own *statut particulier* that defines the conditions, methods, and criteria for grade progression. These conditions usually specify required grades and steps, training obligations, or prior experience in posts with elevated responsibilities. In some category A corps (jobs related to policy design, management or senior leadership), promotion may require having held specific high-responsibility functions. This type of promotion differs from the "internal promotion" process that leads to a different corps and to functions at a higher level.

Three main pathways can allow civil servants to progress to a higher grade, promotion *au choix,* promotion after a professional examination, and promotion through a professional competitive exam.

Each pathway is governed by national rules but applied within each corps, making implementation diverse across the civil service.

- Promotion *au choix* is the most common pathway and relies on an assessment of professional merit. Employers select eligible civil servants who meet the statutory conditions. Decisions are guided by management guidelines setting common principles and criteria. These include the diversity of career paths, training completed, specific working conditions, professional engagement, adaptability and, where relevant, leadership capacity. Professional experience inside or outside the public sector, including union activity, can be considered. Selected candidates are ranked on an annual promotion list (*tableau d'avancement*). Appointment occurs as vacancies arise, following the order on the list. Inclusion on the list does not guarantee promotion, and re-inscription the following year is not automatic.

- A second pathway is promotion after a professional examination. The *statut particulier* sets the eligibility rules and the content of exams, which may combine written tests, oral tests, and the review of the candidate's personal file. Each year, a ministerial order sets the number of available positions. Successful candidates are then placed on an annual promotion list (*tableau d'avancement*) and appointed as vacancies open. This pathway can, in some *corps*, allow access to a grade that is not the immediately higher one.

- The third pathway is the professional competitive examination. It is similar to the professional examination, but is structured as a formal competitive examination with its own eligibility conditions and test requirements. Successful candidates are also placed on an annual promotion list (*tableau d'avancement*) and appointed as vacancies open.

These promotion opportunities are shaped by the promotion rate. The *statut particulier* may cap the number of annual promotions to a fixed percentage of eligible staff. When the rate prevents promotions for two consecutive years, an exception can allow promotions to occur in the third year. This mechanism helps balance career progression with workforce management constraints.

In Chile, these dynamics are particularly pertinent. For *planta* officials, promotions are formally based on performance evaluations, training, adequacy for the role and tenure. In practice, however, performance assessments often produce uniform results, making tenure the dominant factor. For *contrata* staff, promotion is more discretionary as it depends on managerial decisions rather than homogeneous processes. While *Servicio Civil* reminds institutions that merit should guide these decisions, the discretionary nature of the system can undermine transparency and consistency.

2.2.2. Defining opportunities for internal candidates

Providing vertical mobility opportunities for internal candidates is one of the defining criteria of a career-based public service. In the context of an ageing public service with a limited number of vacancies, this can partly be done by providing internal candidates with privileged access to some career opportunities in comparison to external candidates. Across OECD member countries, 72% keep some positions exclusively for internal candidates within their ministry/agency, 67% include candidates of other ministries/agencies in internal recruitment, while 44% limit internal recruitment to those who hold a position within the same profession (Figure 2.6). These different mechanisms send a strong signal that entering and investing in a public service career can bring upward opportunities, while at the same time help administrations retain talent and institutional knowledge.

Figure 2.6. Job openings only available to internal applicants

Percentage of OECD member countries
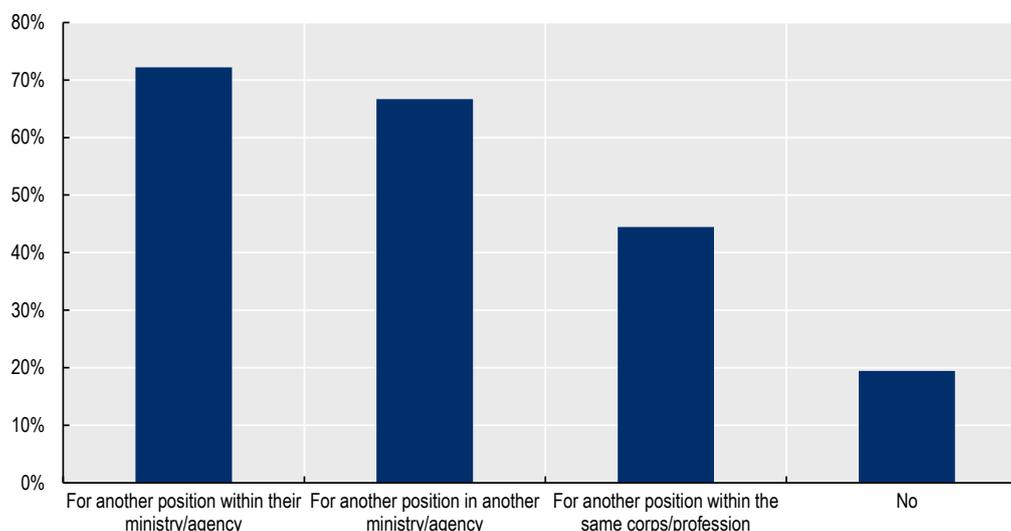
Note: N=36. Original survey question: "As a form of mobility, are there some job openings that are available only to internal applicants (i.e. existing public servants)?"
Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

In practice, most countries operate hybrid systems, balancing open competitions with specific provisions for internal candidates. In Italy, for example, all public competitions are preceded by intra and inter-ministerial competitions, ensuring that current staff has a first opportunity to progress. In the Netherlands, vacancies are usually first open to internal applicants from the recruitment department, before being extended to other departments and finally to the external market if no suitable candidate is found. Similar mechanisms exist elsewhere: in Australia, agencies may restrict temporary postings to internal applicants through specialised job boards; in Ireland, promotion competitions are often reserved for internal staff with sequencing arrangements by grade; and in New Zealand, agencies advertise certain roles only on internal platforms accessible to civil servants. These practices all highlight that vertical mobility can be institutionalised through dedicated processes.

In Chile, vertical mobility is shaped by contractual modalities, with distinct implications for *planta* and *contrata* staff. For planta civil servants, opportunities tend to be quite limited as promotions require the creation of a new planta vacancy, by law, existing *planta* vacancy, or the replacement of another planta staff leaving. This can significantly constrain upward movement, as the internal planta labour market remains extremely restricted. By contrast, *contrata* staff operate in a system closer to a position-based model. In this model, the head of the *servicio* is responsible for the way vertical mobility is organised: whether through an internal recruitment process or by direct appointment. However, since there are no concrete rules to ensure merit for *contrata* appointments, this flexibility may promote an over-dependence on managerial discretion and could result in undue favouritism. Such system should therefore also ensure that opportunities for progression rely not only on contractual status but also on merit and long-term career development.

2.3. Recommendations to strengthen mobility in the Chilean public service

2.3.1. Defining the objectives of horizontal mobility

- Give *Servicio Civil* the mandate and resources to develop and publish a policy framework on horizontal mobility that clearly defines its objectives. This framework should set clear objectives on what horizontal mobility entails for managers, executives and public servants, linking mobility to skill development, collaboration and workforce resilience.

- Ensure the framework explicitly defines horizontal mobility as a workforce management tool. This would strengthen the role of horizontal mobility as a strategic response instead of being uniquely salary-driven.

2.3.2. Putting the right structures in place for horizontal mobility

- Integrate mobility features into the job architecture to create a common language across *servicios*. This would make comparable positions easier to identify and mobility more predictable.

- Develop distinct mechanisms for temporary and long-term mobility, such as secondments, rotation schemes, and micro-assignments. Each mechanism should have a clearly defined purpose, from short-term capacity support to long-term career development.

