



2026

INNOVATIONS IN NEW OPERATING MODELS IN GOVERNMENT

MANAGING THE FUTURE CIVIL SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Over the two decades, civil service reform has been underpinned by new models of public management. This has often focused on applying private sector techniques such as contracting out, devolution, and performance management to make the public sector more flexible, decentralized, and responsive to users’ needs. Yet, this approach has also led to organizational fragmentation, accountability, and control gaps, poor institutional memory, and inadequate democratic engagement among users. It has impeded joined-up government at a time when policy challenges like globalization, international migration, and greater public expectations of government require cohesive solutions.

This report surveys nine case studies from developed countries to identify a variety of international approaches to civil service reform. Some common challenges include: enhancing accountability; improving policymaking; developing institutional memory; building staff expertise; and promoting joined-up government. Meeting these challenges usually requires implementing new technologies, clarifying the roles of ministers and officials, opening up policy making, capturing innovation, and narrowing the gap between the center and frontline delivery services. Digital transformation is usually a crucial building block of success regardless of innovative mechanisms.

To become more innovative, civil services must act on many fronts. Recruitment and promotion, for example, can be reformed to reward intelligent risk-taking. Sandboxes and hackathons can provide safe spaces for experimentation. New communications platforms can gather ideas from specialists and frontline staff. Government-wide assurance processes can be streamlined and made more flexible.

Mindset is at the heart of these new models, influencing the values and principles that affect how governments make use of their infrastructure and capabilities. Hybrid and remote work and its ramifications are transforming the delivery of citizen services and engagement as well as improving resilience in government. They are also helping the public sector attract, support, and retain more motivated and quality workers. For the next generation of government employees, flexibility is supreme. The public sector must adopt these latest mindset trends if it does not want to permanently lose out on talent quality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 New Zealand’s Flexible-Work-By-Default	06 Australia’s Activity-Based Workplaces
08 Estonia’s Data Exchange	12 South Korea’s Competency Assessment for Senior Positions
14 The Netherland’s AMdex	16 Kazakhstan’s Civil Service e-Learning Hub
18 United Kingdom’s New Age of Public Policy Making	22 United Arab Emirates’s HR AI Agent
26 United Arab Emirates’s HR Insight Platform	



New Zealand's Flexible-Work-By-Default

Flexible-by-default means shifting from asking “Why should a role be flexible?” to “Why not?”

It means treating all roles as location agnostic unless there is a genuine service reason to prevent doing so. Flexible-by-default is varied and means far more than working remotely. It also includes flexible hours, flexible leave arrangements, job sharing, atypical schedules such as compressed week or fortnight hours, and having a phased return to work (after maternity leave, etc.) or phased retirement.

A flexible-by-default approach seeks to normalize flexible working so that it does not undermine career progression or pay and is equally available to all regardless of gender, family status, disability, and other dimensions of diversity. Adopting this operating model is beneficial for some reasons, such as building more diverse and inclusive workplaces, attracting and retaining better talent, and strengthening the ability of an organization to maintain business continuity. As the number of nuclear family households decline and alternatives become more common, an increase in flexibility is more necessary than ever – regardless of a catastrophic pandemic being the catalyst for change. Multi-generation families who care for older parents, single-parent families, and other familial situations more easily thrive when allowed greater flexibility in scheduling.

Flexible-by-default arrangements are both formal or informal, ad hoc or regular, temporary or permanent. Informal flexible

working usually occurs when managers agree that employees have flexibility over when and where they carry out their duties, as long as they accomplish their responsibilities and deliverables. It can also involve agreements to more regular arrangements, such as regular changes to start and finish times, as long as arrangements do not require changes to pay or employment contracts. Alternatively, formal flexible working occurs when a recurring work arrangement impacts on pay or involves changes to employment terms such as working hours, patterns, and location. It may take place for an agreed period or on an ongoing basis with regular review. Examples include reducing hours, job sharing, or working remotely on a regular basis. It is important to note that both formal and informal arrangements require cooperation, communication, and flexibility by all parties. The New Zealand government has developed a three-stage approach to shifting its workforce to the flexible-by-default model:

- A Agencies explore their current state.** Learning about the current state of flexible working helps each agency understand valuable information such as experiences of flexible work, positive and negative and the current culture around flexible working, barriers to flexible working, the impact of flexible working on teams and the agency, and good practice and positive experiences to showcase.

- B Design.** An agency vision statement for flexible-by-default helps build a shared sense of purpose across the agency. This vision can be based on the principles of flexible-by-default which set out the balance that needs to be achieved between what works for employees, what works for teams, and what works for the agency. Additionally, clear strategic goals help agencies focus their actions and stay on track. An implementation plan guides agencies through the steps needed to achieve their vision and goals.

- C The methodology concludes** with a monitoring and review phase, during which agencies continue to assess progress toward the transition to flexible and virtual working. This can be carried out through focus groups or surveys of managers and employees to determine whether the experiences have been positive and to address any existing concerns.

