Talents Retention

Retaining talents in the public administration is key for institutional memory and efficiency

Similarly to talent attraction, various retention mechanisms can be put in place to ensure staff remain motivated with clear career paths to decrease turnover rates.

- **Remuneration:** One of the more difficult of mechanisms to deploy, given its inherent cost and rigidity, involves adjusting salary scales to make them more competitive vis-à-vis the tech sector.
- **General working conditions:** Public sector employment may be able to offer more work stability and better working conditions than the private sector in many areas, while also carrying a stronger sense of purpose by working for the common good. It is important to offer longer-term contracts and flexibility in working modalities. Some adjustments to consider regarding working conditions -which would impact the entire civil service, not just tech talents- could be:
  - Flexible work: ways of working that suit workers' needs, such as remote work allowed, flexible start and finish times, etc.
  - Ensuring high-quality hardware and work materials are available
  - Encouraging peer-learning, and collaborative work (see below)
  - Offer a stimulating working environment: for instance, shared offices at RISA building, facilities for staff to purchase material or infrastructures, meetings with inspirational actors of the tech ecosystem, …

- **Career progression programs:** Once in the administration, the Government should have a clear career progression program for tech talents. This could include coaching for those talents who possess soft skills and who may want to aim for higher positions, opportunities for internal mobility (according to the staff's skills and interests), training opportunities (see below) and more comprehensive leadership programs. This involves high-level coordination to allow for internal mobility and to align the administration's strategic goals with the individual needs of tech talents.
- **Training and peer learning:** The tech sector in particular, with its ever-changing techniques, paradigms, and new technologies demands that staff remain trained and up-to-date with new trends. Therefore, public sector employment should include flexible training opportunities. This means, instead of providing a rigid menu of possible courses, to allow talents to choose their own courses, even if they are not offered by traditional public training centres. In addition, training and knowledge-sharing tends to be done informally through communities of practice (CoPs) and other interest groups. Setting up and encouraging CoPs within public sector teams is essential to foster a culture of collaboration and life-long learning.
- **Test new team organisations, project management and recruitment mechanisms**

    - **Encourage experimentations and initiatives from staff**: inspired by the 10% program developed by the French AI teams in Etalab, a test of a similar format where talents can spend some time in exploratory projects, led in collaboration with colleagues or partners.
    - **Explore inflexions in terms of project management and procurement mechanisms**: in order to mirror a possible objective to switch to product management methods, structure your teams according to products/services, as well as transforming calls for tenders towards service providers (instead of describing specifications with define functionalities, structure your tenders asking for agile methodologies).
- **Internal mobility programs**:

Digital Intervention Brigade: Brigade (similar to a squad) initiative assists ministries and public operators in developing and operating digital services following best practices. Comprising experts in areas like user research, design, accessibility, eco-responsibility, cloud, and digital transformation, it provides project co-financing, expert support, and team training. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that digital products are user-centric, accessible, sustainable, and innovative.

Programme 10%: 10% program initiative allows data science experts (or any other experts) to dedicate 10% of their time for inter-ministerial data science projects (or any other expertise). Its main features are:

- 20-30 people selected in different administration each year
- Collaborative work on projects answering common issues for all administrations. These projects are built as products (investigation, development, acceleration) and are all open source. Examples include:
    - creating a data visualisation tool
    - building data-anonymization
    - building AI models and datasets for specific uses in the administration

Enforcement to internalise the minimum part of projects: The initiative requires public agencies to **have an internalisation rate on projects of at least 20%** explained by the fact that externalised digital services cannot be done in detriment of the tech capacities of public administration. It urges public services to reinforce its capacities to avoid the potential risks of increasing externalisation of digital services.

As such, it considers that:

- If a digital project externalises its execution over 60% it is considered at risk. It should be closely monitored and an internal capable team should be hired to oversee it.
- If a digital project externalises its execution over 80% it cannot commence.

Revision #1
Created 9 July 2025 22:04:25 by RISA
Updated 9 July 2025 22:04:39 by RISA