- Consider setting up and piloting a centrally managed horizontal career. Start by choosing an appropriate function – possibly middle management, since the senior level is already managed by *Servicio Civil*, so this could build on that experience. Begin with a small cohort of 20 managers, and scale up progressively as the concept proves its value.

- Strengthen the *Colabora* programme by expanding its coverage and visibility. Structured follow-up of mobility experiences should be introduced to ensure learning is captured and shared.

- Introduce transparent and centralised processes to advertise and access horizontal mobility opportunities, therefore reducing reliance on informal networks and improve fair access.

2.3.3. Creating a culture of horizontal mobility

- Build awareness among senior leaders of the benefits of mobility. This requires targeted communication and visible support from executives to normalise mobility as a career practice.

- Introduce incentives that encourage participation in mobility. These could include linking mobility experience to promotion eligibility or professional development opportunities.

- Address financial disincentives for employees engaging in horizontal mobility. For example, salaries and benefits could be protected and partially paid for by the sending institution for the first year of temporary mobility, with gradual adjustments beyond that timeframe.

2.3.4. Strengthening vertical mobility

- Revise promotion criteria to ensure merit, competencies, and training are valued alongside tenure. Ensure these are consistently applied across institutions.

- Strengthen the performance evaluation system so that results are differentiated and meaningful. Linking actual performance outcomes to promotion decisions would improve fairness and credibility in the system.

- For *contrata* staff, reduce discretion in promotion by developing a norm on fair and transparent promotion. This could be done by *Servicio Civil*.

3 Strengthening performance management in the Chilean public service

Performance management has long been a central topic in public administration reform, reflecting its dual role as both a mechanism for accountability and a lever for transformation. When effectively designed, performance management systems can fulfil multiple purposes. First, they support learning cultures by creating structured opportunities to reflect on past results, identify lessons, and build collective understanding of what works. Second, they drive individual capability by providing employees with forward-looking direction and targeted feedback that guides their development. Third, they align organisational and individual objectives by ensuring that employees' work contributes meaningfully to broader institutional goals. Together, these functions make performance management a core element of effective workforce management and public sector improvement.

Effective performance management calls for well-designed structures and systems, as well as effective and skilled public managers. Clear frameworks, tools and processes help to ensure consistency and fairness but are not enough on their own. Managers also need the capabilities and incentives to do performance management well – including the capabilities to hold constructive (sometimes difficult) conversations about performance, provide effective and developmental feedback, and motivate employees. These managers bring the system to life, making it a tool for both individual and organisational developmental, rather than solely a set of procedures that must be followed.

The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability recognises performance management as a key component of effective people management. Notably, the Recommendation calls for assessing, rewarding and recognising performance, talent and initiative, in particular through:

a) Aligning and assessing individual, team and organisational performance through agreed indicators and criteria which are regularly discussed and reviewed;

b) Rewarding employee performance by appropriate means and addressing under-performance as part of a coherent approach to performance management; and

c) Ensuring that managers have the capabilities and support necessary to carry out performance management and to identify and develop talent.

These principles underline the importance of viewing performance management not as an isolated process, but as part of a broader system of workforce development and organisational improvement. A coherent approach ensures that assessment processes are meaningful, fair, and strategically connected to other human resource and organisational management practices, such as training, mobility, and career progression.

Across OECD member countries, however, performance management systems often fall short of their intended impact. Many remain compliance-driven, appearing as "tick-the-box" exercises rather than fostering a culture of performance improvement and learning. When processes are overly bureaucratic or

disconnected from daily work, they risk being perceived as unfair or irrelevant, generating frustration among employees and undermining trust in the system. In some cases, assessments may reinforce hierarchical relationships without contributing to learning or capability building. As a result, the potential of performance management to motivate staff, strengthen accountability, and improve public service outcomes is often untapped.

Part of this untapped potential is due to the challenges inherent to performance management in the public sector. In various ways, the nature of public sector work itself complicates the identification of high performance. Many roles involve collective effort, where results depend on teamwork, consultation, or long-term policy implementation. In such contexts, isolating individual contributions is complex, and the impact of one person's work may not be immediately visible. Performance indicators may fail to capture the full scope of an employee's influence, particularly for those engaged in strategic planning, inter-agency co-ordination, or service delivery in volatile environments. As a result, performance assessments risk undervaluing critical but less measurable competencies such as collaboration, judgement, or innovation. These features highlight the importance of designing evaluation frameworks that combine measurable results with qualitative criteria that reflect the realities of public service work.

3.1. Defining the architecture of performance management systems

Building a culture of performance in the central administration requires two elements: a formalised and systematic performance assessment architecture, and well-equipped managers with the skills and incentives to use it effectively. A well-defined architecture provides the foundation for how performance management systems are designed and implemented. It determines who is covered, with what tools, and how often evaluations are conducted. The clarity and understanding of the process can help public servants better understand the system and its potential implications. The overall process also helps administrations better define the intent of the performance management system: a non-mandatory process taking place punctually would have different impacts than a multiannual process seeking to develop conversations around performance between managers and employees.

3.1.1. Performance management framework definition

Public service performance management systems are rooted in formal frameworks that define their scope, procedures, and application. These frameworks can appear in the form of legal instruments or of administrative guidelines. They establish the authority, accountability, and consistency of performance management processes across the public administration. A clear structuration is an essential part of the system to ensure that performance management is not perceived as an optional exercise or a managerial preference, but as a core component of public employment and management.

One of the key system design questions is how much to centralised versus how much to leave to the discretion of ministries and agencies. Public administrations from OECD member countries are seeking a balance between the uniformity of a centralised performance management system, to ensure fairness and comparability across ministries, and a more decentralised approach providing the autonomy to administrations allowing them to adapt tools and processes to their operational context. In practice, overly rigid rules can reduce relevance and ownership at the institutional level. Conversely, too much decentralisation can lead to a patchwork of practices that limit the system's overall capacity to provide reliable data or inform whole-of-government workforce planning (see Developing a job classification in the public service).

In Chile, the overall, centralised, performance management framework is established by the *Decreto Supremo N° 1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)*, which frames the Regulation of Qualifications of Personnel Affected by the Administrative Statute (*Reglamento de Calificaciones del Personal Afecto al*

Estatuto Administrativo). This decree sets outs the general performance-related rules all public employees, whether *contrata* or *planta*, are subject to. It defines the overarching parameters of performance assessment, encompassing structure, frequency and general principles, ensuring a common baseline across the central administration. Additionally, *Servicio Civil* has established guidelines, involving the development of four key processes in performance management: setting individual goals, monitoring and feedback, evaluation and continuous improvement.

However, the Chilean system also introduces a layer of decentralisation by allowing each *servicio* to develop its own Specific Regulation of Qualifications (*Reglamento Especial de Calificaciones*), building on *Servicio Civil*'s guidelines. This regulation enables *servicios* to adapt the general framework to their operational context, modifying criteria such as the number of reports, frequency of assessments, factors and subfactors to be rated, scales, and weights. While this flexibility allows institutions to tailor performance management to their missions and workforce realities, it also introduces substantial variation in how performance is assessed between *servicios*. The result is a heavily decentralised system in which performance management practices differ significantly across the public administration, reducing in some cases the potential for cross-institutional comparison and collective learning.

3.1.2. Coverage of a performance assessment system

The scope or coverage of a performance management system defines who is included in the assessment process and under what conditions. Coverage decisions reveal how a public administration conceives performance management: whether as a tool for selective accountability, or as a collective commitment to improvement and development. Comprehensive coverage helps reinforce the principle that performance matters at every level of the public service, while limited coverage may risk signalling that performance discussions are reserved for specific groups or profiles. A broad and systematic approach to performance management can also strengthen the alignment between individual and organisational objectives. When all staff follow a common performance cycle, it becomes easier to build shared learning cultures, promote coherence in implementation, and ensure that individual efforts contribute to broader administrative missions. Moreover, consistent coverage facilitates the identification of skills gaps and subsequent development needs and of potential talent, allowing performance data to inform workforce planning across government.