Agencies can also analyze internal data related to formal leave requests, the adoption of informal arrangements, and human resources statistics such as employee turnover rates, levels of engagement, career progression, and performance evaluations. This enables organizational leaders to understand whether virtual flexible working has any unintended effects on pay or career pathways as the program evolves.

Overall, all government agencies allow employees to apply for flexible work schedules. An early leader appears to be the Ministry of Education, which had a **94.5%** approval rate for all flexible working applications received in 2021. Similarly, the Inland Revenue Department had **79%** of its employees working from home in some recurring way in 2021. Of these, **97%** had informal arrangements.

The New Zealand government maintains a website with expanding resources to help public servants understand the benefits of flexible-by-default. These include answers to common questions and concerns, to help people feel more comfortable with the transition, as well as distribute best practices for other agencies to follow suit.

The resources can be found here:
https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/pay-gaps-and-pay-equity/flexible-work-by-default?e6318=action_viewall





Australia's Activity-Based Workplaces

Activity-based working is a design concept that recognizes that **through the course of any day, employees engage in many different activities and that they need and can choose different types of work settings to accommodate these activities.** This type of work environment is known as the activity-based workplace (ABW). ABW is a movement across the workforce – both public and private – to replace structured environments, such as offices and boardrooms, with more **fluid spaces** that can be used in a variety of different ways depending on the project at hand and who is involved.

ABW features a variety of work points that are designed with productivity in mind and supports a range of activities we do each day, from working independently to working collaboratively, whether in an office building or a laboratory or on the front lines of service. There is a focus on ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities—reflecting a strong recognition that more needs to be done to remove barriers. In these workplaces, individual employees are not assigned to a particular workstation. The workspace is designed in such a way that it allows them to perform different activities over the course of the workday, such as learning, focusing, collaborating, and socializing. Indeed, a classic hallmark of activity-based workspaces is the group spaces that are intended to offer office workers a comfortable place to work together. These spaces can range from closed rooms with moveable furniture and whiteboard-topped tables to open spaces with moveable whiteboards and circular seating arrangements. Open lounges, on

the other hand, are designed to combine comfortable seating arrangements with productive touches such as laptop tables and easily accessible power outlets.

A key element of an ABW is a strong virtual environment that supports mobile, collaborative, and remote working. It is designed based on an assessment of employees’ activities and the organization’s programs and culture. Each group’s requirements and work styles can vary, and the ABW concept is flexible enough to be adapted to the needs of each organization.

This new way of working is not only about the workplace design. It is a cultural change that requires the integration of **3 major elements:**

The People	culture, business processes, behavior, attitude, organizational changes, training, human resource policies.
The Technology	updated information management systems, self-service tools, Wi-Fi, mobile devices, videoconferencing, document sharing.
The Space	building, interior design, furniture.

The benefits to be gained from ABW are so compelling that the government of Australia is already pushing the envelope of the current work model. The ABW allows for **huge cost savings.** Real estate represents one of the highest costs faced by organizations, second only to the cost of labor. Most property teams are facing pressure to reduce the cost of workspace, but Australian government departments face an even greater challenge. They are mandated by law to reduce costs every year, in the form of the yearly efficiency dividend. Since ABW allows organizations to accommodate **more people in fewer square meters**, it's an attractive option for helping to meet occupational density and vacancy targets, as well as reducing overall real estate spend without any reduction in headcount. According to recent reports published in 2023 by the global real estate services company JLL, government agencies in Australia can reduce their office footprint by between 30% and 50% by adopting flexible working models and activity-based work environments. The growing adoption of hybrid working models has led to a noticeable decline in office utilization rates, prompting many government entities to redesign workplace spaces and improve the efficiency of their real estate assets.

Furthermore, in exchange for the desk they lose, **employees stand to gain spaces that are better suited for the work they are doing,** more collaborative spaces where they can connect with co-workers, and fun features like employee lounge and kitchens are areas for relaxation. It's a proven fact: happy workers produce better results. As such, agile spaces can more easily accommodate fluctuations in the number of workers and reorganizations due to new plans.

Australian government agencies can **reduce** their property footprint by **as much as 40%** by adopting ABW environments.





Estonia's X-tee Data Exchange

X-tee (also known as X-Road in English, since the Estonian word for Road is “tee”) is a **data exchange layer for information systems**; a technological and organizational environment enabling a secure Internet-based data exchange between information systems. In practice, it allows secure and standardized data exchange amongst different government departments, citizens, and other private sector stakeholders.

To exchange data, an organization creates services and enables other organizations to use their services. Since there are a lot of systems and services on X-tee, organizations can use the services and data of other institutions to optimize their business services.

X-tee has a versatile security solution: authentication, multi-level authorization, a high-level system for processing logs, and data traffic that is encrypted and signed.