An overwhelming majority of OECD member countries conducts mandatory performance assessments for non-managerial staff (83%), senior-level public servants (80%), and middle managers (80%). This results in almost 60% of OECD member countries conducting mandatory performance assessment for all public servants, excluding ministerial advisors (Figure 3.1). As mentioned, this broad coverage often communicates that performance expectations apply to everyone in the organisation, regardless of grade, function, or contract type. Additionally, the inclusion of senior leaders in these processes also serves an important symbolic and practical role. It demonstrates that evaluation and accountability are not limited to frontline employees, but extend to those responsible for setting direction and shaping outcomes. This helps build credibility in the system and encourages leaders to model the behaviours and standards expected from others.

Figure 3.1. Categories of the workforce for which formalised performance assessment is mandatory in the central administration, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries
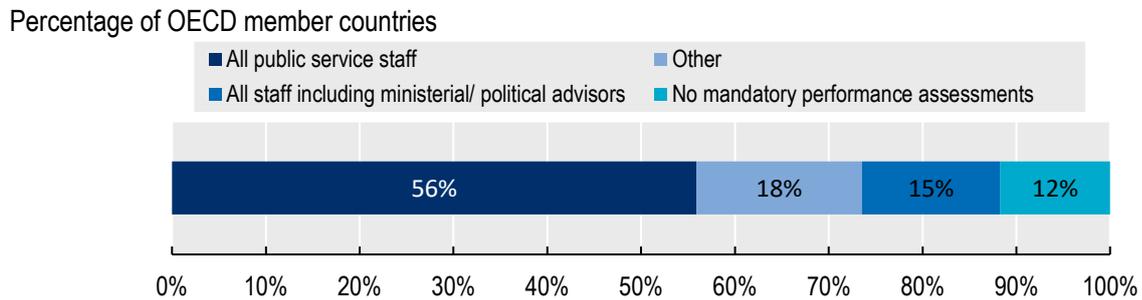
Note: N=34. Original survey question: "Is formalised performance assessment mandatory for public servants?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

These senior leaders may require tailored performance management systems to reflect their specific roles and responsibilities. Indeed, their assessments often focus less on individual task completion than on strategic leadership, collaboration, and delivery of cross-government objectives (Figure 3.2). As a result, some OECD member countries have introduced specific frameworks for senior civil servants, aligning performance evaluation with institutional goals, ministerial priorities, and broader public sector values (Box 3.1). In Chile, senior-level public servants covered by the senior management system (*Alta Dirección Pública*) are subject to performance agreements. These agreements are accompanied by feedback through an annual evaluation and a final assessment at the end of their mandate. However, some of the most senior leadership positions in public agencies and *servicios* fall outside the senior management system and are therefore not subject to formal performance evaluation arrangements.

Figure 3.2. Performance management of senior level public servants in central and federal administrations, 2020

Percentage of OECD member countries

Note: N=34. Original survey question: "Which of the following apply for performance assessment of senior level public servants?"
Source: OECD (2020), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Box 3.1. Developing a specific performance management framework for the senior civil service in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has established a dedicated performance management framework for its Senior Civil Service (SCS), design to ensure a specific approach to managing senior leadership performance encompassing the specificities of these roles. The framework provides detailed guidance to departments for every step of the process, from setting objectives to final performance evaluations. This level of standardisation helps align expectations across government and promote fairness while leaving departments the flexibility to tailor discussions to their operating context.

The performance evaluation process begins with a strong emphasis on alignment and strategic discussions. Guidelines recommend preliminary conversations with senior leaders, such as Directors-General, Heads of Profession, or Permanent Secretaries, to define performance expectations and objectives at the start of the year. This ensures that individual objectives are rooted in collective goals and reflect both organisational and cross-government priorities. The framework also sets the expectation that objectives should be "stretching", meaning they should be challenging and reflect the scale and complexity of senior roles. These objectives are typically agreed with the SCS's line managers across four key areas: business delivery, finance and efficiency, people and capability, and corporate contribution.

The overall performance management process is structured around quarterly performance discussions. This frequency ensures that objectives remain relevant, progress is reviewed at regular intervals, and barriers to delivery are addressed early. At the end of each discussion, on overall appraisal of performance is given, based on a 4-point scale. This appraisal looks at the overall performance instead of an objective-by-objective performance. The final quarterly meeting, held in March, concluded with a formal yearly rating. The framework emphasis that performance should be assessed holistically, based on both what is achieved and how it is achieved, also taking into account the application of Civil Service values.

The SCS performance framework therefore uses four performance ratings: Exceeding, High performing, Achieving, and Partially met. Each rating is linked to a clear description and additional guidance specifying what it consists of, and what it does not consist of in. The system previously included forced distribution quotas, but these were abolished in 2019. Instead, departments are now encouraged to maintain balance in their overall distribution, with the majority of staff typically rated as Achieving, and around 5% as Partially met. The flexible approach combines the benefits of calibration with a greater focus on fairness and dialogue. Local moderation panels play a key role in maintaining coherence across departments. These panels review and discuss ratings to ensure that similar performance levels are recognised consistently and that the rational for each rating is clearly documented. These department-level moderation meetings also serve as forums for collective learning, with managers comparing approaches and developing a shared understanding of what constitutes high or low performance.

This distribution is complemented by a supportive approach to address underperformance within the SCS. If an individual receives a Partially met rating, departments are expected to provide development opportunities, or to review whether lateral moves could help revitalise performance. If an individual receives two consecutive Partially met ratings, a formal performance development plan is initiated, setting improvement goals and timelines. Continued underperformance after this stage can trigger formal capability procedures. This graduated process balances accountability with fairness, ensuring that managers act early while still giving individuals a reasonable chance to improve. It reflects the

system's developmental philosophy, viewing underperformance as a signal for support and adjustment rather than immediate sanction.

On the other hand, the SCS framework also includes mechanisms to recognise and reward high performance. SCS rated Exceeding are eligible for end-year performance-related payments, which acknowledge exceptional contributions to departmental or cross-government priorities. Departments also retain the discretion to extend such payments to High performing individuals when justified by the context or scope of their achievements.

In Chile, performance assessments are mandatory for all public servants, whether *planta* or *contrata*, provided that their contracts exceed six months. This universal coverage reflects a strong institutional commitment to applying performance management principles consistently across the central administration.

However, the Chilean system's decentralised design limits its ability to ensure consistency across *servicios*. While the *Decreto Supremo N° 1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)* establishes the general framework, the discretion granted to individual institutions to design their own *Reglamento Especial* results in significant variation in practice. Consequently, although every public servant is assessed, they are evaluated under institution-specific systems. This could be a benefit if it results in well-designed systems tailored to the specific needs of each *servicio*, however this depends on a high level of capacity for performance management in each *servicio*. This level of decentralisation also has negative aspects, such as the potential to complicate maintaining standards and building whole-of-government managerial capability for performance, and limiting opportunities for *servicios* to learn from one another through comparability of results and the aggregation of performance information at the central level. In such context, stronger soft co-ordination mechanisms, such as peer learning networks, shared guidance or capacity-building programmes for managers could help harmonise practices and strengthen the overall performance management system.

3.1.3. Different tools for different purposes

Performance management systems rely on a mix of tools to assess performance. Their effectiveness depends less on the tools themselves than on how they are used. The same tool, such as meeting with a supervisor or written feedback, can serve different purposes depending on its design and implementation. A same tool can focus narrowly on compliance, reinforcing solely accountability and control, or encourage dialogue and feedback loops, fostering learning and growth. The value of a tool therefore lies in the quality of the managers using it, and their intent regarding performance conversations.

Effective public sector performance management systems combine at least two functions, measuring performance while helping employees and organisations learn from their experiences. This balance can more easily be achieved through the use of different tools, reflecting how a system balances consistency and flexibility. A system that relies on multiple tools can signal a more mature approach to performance management developing a comprehensive performance culture.

Across OECD member countries, 86% use three or more performance assessment tools in some capacity. This shows a commitment to comprehensive assessment practices. Additionally, 83% maintain at least one standard method across all central government organisations, helping ensuring comparability and benchmarking. There are two main types of tools used for performance assessment:

- Manager-led tools such as individual meetings with supervisors (used to some extent in 91% of OECD member countries) and written feedback (86%) are among the most common. Their widespread use reflects the central role of line managers in maintaining oversight and ensuring performance standards (see Involving managers to develop meaningful performance discussions). However, their impact depends on how these interactions are conducted. When focused only on

compliance, they reinforce control mechanisms. When used as genuine opportunities for dialogue with effective managers, they become useful tools to build trust and support employee growth.

- Similarly, tools promoting reflection and continuous learning, such as individual learning plans (74%) and employee self-evaluation (66%) can strengthen ownership of performance. However, their effectiveness also relies on how they are integrated into the broader performance process. These tools also risk losing their developmental purpose when they are treated as administrative checkboxes. However, they help transform performance management into a continuous learning process when they are embedded in meaningful conversations and linked to feedback and goal-setting.

In Chile, the *Decreto Supremo N° 1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)*, sets out a performance assessment process relying on partial and non-binding performance reviews and a prequalification assessment, conducted by the direct supervisor, followed by a final rating determined by the *Junta Calificadora*. The prequalification assessment does not mechanically aggregate the partial reviews, which serve only as background information for the final decision. This board typically consists of the five highest-ranking officials of the institution, along with an employee representative elected by peers. In addition, a delegate from the largest union participates with speaking rights but no voting power. The process therefore combines ongoing managerial input with a final collective decision, aiming to ensure both fairness and consistency in the evaluation of results.

However, each *servicio* retains discretion to adapt the tools and methods used within this framework. This results in varying practices across *servicios*. For instance, while written feedback from a superior and meetings with HR officers are applied across all institutions, other tools such as self-evaluations, individual meetings with supervisors, or learning plans are used selectively. This fragmented application of tools increases the complexity of the system and therefore requires strong central guidance to ensure coherence and comparability. Such shared framework or common performance standards can help limiting variation in interpretation and implementation, which can undermine the credibility and consistency of assessments across the public administration.

3.1.4. Grading system

A standard performance scale helps ensure consistency and comparability across public administrations and the public service as a whole. It allows administrations to assess employee performance using shared benchmarks, potentially linking evaluation outcomes to career development, pay, or training decisions. An appropriate grading scale makes performance management more transparent and can foster accountability while recognising excellence and identifying areas for improvement.

Across OECD member countries, most administrations rely on a standardised performance rating system for central government employees. Indeed, 60% of OECD member countries use a common performance scale, while another 20% operate with different scales between organisations (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Common performance scale/rating system for central government employees, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries
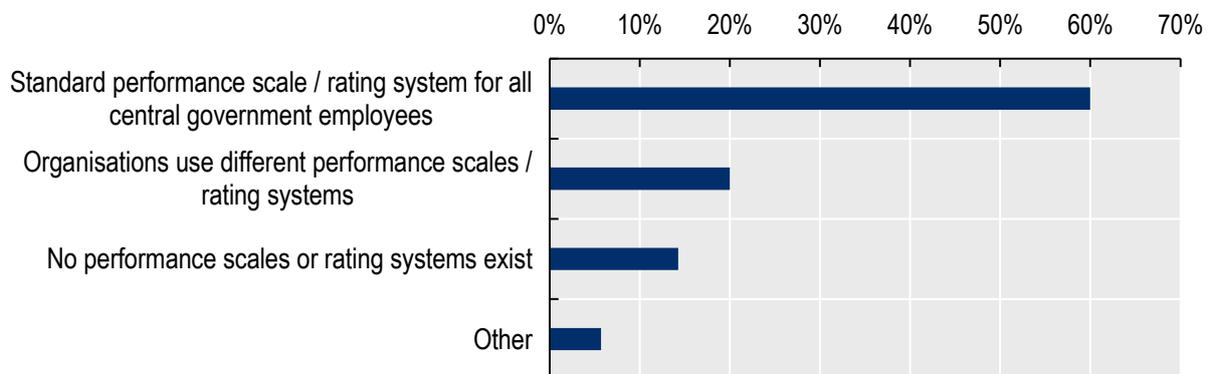
Note: N=33. Original survey question: "Is there a common performance scale / rating system for central government employees?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

When a common performance scale exists, it usually takes the form of a five-point rating system. Such scale is used in 38% of OECD member countries having a standard performance scale/rating system for all central government employees. In theory, the middle score represents satisfactory performance, signalling that most employees meet the expectations of their role. The corresponding distribution of grades reflects the assumption that only a small share of employees either underperforms or exceed expectations. This design is supposed to differentiate levels of performance while maintaining fairness, simplicity and consistency across the workforce.

However, in practice, some OECD member countries are facing challenges in applying this theoretical model effectively. Across some OECD countries, performance assessment data can show a narrow distribution of results, with the majority of employees rated in the top categories. In systems using a five-point scale, for example, most staff tend to receive grades 4 or 5, even where 3 is defined as satisfactory performance. This phenomenon, often referred to as "grade inflation", limits the system's ability to differentiate between satisfactory and top performance. This weakens the credibility of the performance management process and reduces its value as a management tool. Over time, inflated ratings can also distort incentives, creating pressure for supervisors to avoid difficult conversations or to maintain artificially positive assessments to address employees reward-related expectations. Additionally, underperformance is rarely identified through these mechanisms, which limits their usefulness for workforce development or performance improvement. The end result is that such grading systems can lose their ability to identify poor and outstanding performance.

A way to address this challenge can be to introduce managerial calibration mechanisms, where supervisors collectively review and discuss proposed ratings before final validation (see Involving managers to develop meaningful performance discussions). These discussions help ensure that scoring reflects shared standards rather than individual judgment. They also give the community of managers support in resisting pressure from employees for grade inflation. Across OECD member countries, such calibration process remains underused, with only 27% reporting managerial discussions to moderate high and low scores. Another approach can be to force the distribution of the highest grades, limiting it to a specific share of the workforce. While this may limit the ability to identify and reward all high performers, it could be a useful first step towards setting expectations that only a few genuine high performers receive the top rewards each year. This should however be seen as a transitory step towards a more mature performance management system.

Another way forward can be to simplify the grading structure to enhance clarity, avoid gaming and promote dialogue between managers and staff. Ireland, for instance, set up a two-point system structured around "effective" and "needs improvement" appraisals. This reform aims to make evaluations more straightforward and ensure that feedback focuses on development rather than scoring. Such practice strengthens the managers' capacity to recognise and address underperformance, and lowers the administrative burden associated with complex rating systems.

In Chile, the performance evaluation system applies a single overarching framework across the public administration. As defined by the *Decreto Supremo N° 1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)*, all public servants, including the *contrata* ones, are placed each year into one of four lists of qualification: List 1 Distinction (distinción), List 2 Good (Buena), List 3 Conditional (condicional), or List 4 Elimination (eliminación). This represents the final classification of performance for the year and has direct implications.