Tied into X-tee is Estonia's Population Registry, the state's database for holding basic information about each person living in the country. It contains their name, ID code, date of birth, place of residence, and other statistical data such as nationality, native language, education, and profession. Each resident – using an electronic ID card – can review and edit their data in the registry.

The registry is linked via X-tee to a variety of other state systems that depend on its data for their services. For example, when individuals apply for child support,

study allowance or concession status for public transport, data is retrieved from the Population Registry. The same is true when a person uses I-Voting as Estonia was the first country in the world to introduce online voting, in 2007. The system retrieves the information automatically. No extra documents have to be submitted, or online forms filled out.

The absolute majority of X-tee users are passive users. Occasionally they make requests against databases and registers, but they do not possess their databases. Or if they do, then it is a local database that is not shared with other X-tee members.

The most important X-tee users are data service providers. They make their data accessible to other members or collect new data from others. All state registers are data service providers. “Providing data” has two sides: a technical one and a legal one. To keep an official database, even if one does not share its data, an organization must register the database with RIHA. RIHA is a local abbreviation for the State Information System's administration system.

It is possible to simultaneously share and request data from others via the X-tee. For example, an organization might be requesting data from databases A and B, while at the same time collecting data from a citizen and

The X-tee system has achieved remarkable success in Estonia. Recent data from 2024 indicates that the platform processes more than 3 billion data exchanges annually between government and private sector databases. The system also enables more than 3,200 digital services delivered through hundreds of participating agencies and institutions, while over 52,000 organizations benefit from these services indirectly.

In Numbers

11 billion

Total X-tee requests since the platform's launch

3 billion

Requests processed annually through X-tee

3,200

Services available through X-tee

52,000

Organizations using X-Road services

690

Entities directly using X-tee



recording it in its own database, C. Once recorded, that information in Database C can be shared with other X-tee members, including the institutions responsible for databases A and B. Finally, it becomes possible, based on the personal code of that citizen, to make a complex simultaneous request against databases A, B, and C and to get a joint answer containing data from all three.

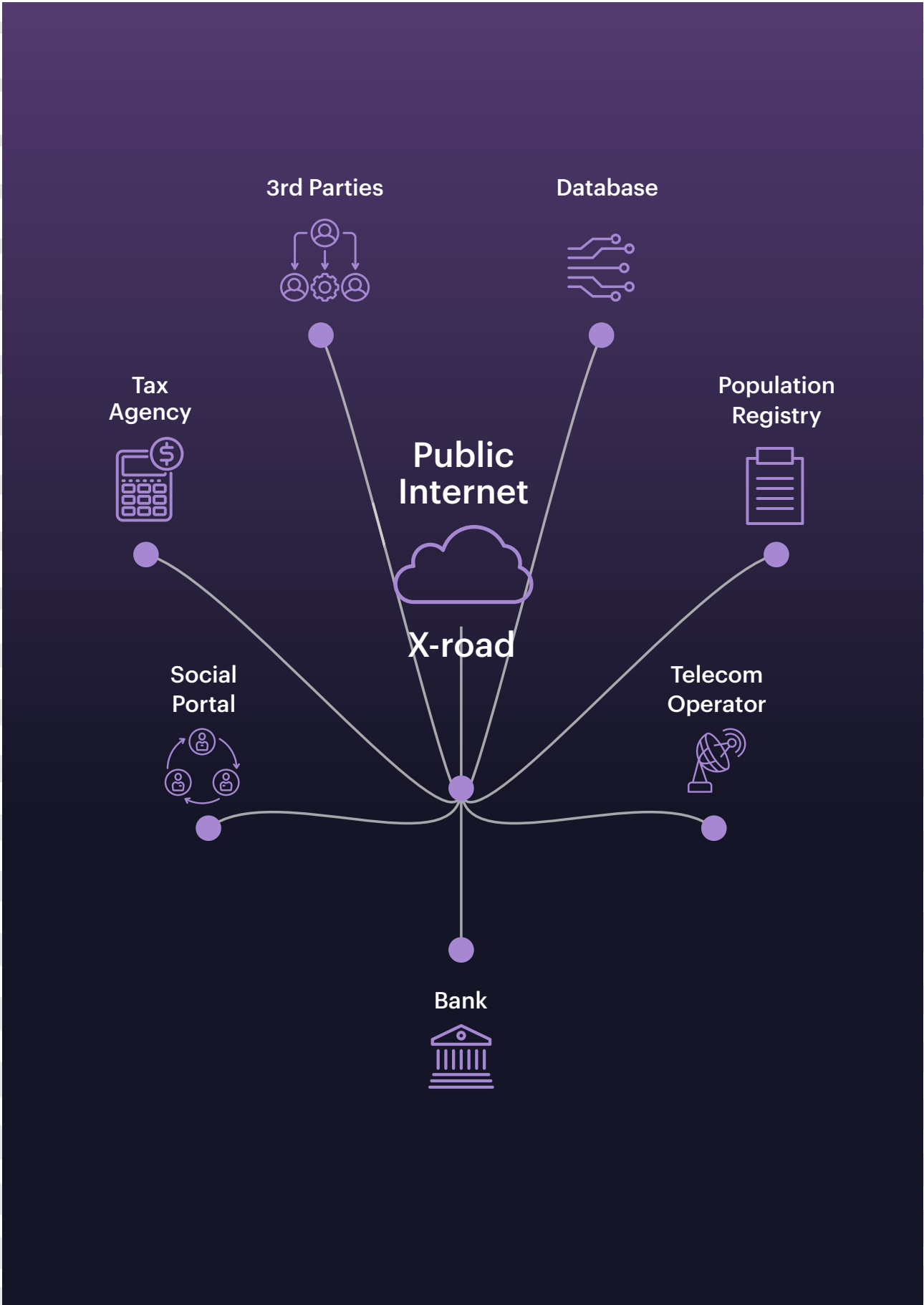
It is possible for users to simultaneously read and update X-tee data. The X-tee can also support complex queries, such as the request a policeman makes while issuing a speeding ticket. A finished question-answer cycle is referred to as an interaction.