Beneath the final list lies a more technical evaluation process that determines the score leading to each category. Indeed, performance is assessed through a numerical scale from 1 to 10, looking at *rendimiento* (output and quality of work), *condiciones personales* (attitude, teamwork, and engagement), and *comportamiento funcionario* (conduct and compliance). Each occupational group (see Developing a job classification in the public service) (*directivos, profesionales y técnicos, administrativos* and *auxiliares*) has different weightings for these factors, reflecting the varying importance of leadership, technical competence or procedural reliability in their roles. The final weighted average produces a total score that determines the employee's classification:

- 81 - 100 points: Lista 1 (Distinción)
- 46 - 80.99 points: Lista 2 (Buena)
- 30 - 45.99 points: Lista 3 (Condicional)
- 10 - 29.99 points: Lista 4 (Eliminación)

While this system establishes a common structure, each *servicio* retains significant autonomy in implementation. *Servicios* can modify certain aspects, such as the evaluated components for each factor. This flexibility allows adaptation to organisational contexts, but at the sake of clarity across *servicios*. Different *servicios* can use varying definitions or weightings for performance factors, limiting comparability and creating disparities in evaluation outcomes across the whole public service. This results in a system that is formally unified but operationally fragmented for little end impact on the overall performance management system.

Moreover, despite its formal five-grade structure, almost 98% of the Chilean public workforce is rated in the highest category "distinción". Among these 98%, 50% are graded at the top of the list. This extremely minimal variation across the workforce undermines the purpose of performance differentiation. As nearly all employees are classified as top performers, the system does not provide meaningful signals about actual performance or development needs. It also limits the capacity to distinguish between satisfactory and outstanding performance, limiting the potential identification and motivation of top performers. Over time, such grading weakens accountability and reduces managers' willingness to engage in honest performance discussions.

Some Chilean *servicios* have experimented with alternative models seeking to strengthen the accuracy of the final results. The *Comisión para el Mercado Financiero*, for example, has a specific status that allows it to operate under a distinct performance management framework providing greater autonomy and flexibility. Its internal system uses a 120-point scale, where the average employee score is 102 points. This design allows for more nuanced differentiation of performance and connects individual results to the allocation of performance-related bonuses. Importantly, not all employees can receive the bonus, which creates stronger incentives for genuine differentiation. Even though such point scale remains quite complex to implement, especially considering the difference between close ratings rarely reflects a

meaningful distinction in performance, this approach has helped foster a culture of accountability and trust, supported by the CMF's specific governance structure. A future step could be to simplify the grading system and allow managers to focus on what truly matters: identifying broader performance patterns and supporting improvement.
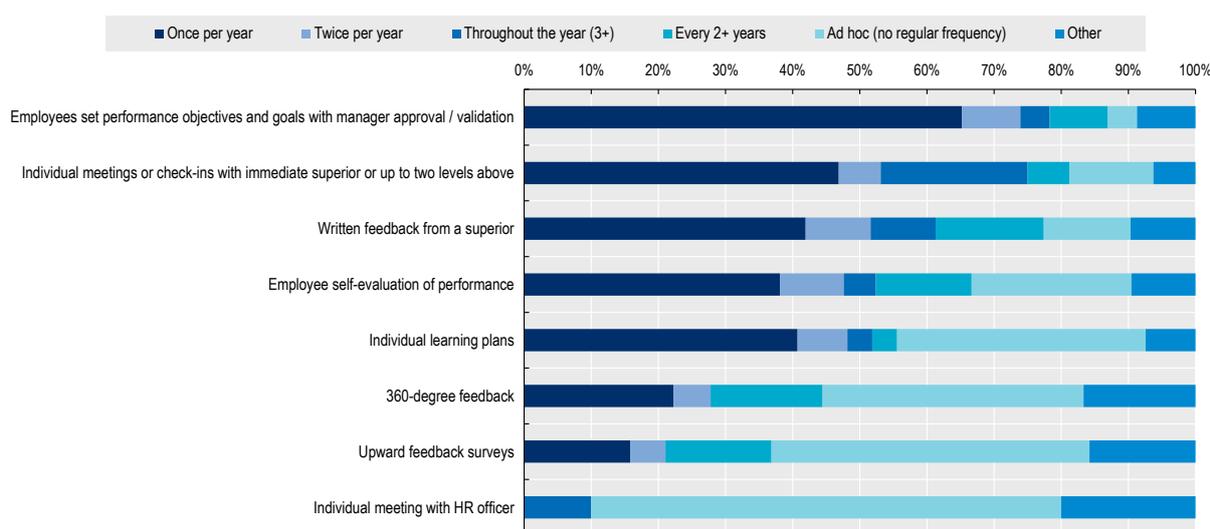
3.1.5. Frequency of performance assessments

The frequency with which performance assessments are conducted plays a decisive role in determining how performance management systems function in practice. Regular evaluations create a rhythm of reflection and dialogue within public organisations, helping to embed performance management as an ongoing, developmental process rather than a one-time compliance exercise. When assessments are too infrequent, feedback may lose its relevance, and opportunities for timely improvement can be missed. Conversely, excessive frequency or overly burdensome procedures can generate administrative fatigue, reduce engagement and diminishing the quality of performance discussions. Finding the right balance between continuity and manageability is therefore essential for maintaining both the efficiency and legitimacy of the system.

Across OECD member countries, performance management remains largely anchored in annual cycles. Around 65% of administrations set employee objectives once per year, while only 9% do so twice annually and 4% more frequently (Figure 3.4). Similarly, 47% conduct formal annual meetings with supervisors, and 42% provide written feedback on the same basis. More interactive tools such as 360-degree or upward feedback are less common, used by roughly one in five countries, often limited to managerial staff. This reliance on annual evaluations reflects an emphasis on accountability and procedural consistency, but it can reduce opportunities for learning and adaptation. Complementing formal reviews with regular informal check-ins and feedback can make performance management more relevant and developmental, turning it from a compliance exercise into a continuous process of improvement.

Figure 3.4. Frequency of performance assessments, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries

Note: N=33. Original survey question: "At what frequency are different types of performance assessments used?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

In Chile, the frequency of performance assessments is mostly determined by the *Decreto Supremo N°* *1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)*, which sets out a structured 12-month evaluation process. In practice, however, the frequency at which different tools are used varies significantly across *servicios*. Some institutions conduct mid-year or quarterly follow-ups to ensure that feedback remains timely, while others rely solely on the requirements of the *Decreto Supremo N° 1.825 del Ministerio del Interior (1998)*. This uneven implementation reflects the high degree of autonomy granted to each *servicio* under Chile's performance management framework, allowing them to adapt evaluation frequency and processes to their operational needs. However, it also makes it difficult to establish a coherent national picture of how often public servants receive feedback, or to assess the consistency of practices across the administration.

3.2. Involving managers to develop meaningful performance discussions

Beyond the system design, performance management relies first and foremost on managerial engagement. Even the most robust frameworks will fail to achieve their intended purpose if managers are not equipped to apply them consistently. Indeed, managers act as the link between organisational goals and individual performance. Their ability to run performance management processes smoothly determines whether performance management becomes a meaningful or a "tick-the-box" exercise. Supporting and involving managers is therefore key to building a credible and fair performance management system.

3.2.1. Giving the right support to middle managers

Middle managers play a central role in translating performance management systems into meaningful practice. They are the ones who conduct evaluations, provide feedback, and support staff development. However, middle managers often lack the training and tools needed to fulfil this role effectively. This is illustrated by the fact that 74% of OECD member countries report the inconsistency in how managers apply performance assessment criteria as a key challenge faced when it comes to performance management. This inconsistency undermines trust and comparability across teams or departments.

Targeted training can help address these issues by developing specific managerial capabilities. However, only 31% of countries make training on performance management mandatory for managers, while 54% offer it on a voluntary basis (Figure 3.5). In more than half of OECD countries offering such programmes, training focuses on core aspects of performance management, including objectively assessing employee performance, providing clear and effective feedback, handling difficult discussions, and mitigating bias. Providing consistently this type of training can help managers see performance management not as a bureaucratic obligation, but as a tool for developing their teams and improving organisational outcomes. This type is even more important in systems structured around performance discussions rather than assessments (Box 3.2).

Figure 3.5. Use of performance management training, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries
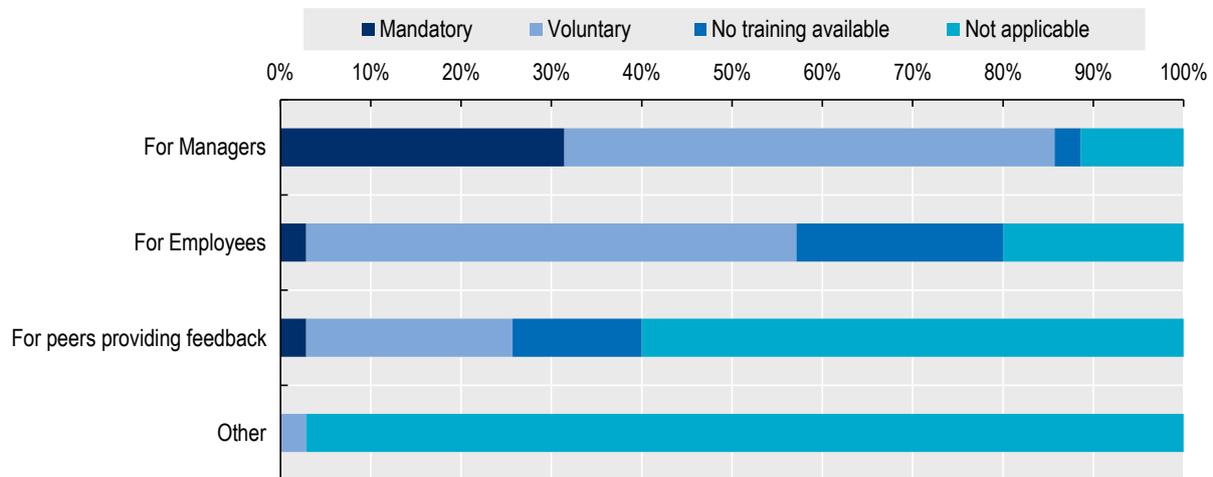
Note: N=35. Original survey question: "Is training available on the performance management system?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Box 3.2. Moving from performance appraisal to development discussions in Slovenia

In 2025, Slovenia replaced its traditional annual performance appraisal system for civil servants with a new model centred on development discussions. This reform marks a shift from evaluating past performance to promoting continuous dialogue. The new approach recognises that meaningful performance management is not only about accountability, but also about supporting growth and motivation within central administrations. Development discussions are designed as structured and forward-looking conversations that allow managers and employees to reflect on progress, discuss goals, assess competencies, and identify development needs.

The new system applies to all public servants and managers who have been in their position for at least six months. Regular development discussions are now part of the annual cycle within each institution, complemented by interim conversations triggered by specific circumstances, such as new goals, changing tasks, or emerging training needs. These interim discussions can be initiated either by managers or employees, promoting shared ownership of the process. For new staff or managers in post for less than six months, an adapted first conversation helps set expectations and establish the basis for future development. This structured approach ensures that every employee, regardless of role or tenure, has regular opportunities for guided reflection and planning.

All development discussions are managed through the IS MUZA platform, Slovenia's HR information system, which standardises templates, captures results, and supports real-time monitoring across the state administration. Some sections of the template are mandatory to ensure consistency and comparability, while others are customisable to fit each organisation's specific context. The platform also allows HR departments to track analytics and compile reports on participation rates or training needs. This integration provides managers and HR teams with insights for workforce development and helps identify strategic capability gaps across the administration.

The performance management system connects to IS MUZA through three main aspects:

- Linking performance and competency management. Development discussions are integrated with Slovenia's Competency Model, allowing managers and employees to assess and reflect on technical and behavioural competencies through 90°, 180°, 270°, or 360° assessments. The results generate a competence profile that informs career planning and guides targeted skill development.

- Identifying and addressing training needs. Each discussion includes a structured review of future development activities, where managers and employees agree on specific training, education, or learning opportunities. These inputs feed into HR departments, which consolidate priorities and design organisation-wide training plans.

- Strengthening mobility. Performance discussions can also serve as a lever to support movement within the administration. By identifying skills, interests and development aspirations, they offer HR professionals better visibility on employees who may wish to undertake horizontal mobility or explore new roles.

This system relies on managerial capability. All managers receive training on how to conduct development discussions effectively, including how to give feedback, identify competency gaps, and set development goals. This reinforces a culture of continuous learning and positions managers as key enablers of employee growth and organisational development.

Slovenia's approach offers an alternative way to manage performance in contexts where outputs are difficult to quantify. By focusing on ongoing dialogue, it shifts attention from measuring results to strengthening the factors that drive them: skills, motivation, and collaboration. This creates a forward-looking system that promotes accountability through learning rather than evaluation.

Beyond skills and tools, managers also need the right incentives to engage in meaningful and sometimes difficult performance discussions. In many systems, avoiding difficult conversations can feel less risky than addressing underperformance or aligning expectations. Creating incentives at the system level can help shift this dynamic. For example, moderation panels can be used to review performance assessments across departments, helping to ensure consistency and fairness while signalling that well-justified differentiation is valued (see Grading system). Similarly, linking managerial evaluations to the quality of feedback and team development can encourage managers to see performance discussions as a core part of their role.

In Chile, training for managers on performance assessment remains voluntary and varies across *servicios*. This decentralised approach results in uneven managerial capacity to conduct effective evaluations. To strengthen consistency and build a more development-oriented performance culture, *Servicio Civil* could consider expanding guidance and training programmes specifically designed for managers, regardless of their *servicio*. Such initiatives could include practical toolkits or peer-learning networks that prepare managers to lead performance conversations constructively and confidently.

3.2.2. Making performance management matter among managers

Performance management is not only an individual managerial responsibility but also an organisational one. For the system to work effectively, managers must have structured opportunities to exchange on how performance is assessed, discussed, and improved. Collective reflection helps ensure that performance management is not treated as a box-ticking exercise, but as a shared management function that supports organisational learning. Embedding these discussions in organisational routines helps strengthen a common understanding of what good performance looks like and reinforces accountability across levels.

However, across OECD member countries, only a minority of administrations formally integrate these discussions into management processes. Only 27% of OECD member countries organise meetings where managers compare team performance results, suggesting that performance management is often treated as an individual rather than a collective responsibility. Additionally, 27% hold sessions to moderate high and low scores, despite their potential to prevent grade inflation, ensure that high and low scores are justified, and create a culture of constructive dialogue about results. Finally, 21% provide dedicated spaces to discuss performance assessment challenges, which can help better reflect on the difficulties of evaluation relating to bias or unclear criteria. This limited engagement suggests that performance management often remains fragmented and individualised, reducing the potential for peer learning and calibration.