The State Information System Authority, the successor of the Estonian Informatics foundation, acts as a central information hub for the program. They accept new members, issue access credentials for services, update the Code of Conduct, and monitor usage patterns using special software. As a result of the X-tee's distributed architecture, this hub's involvement is not necessary for answering data requests. Instead, it distributes the list of X-tee data service providers.

In contrast to consumers, who make requests via the X-tee, data providers use the X-tee to answer requests and share data. Data providers must meet two extra requirements to use the X-tee.

- 1 First, data providers must register to grant access. Through the registration process it is also possible to limit who has access to the database.**
- 2 Second, data providers must have an adapter Server, commonly known as "integration components".**

Another feature of the X-tee is known as MISP (mini-information-service-portal), a standard web portal to enable trivial requests that conform to prescribed parameters. The MISP makes it possible for users to access the X-tee via a normal internet browser. MISP is intended for small and low budgeted institutions that are legally required to publish data of some kind. MISP makes X-tee participation more convenient for these organizations, which might otherwise be thwarted by the complexity of X-tee participation.



Graph: Secure Digital Data Exchange: The X-road Network



South Korea's Competency Assessment for Senior Positions

Many advanced countries have introduced **competency assessments** to define the necessary abilities for effective job performance—linking key human resource management and leadership development activities to ensure organizations have competent employees.

South Korea's government runs a mandatory competency assessment process for all senior civil servants. Before they can be appointed to one of the top positions, candidates must pass a daylong series of interactive assessments overseen by a group of well-trained assessors.

These include exercises that simulate policy and management problems.



South Korea has used this competency assessment system not only to **improve the leadership competencies** of its senior civil servants, but as a tool to **transform the culture of the civil service**.

The program is run and monitored by the **Ministry of Personnel Management's (MPM)**. According to their data, external applicants were performing less successfully than internal applicants. A number of reasons may account for this:

- 1 **First, internal applicants have more experience with the kinds of policy challenges tested in the exam.**
- 2 **Secondly, the internal applicants have more access to preparatory training offered by NHI.**
- 3 **Third, the legislation limited the number of times external candidates could apply.**

Based on this assessment, the MPM has recently taken new steps to even the playing field by making training available to external candidates and changing the law about the number of applications.

The South Korean government additionally offers a training program for external (non-civil servant) candidates for senior civil service positions. It was initially only **3 hours long** but as the demand increased over time, MPM revised the program into an **8 hour-long course**. 103 SCS candidates and 186 division director candidates benefited from this training course. MPM also provides an online tutorial course through their website.

By using new digital infrastructure, MPM provides an environment in which trainees can learn without being constrained by space and time, and operates a constant learning system, in which lower-ranking officials can develop self-directed learning plans each year and receive **80 or more hours of training** to improve their competencies.

Regulations have also been recently updated based on feedback from candidates. For example, external candidates for open

positions could be exempted from the assessment when they're applying for highly specialized positions in the fields of culture, art, and medical service. More recently, they also widened the scope of the exemption to those who are recognized to have managerial careers in SCS-level positions such as board members in private companies, schools, and research institutes.

To judge the assessments, great care is put into the development of a pool of assessors who come from a range of backgrounds, including retired SCS, HR professionals from the private sector, certified organizational psychologists, professional experts, and professors in the field of public administration, personnel management, or business management. There is a pool of around **260 assessors**.

The Korean government believes that attracting competent and talented individuals improves the quality of public service delivery. Also, the government has expanded its recruitment policies to improve diversity in the public sector and aims to be an exemplary employer by promoting social integration based on gender, disability, income etc.