In Chile, practices vary widely between *servicios*. Some institutions promote structured managerial discussions, while others handle assessments more independently. This unevenness can lead to inconsistencies in how evaluations are conducted and interpreted. Establishing forums or communities of practice among managers could help build a common understanding of evaluation criteria and foster a shared culture of performance across the administration. Such mechanisms would also provide an avenue to discuss challenges, exchange practical solutions, and strengthen managerial ownership of the performance management process.

3.3. Identifying and fostering performance

An effective performance management system should not only assess performance but also act on its results. Linking evaluations to HRM-related consequences and growth opportunities gives meaning to the process. Recognising high performance encourages continued excellence, while addressing underperformance ensures fairness and supports improvement.

3.3.1. Rewarding high performance

Recognising and rewarding high performance is a central objective for most performance management systems. Identifying public servants consistently exceeding expectations helps organisations reinforce desired high-performance behaviours. In theory, such recognition has the potential to create a virtuous cycle, where high performance is encouraged through visible and fair rewards. In practice, identifying and rewarding actual top performers in the public service remains a challenge aspect of performance management.

Aside from the topic of grade inflation mentioned above, a related challenge is to determine how performance distinctions should translate into tangible rewards. Across OECD member countries, high performance can lead to various forms of recognition: one-time bonuses are used in 60% of countries, career advancement in 57%, and permanent salary increases in 49% (Figure 3.6). Non-financial rewards, such as access to professional development opportunities (49%), positive recognition (34%), or extra holiday (20%) are also relatively common. Each mechanism seeks to reinforce motivation and signal that good performance is valued. However, each also carries potential risks if not carefully designed and implemented.

Figure 3.6. Possible outcomes for employees receiving above average performance ratings, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries

Note: N=35. Original survey question: What are possible outcomes for employees receiving above-average performance assessments?
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Management.

Performance-related pay (PRP), for example, is often used to strengthen the link between performance and reward. While it can create extrinsic motivation, evidence suggests that in the public sector, its positive effects are hard to ensure, and may result in unintended negative consequences. PRP can foster short-term focus on measurable outputs at the expense of collaboration, innovation, or quality. It can also lead to perceptions of unfairness when performance metrics are ambiguous or when rewards depend on managerial discretion. In some cases, it may even discourage honest feedback or risk-taking, as employees prioritise maintaining high ratings over learning or improvement. Career advancement tied to performance can present similar risks. When promotions depend heavily on high performance ratings, supervisors may feel pressured to give positive evaluations to avoid blocking employees' career progression. Over time, this dynamic can reinforce grade inflation and erode the credibility of the system.

The Chilean performance management system illustrates both the potential and limitations of incentive-based recognition. As mentioned above, under Chile's *Reglamento de Calificaciones del Personal Afecto al Estatuto Administrativo*, public servants are evaluated annually and placed into performance "lists." Eligibility for promotion in *planta* positions requires placement in either Lista 1 or 2, while no formal regulatory requirements apply to *contrata* staff. Although Lista 1 is intended to reflect satisfactory or outstanding performance and is associated with access to career progression opportunities, in practice it has become the norm rather than the exception, encompassing around 98% of civil servants (see Grading system). This pattern suggests that the system struggles to differentiate between levels of performance, therefore weakening its capacity to recognise excellence.

The consequences are twofold. First, when almost all employees are classified as high performers, the system loses its ability to identify and reward truly exceptional contributions (see Grading system). Second, the expectation that satisfactory performance automatically equates to Lista 1 reinforces a culture of compliance rather than performance. Supervisors may be reluctant to assign lower ratings due to the

strong link between Lista 1 and promotion prospects, fearing negative reactions or appeals. As a result, the system ceases to provide meaningful information about performance differences across the workforce. This undermines both accountability and talent management objectives.

The challenge for Chile, as for many OECD countries, is to strike a balance between fairness, motivation, and differentiation. Ensuring that performance ratings reflect actual differences in achievement requires clear standards, consistent application, and managerial support. Calibration mechanisms, such as moderation committees or benchmarking across units, can help reduce inflation and promote more accurate assessments, but can also lead to unfair perceptions of the system. Equally, revisiting the link between ratings and promotion could help reduce pressure on supervisors while maintaining incentives for continuous improvement.

Ultimately, in Chile as across OECD member countries, rewarding high performers effectively requires more than financial incentives. It involves building a culture that values performance through recognition, development, and trust. Systems that clearly define what constitutes exceptional performance, apply these standards fairly, and use results constructively are more likely to sustain motivation and support organisational learning. In the absence of such clarity, rewards risk losing their motivational nature, and performance management presents the risk of becoming a formal tick-the-box exercise.

3.3.2. Identifying poor performance

Identifying and addressing underperformance is a core component of any credible performance management system. While rewarding high performers signals what organisations value, managing poor performance ensures accountability and maintains trust in the system. Identifying and addressing underperformance remains however a complex challenge faced by most public administrations. This difficulty reflects both institutional and cultural features of the public sector, including life-long tenure, automatic step increases, and limited managerial autonomy. For performance management to be effective, it must give managers the tools, authority, and confidence to identify and respond to underperformance early and constructively.

Across most OECD member countries, systems are designed to detect and address low performance through structured processes. However, even when such mechanisms exist, they are often underused. Only an extremely small proportion of public servants receive the lowest ratings in their annual assessments, which is to be expected in a well-performance public service. However, the extent of this rarity most likely overstates actual performance levels, suggesting that underperformance, while uncommon, is not as infrequent as current assessments show. Several factors contribute to this pattern. Managers may feel uncomfortable labelling staff as underperformers, especially in cultures that prioritise stability and procedural fairness. They may also lack training in how to have performance conversations or how to use available HR tools effectively. In some cases, formal processes are seen as overly burdensome or unlikely to yield results, discouraging managers from taking action. As a result, underperformance can persist, quietly affecting team morale and organisational effectiveness.

A well-functioning performance management system should support both identification and remediation. The first step is building a management culture oriented toward performance. This involves equipping managers with the skills to observe and assess performance objectively, provide timely feedback, and document performance issues consistently. It also requires cultivating trust between managers and employees, so that performance discussions are seen not as punitive but as opportunities for improvement. Open communication and continuous feedback can prevent minor performance issues from becoming entrenched.

Once underperformance has been identified, systems must provide clear, fair, and proportional response mechanisms. Across OECD member countries, common corrective measures include setting up a performance improvement plan (54% of countries, see Box 3.3), more frequent performance evaluations

(37%), or mandatory training (26%) (Figure 3.7). These measures recognise that low performance often stems from skill gaps, unclear expectations, or job misalignment rather than lack of motivation. Supporting underperforming employees through development opportunities can therefore address the root causes of poor performance while preserving institutional knowledge and morale. Additionally, even though it is legally possible to dismiss public servants for low performance in 63% of OECD member countries, such dismissals remain rare in practice. This is partly because such processes can be extremely burdensome for managers and HR departments, which prefer finding other ways of dealing with such underperformance.