AMdEX is an **innovation field lab** initiated by AMS-IX, SURF, UvA, DEXES & Amsterdam Economic Board and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The Netherlands AMdex

It contributes to the development of a fair and sustainable digital society and thus to a smart Amsterdam Metropolis. **AMdEX ensures that data can be shared in a controlled, reliable, and secure manner** under the owner's conditions without the intervention of a third party. Data owners determine and control who is allowed to use which data, with which algorithms, and for what purpose.

In this field lab, parties collaborate to develop, and test trusted, fair, and scalable technologies to support the emergence of data markets in which its members can freely decide with whom to interact and under which conditions. This is achieved by researching, testing, and deploying a neutral exchange infrastructure that provides and executes reliable data-sharing archetypes. One that technology providers can integrate into their products to service data markets and data trusts and is inclusive of language and operating system agnostic, so users remain free to choose their IT infrastructure, development platform, or programming model. The model is not owned by a few parties but operates as a public facility by all and for all.

To understand how the initiative works, it is important to note that AMdEX is based on a federated structure, which means that it ensures controlled access to each other's data. It does not store data centrally and thus

prevents undesirable data accumulation with a third party as a condition for sharing data.

Compared to bilateral or sector-specific data-sharing agreements, AMdEX is cheaper and faster because data owners do not have to develop their technology and can make use of existing infrastructure. This allows them to focus on innovation and not on infrastructure management.

Indeed, AMdEX makes innovation possible through cross-sectoral data sharing, which means that **data from different backgrounds is accessible and can be combined, which is essential for innovation.**

Envisioned benefits of AMdEX includes:



Cost savings

technology providers and data markets can implement data sharing archetypes offered by AMdEX as a service. There is no need to invest in physical hardware and software



High speed

AMdEX replaces one-off solutions that take a long time to implement and allows parties to swiftly spin up secure and fair data sharing solutions

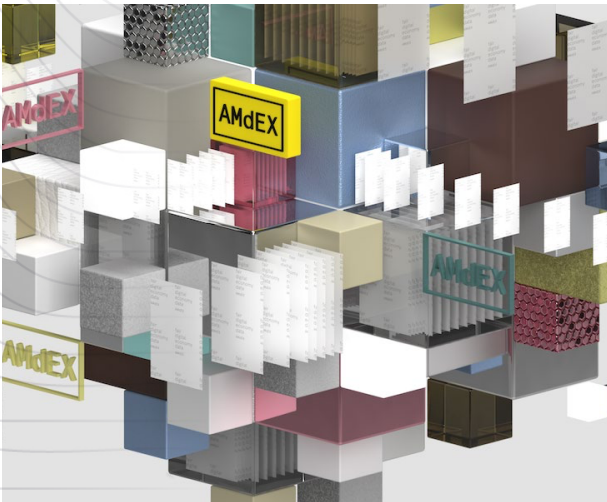


Competitive edge

with AMdEX, organizations can rapidly deploy and iterate faster with a focus on innovation, not on managing infrastructure

Under the banner of AMdEX, companies and knowledge institutions collaborate on creating a generic technical facility and organization that make dataspaces possible. The Amsterdam Economic Board is one of the initiators of this collaboration. The AMdEX initiative will run until it will be privatized for further development and upscaling.

At present, **four use cases** are currently being



tested in the AMdEX field lab, including:

Aircraft maintenance data market.

Predictive Maintenance is a highly competitive field in many industries. Machine learning allows the industry to transition from fixed to variable maintenance intervals of parts through prediction. Training data is required for this, preferably on all global flight conditions, from arctic to desert conditions. There is no company that collects all this kind of data with its flights. AMdEX provides the possibility to set up data markets for maintenance data in which companies can share this data with each other.

Childhood cancer research.

On behalf of the SIOPE DIPG network, the Dutch Childhood Oncology Group manages a register of data collections, contributed by network members. However, this registry does not provide conditions under which data collections can be used. Our prototype tries to respect the current practice of using the registry and show how collaboration agreements between network members can automatically be enforced through AMdEX.

Marineterrein (a historic marine district in Amsterdam).

Numerous sensors have been installed around the area, with a variety of owners including the City of Amsterdam, and research institutes. Local businesses, artists, authorities, journalists, and residents are each able to access the data with varying degrees of permission.

Research Data Exchange.

SURF and UvA are developing a Research Data Exchange for researchers and industry to collaborate. The goal is to share data from pedagogical and educational research in order to better assess government policy. It will also apply to the resulting data publications in which the entire lifecycle of data processing by various industries can be traced.



Kazakhstan's Civil Service e-Learning Hub

Constructing an effective civil service system, with a professional corps of civil servants able to meet today's demands and challenges, is a key factor in any country's striving for sustainable development.

Meeting the needs of **people today, without compromising those of future generations**, requires governance to rise to **new levels of effectiveness** and **develop new capacities** for integrated policymaking around a clear vision for sustainable development.

Central Asia's experience over recent decades has shown that securing positive outcomes through reform of the civil service relies on more than legislation 'on paper' and national public debate. Success also requires strong capacity development to implement reform, extensive knowledge management, and experience exchange with countries in similar situations through civil and public service excellence hubs.