Figure 3.7. Possible consequences for below-average performance, 2024

Percentage of OECD member countries
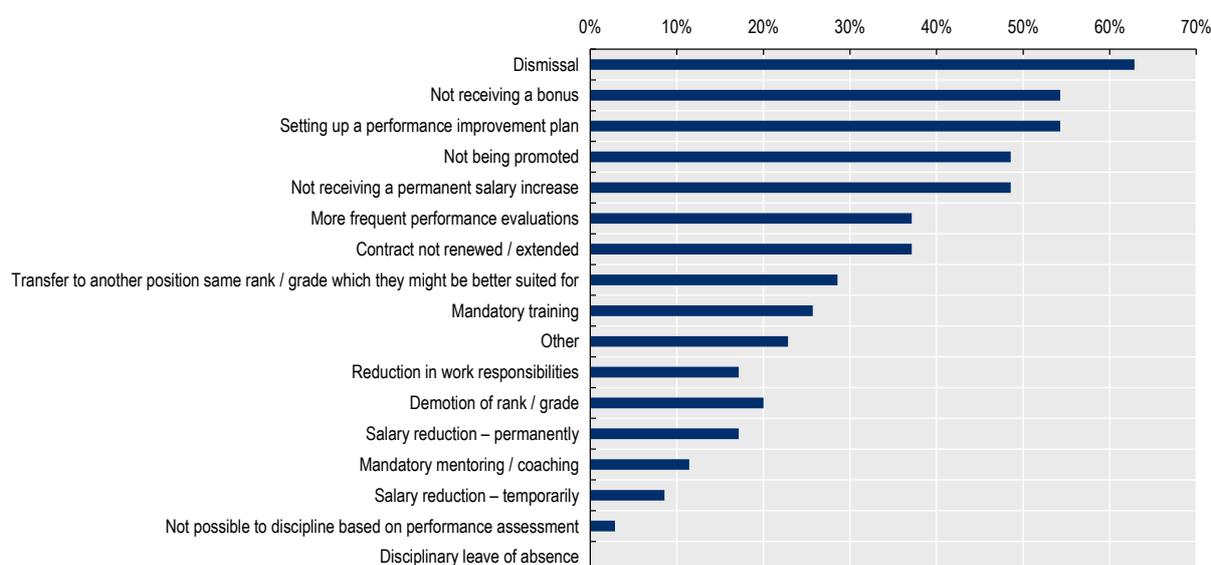
Note: N=35. Original survey question: "What can be the consequences for employees receiving below-average performance assessments?"
Source: OECD (2024), Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

Box 3.3. Managing underperformance in the Irish civil service

The Irish Civil Service has developed a structured approach to addressing underperformance in the public service. This approach is centred around early dialogue, clear expectations, and sustained support. The process aims to resolve issues constructively, while ensuring fairness for both staff and managers.

The process begins with a Performance Review Meeting, which takes place once informal efforts to address concerns have not led to improvement. This meeting is used to understand the reasons behind underperformance and determine whether a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is required. Managers are expected to assess the nature and duration of the performance issue, its impact on team outputs, and any potential contributing factors, including workload pressures or personal circumstances. They must also be able to provide concrete, factual examples such as missed deadlines or quality issues to ensure clarity and objectivity in the discussion.

The public servant receives notice in advance of the meeting and is provided with the relevant policy documents. During the meeting, the manager sets out the underperformance concerns and their impact,

while the civil servant is given the opportunity to respond and provide context. In cases where disagreement persists, managers are encouraged to clarify expectations and consult HR for guidance. If the issue warrants structured support, the manager puts in place a Performance Improvement Plan. The PIP outlines the areas requiring improvement, the progress expected within a defined timeframe, the support measures to be provided (e.g. coaching, training), and the schedule for follow-up review meetings.

PIPs typically run for up to eight months, with progress reviewed at least every two months. These Progress Review Meetings serve to acknowledge improvements, adjust supports as necessary, and determine whether further action is required. If performance does not improve, the process becomes progressively more formal, with verbal and written warnings issued in line with the severity and persistence of the issue. In cases where performance remains unsatisfactory by the end of the PIP, the civil servant moves into the formal disciplinary process, which can lead to sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Importantly, the system also recognises when performance improves. A PIP concludes successfully once the expected performance level is reached, and the individual continues in their role. If performance later declines, the process can be re-initiated, usually at a more advanced stage to avoid unnecessary repetition.

In Chile, the performance management system formally allows for measures to address underperformance, such as more frequent performance evaluations, or the establishment of a performance improvement plan. In theory, these tools can provide a structured approach to managing low performance. In practice, however, the system struggles to identify underperformers. As of March 2025, only 0.02% of civil servants were placed in Lista 4, while 98% are classified in Lista 1. This distribution suggests that the system lacks the sensitivity to distinguish genuinely weak performance from satisfactory work.

Several factors contribute to this limitation. First, the prevailing expectation that satisfactory performance automatically corresponds to Lista 1 leaves little room for nuance or differentiation. Second, the incentives in place related to high performance make it a pre-requisite for any career opportunity to be placed in Lista 1. Third, the high administrative burden and potential legal implications of low ratings discourage managers from using them. Assigning an employee to a lower list can trigger complex procedures and appeals, creating both a safeguard mechanism but also, in some cases, strong disincentives for honest evaluations. As a result, the system does not provide reliable information for identifying those who may require support or intervention.

To address these challenges, Chile could consider creating the conditions for more meaningful performance discussions and active management of underperformance. This would involve building managerial capacity through training on feedback, coaching, and conflict resolution. Introducing intermediate mechanisms, such as structured feedback sessions, early intervention frameworks, or supportive improvement plans, could help managers act before issues escalate. Over time, such measures could shift the system from a formal compliance exercise toward a culture of dialogue, learning, and accountability.

3.4. Recommendations to strengthen performance management in the Chilean public service

3.4.1. Defining the architecture of performance management systems

- Reset and simplify the ratings system. Introduce a five-point scale with clear performance descriptors and begin with a baseline distribution where the majority of staff are placed at the central rating, with only a limited number initially placed above or below. This may require significant change across the system, and may have to be dealt with as a longer-term initiative.

- Introduce managerial calibration mechanisms. Require managers to meet regularly to compare and moderate ratings, including within the highest categories (Lista 1). This could include further discussing the performance of public servants in Lista 1 to better differentiate actual performances levels.

- Ensure alignment across *servicios* through common principles and guidance. Develop central guidelines that set minimum standards for performance management while allowing flexibility for adaptation.

- Integrate personal learning and development plans into performance discussions. Make individual learning plans a systematic outcome of performance conversations. This positions performance management not solely as an evaluative process, but also as a platform for professional growth and mobility, linking performance to capability development.

- Support the effective use of performance-assessment tools. Have *Servicio Civil* provide practical guidance on selecting and combining tools, ensuring that their use enables assessing results and encouraging dialogues.

- Monitor the functioning of the performance management system itself. Establish a regular evaluation cycle for the system. In addition to monitoring rating distributions, run periodic employee surveys that include questions on perceived fairness, usefulness of feedback, and clarity of expectations. Use this evidence to adapt the system and develop managerial competencies over time and improve trust and engagement.

3.4.2. Involving managers to develop meaningful performance discussions

- Position managers at the centre of performance management. Empower them as the main drivers of a culture of dialogue and learning by providing the tools, incentives, and organisational support they need to manage performance proactively.

- Create the conditions for regular and constructive feedback. Encourage managers to hold informal performance discussions throughout the year, not just during formal assessments. This could be reinforced through internal guidance, communication campaigns, or integration into managerial objectives.

- Provide clear guidance and mandatory training for managers. Develop practical toolkits and training modules to help managers conduct evaluations, provide feedback, and address difficult conversations. This could be further developed by *Servicio Civil*.

- Promote peer exchange among managers and support networks. Establish forums or communities of practice for managers and HR teams to discuss performance management challenges, share experiences, and build a shared understanding of what good performance looks like across *servicios*.

3.4.3. Identifying and fostering performance

- Strengthen the identification of high performance. Use calibration and collective review processes to identify genuinely high-performing staff. Complement these mechanisms with transparent recognition or development opportunities to reinforce motivation and engagement.

- Support managers in addressing underperformance. Introduce intermediate mechanisms, such as early intervention frameworks, improvement plans, and access to coaching or learning opportunities, to help managers act before problems escalate.