Several excellence hubs have been established across continents and countries, to build innovative and flexible systems for strengthening regional networking and cooperation.

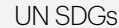
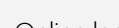
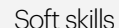
In Kazakhstan, a regional program called the **Astana Civil Service Hub** was created as a multilateral platform to reform the civil services was recently implemented by the Agency of Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan jointly with UNDP, based on the following premises:

-  **Regional cooperation** networks help increase the effectiveness of the civil service systems of its participating countries
-  As a **structure for cooperation and regional information exchange**, the Regional Hub can become a joint virtual work platform for all participants.

Today, the **e-learning platform offers numerous online resources** to augment civil services in many ways, including:

-  Capacity building and peer learning
-  Research and knowledge management
-  Best practices and innovations
-  Expert rosters
-  Events
-  Chairperson's blog

Training courses fall under the capacity building banner, and are open to anyone with Internet access (VPN services are specifically recommended) free of charge. The courses are available in English, Russian, and Spanish. The knowledge base includes content on:

-  UN SDGs
-  Webinars with topics that include HR best practices
-  Online lectures on topics such as modern challenges in public administration online courses in government organization and strategic intelligence
-  HR materials on corruption prevention, decentralized governance, and more
-  Soft skills toolkits designed to help busy people deliver better results, with topics including
-  SWOT analysis, business model canvas, theory of change, creative workshops, innovation flowcharts, and much more

The platform was originally designed for Central Asia and its neighbors, but today has participating users from over **40 countries**, ranging from Armenia and Afghanistan to Thailand. In addition, the platform cooperates with **70 worldwide public administration organizations**. As of 2022, several hundred events aimed at professional development have been hosted, welcoming representatives from over **100 countries**. They also published more than **40 case studies** for participants to help governments find the most suitable ways of improving the quality of public administration.

The Government of South Korea joined ACSH for a collaborative project to enhance the digitalization of delivering public services in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The project is designed for three years and will be implemented in partnership with multiple government ministries of both countries. In the framework of the project, it is envisioned to conduct analytical studies, and workshops to upgrade the skills of civil servants with the involvement of leading Korean experts, as well as to organize study visits to government agencies of the Republic of Korea. As a result, civil servants are expected to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to identify and implement the best-fit innovative approaches in governance and various methods of delivering public service.

The Astana Civil Service Hub received an international award for its major contribution to the practice and science of public administration by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). ASPA is the oldest and most respected professional association in the field of public administration, serving as a bridge between academics and public administration practitioners since 1939.

In Numbers





The United Kingdom's New Age of Public Policy Making

To thrive in an increasingly competitive world, countries must apply science and technology strategically and embed it in their policy- and decision-making. In the UK, **the Government Office of Science (GOS)** advises the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, to ensure that government policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking.

The Office is responsible for:



Giving scientific advice to the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, through a program of projects that reflect the priorities of the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser



Ensuring and improving the quality and use of scientific evidence and advice in government (through advice and projects and by creating and supporting connections between officials and the scientific community)



Providing the best scientific advice in the case of emergencies, through the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)



Helping the independent Council for Science and Technology (CST) provide high-level advice to the Prime Minister



Supporting strategic long-term thinking in government through Futures and Foresight. The Government Office for Science (GOS) supports embedding Futures tools and techniques across the Civil Service to support policymaking.



Developing the Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession

SAGE provides scientific and technical advice to support government decision-makers during emergencies. SAGE is responsible for ensuring that timely and coordinated scientific advice is made available to decision-makers to support UK cross-government decisions in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room. However, the advice provided by SAGE does not represent official government policy as the government also considers a range of other evidence including economic, social, and broader environmental factors when making its decisions.

Participants in a meeting of the SAGE depend on the nature of the emergency and the issues under consideration but it typically includes leading experts from within government and leading specialists from the fields of academia and industry.

The current group is chaired by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and co-chaired by the Chief Medical Officer and includes experts from within the government and leading specialists from the fields of healthcare and academic.

In addition to core participants, SAGE is also attended by official representatives from relevant parts of government. There are roughly 20 such officials involved in each meeting, and they do not frequently contribute to discussions but can play an important role in highlighting considerations such as key questions or concerns for policymakers that science needs to help answer or understand Civil Service structures. They may also ask for clarification on a scientific point.

SAGE relies on external science advice and on advice from expert groups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this included:

New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group

Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modeling

Independent Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviors

COVID-19 Genomics

Health Data Research

CST provides advice directly to the Prime

Minister and its terms of reference provide for regular engagement with members of the Cabinet and ministers from the Cabinet Office, Treasury, and the science minister. It holds regular meetings with the Cabinet Secretary, Permanent Secretaries, departmental Chief Scientific Advisers, and other leaders in the science, technology, and innovation world.

Previous advice to the Prime Minister has focused on the following broad areas:

How the UK can gain the greatest value from emerging technologies, such as autonomous vehicles and robotics

The direction of science strategy and funding, including advice about the government's Industrial Strategy and its support for research and innovation, promoting the diffusion of technology, and coordination of science and technology for achieving net-zero carbon emissions

How to improve STEM and related education skills, including advice on entrepreneurship teachings in universities and the role of practical examination in science subjects

CST is classified as an expert committee, sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It is supported by a secretariat that is based in the Government Office for Science.

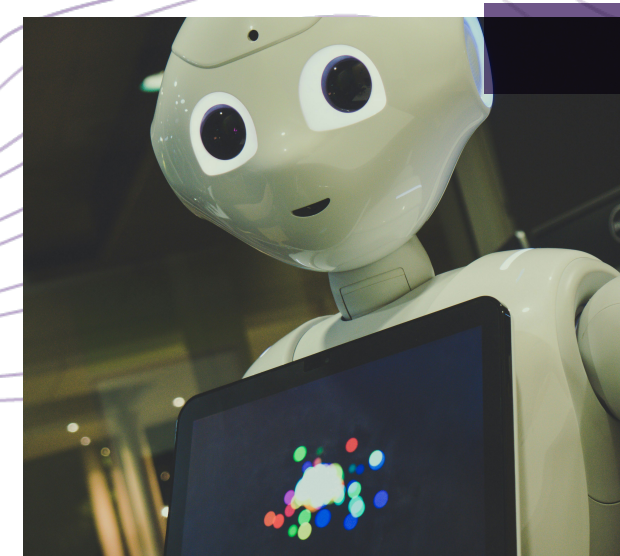
In addition to SAGE and the CST, the Government Office for Science supports extensive foresight capabilities across the Civil Service to support policymaking. This helps to get the best possible policy and strategy outcomes. **'Futures', or Futures studies, refers to different approaches to thinking about the future and exploring factors that could give rise to possible and probable future characteristics, events, and behaviors.** **'Foresight' refers to a process of conducting Future work and 'Horizon Scanning' is one specific technique.**

To support strategic long-term thinking in government, the Government Office of Science collaborates with the Cabinet Office through the Horizon Scanning Program Team (HSPT). The HSPT coordinates Futures work across government to integrate Futures into policymaking. It also supports a Cabinet Secretary chaired Heads of Department – Horizon Scanning meeting, where Permanent Secretaries consider the long-term impact of key Futures topics.

The GOS Futures team is there to demonstrate, enable, and support Futures work. They have developed a range of tools and resources to help Government Officials implement their own Futures work in an effective way. This is delivered through the GOS Future team's capability development program, networks, resources, advice service, and projects.

Above all, the Office shares a vision for the future that can only be achieved in collaboration with the rest of government: to direct science and technology to boost the UK's prosperity, well-being, and security in an increasingly connected, complicated, and competitive world.

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The United Arab Emirates's HR AI Agent

Within flexible frameworks, modern legislations, and policies, the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) employs a range of smart tools to achieve its vision and strategic priorities, which focus on developing national talent, preparing them for the future, and leveraging artificial intelligence technologies to enhance the efficiency of the government HR system in the UAE.

As part of its efforts to advance smart solutions, achieve digital transformation, and support the elimination of digital bureaucracy, FAHR has launched the HR AI Agent. It is an intelligent system that provides HR services to government employees without direct human intervention. The system offers over 136 services and processes more than 80% of employee inquiries automatically and instantly, contributing to an improved employee experience and enhancing operational efficiency across federal entities.

Strategic Objectives of the System

Through the HR AI Agent, FAHR aims to:

- Create a smart and flexible work environment that enhances efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness across the Federal Government.

- Create a smart and flexible work environment that enhances efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness across the Federal Government.
- Automate all stages of the employee journey, from recruitment, onboarding, performance management, and professional development, to retirement, delivering a fully integrated, intelligent, and user-friendly digital experience.
- Ensure rapid and effective response to inquiries and requests, while reducing manual processes in support of the "Zero Bureaucracy" direction.

Strategic Alignment

- The system aligns with the Government Zero Bureaucracy Program.
- It contributes to the UAE Artificial Intelligence Strategy.
- It strengthens FAHR's agenda in leading the provision of exemplary HR services.

System Advantages and Features

- The System operates 24/7 from anywhere via the website or the smart application.
- It utilizes artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to understand and process employee inquiries, such as leave requests, salary and benefits inquiries, and guidance on policies and procedures.
- It provides tailored solutions for each employee using precise databases and advanced analytics, with the ability to continuously learn and improve the accuracy of responses and services.

Service Development Phases

- Current Phase:** 71 services – fully developed and activated.
- Second Phase:** 3 services – ready for testing as part of the quality assurance phase.
- Third Phase:** 39 services – planned for implementation in upcoming phases.

Data and Statistics



136+

services are available, including self-service HR functions



80%+

of employee inquiries handled related to HR legislation automatically and instantly, with a response time of no more than 7 seconds.



28

federal entities are activated in the current phase



48

services are available in the current phase

The AI Agent saves significant annual work hours spent on technical and legal support services, as well as enhances institutional efficiency and productivity while accelerating the execution of internal HR procedures.

Usage and Deployment

The HR AI Agent targets over 45 federal entities, and FAHR has currently activated it in 16 government entities. The Agent provides service both verbally and in writing, in Arabic and English, 24/7. To date, the number of visitors has reached approximately 28,000.

Most Requested Services via the HR AI Agent

In the current phase, users of the HR AI Agent primarily request services such as applying for annual leave, submitting remote work requests, viewing salary certificates, and requesting or accessing attendance and departure records. Additionally, employees seek guidance on working hours, salaries and allowances, laws and regulations, end-of-service benefits, retirement, and other HR-related services and inquiries within federal government entities.

Comprehensive Automation of the Employee Journey from Recruitment to Retirement

FAHR aims to provide an exceptional journey and experience for federal government employees, enhanced by artificial intelligence technologies, through the HR AI Agent. The system automates all steps and phases of recruitment and the employee lifecycle, starting from employee selection, onboarding, performance management, and professional development, to retirement, ensuring a fully integrated, intelligent, and user-friendly digital experience that enhances employee satisfaction and supports data-driven decision-making.

Impact and Effectiveness

- Accessible to over 55,000 federal government employees.
- Over 80% of employee inquiries were handled automatically.

Demand for services via the call center and other channels was reduced.

Services are delivered within record response times.

Achievements of the HR AI Agent

In a significant milestone, FAHR won the UAE Artificial Intelligence Award in the category of “AI Solutions Developed in the UAE” for the HR AI Agent project, during the 2025 UAE Government Annual Meetings held in Abu Dhabi.

The HR AI Agent represents a qualitative leap in automating government HR services, enabling over 55,000 employees across more than 45 federal entities to complete more than 80% of their inquiries and administrative transactions through over 136 services. This reflects its direct impact on enhancing operational efficiency and improving the government employee experience.

This achievement reflects FAHR’s commitment to designing forward-looking frameworks and innovative AI-based solutions, and to leveraging them in serving people, in alignment with the UAE’s vision and strategic directions for digital transformation and the development of government human resources.

The Future of the HR AI Agent

Building on its current success, the next phase of the HR AI Agent marks a strategic shift toward a fully intelligent, predictive, and seamlessly integrated digital HR ecosystem across the Federal Government.

This phase will focus on expanding service coverage including new services supporting power users and administrators, redesigning end-to-end employee journeys focusing on end user experience by introducing advanced features like interactive widgets and intuitive user interfaces, and embedding advanced AI capabilities to deliver hyper-personalized, proactive services.

Looking ahead, the vision for the HR AI Agent goes even further. The roadmap includes onboarding all CRM services into the Agent, fundamentally transforming how Self-service transactions are submitted — making the process simpler, faster, and far less manual. Most ambitiously, the plan is to bring the entire Hire to Retire journey into the AI Agent, creating a single, intelligent thread that follows an employee from their first day to their last. Through the development of intelligent data pipelines, enhanced system integrations, and continuous learning models, the HR AI Agent will evolve from a responsive tool into a strategic digital partner—anticipating employee needs, optimizing decision-making, and driving operational excellence.

This transformation will further accelerate the Zero Bureaucracy agenda, reduce processing times, and elevate the overall employee experience, positioning FAHR as a leader in AI-driven government services and future-ready human capital management.



HR AI Agent



The United Arab Emirates's HR Insight Platform

The Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) has recently launched the updated version of the smart reporting system for HR indicators in the Federal Government, known as the "Insight Platform." The Platform now serves as a key reference for officials and decision-makers across ministries and federal entities. The Platform provides the entities with analytical indicators and real-time HR data that strengthen their ability to make strategic, well-informed, and reliable decisions.

Platform Objectives

The Insight Platform aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal Human Resources Information Management System "Bayanati," and to provide a reliable platform for displaying indicators, contributing to the UAE Government's vision of eliminating digital bureaucracy. The platform also supports decision-makers with precise analytical and predictive information.

Key Features of the "Insight" Platform

- Real-Time Smart Analytics:** The Platform displays up-to-date indicators based on the latest data received from the "Bayanati" System.
- Predictive Reports:** The Platform offers forward-looking insights to anticipate HR trends and identify challenges and opportunities.

- Customizable Reports:** It allows federal entities to tailor and analyses indicators according to their specific needs and work nature.

- Data Accuracy and Reliability:** The System relies on a trusted central database, enhancing the credibility of reports and supporting informed decisions.

- Support for Institutional Performance:** The Platform equips government entities with analytical tools to improve human capital management strategies.

- Integration with Digital Transformation:** The "Insight Platform" aligns with the UAE's national direction towards digital leadership and excellence in the delivery of government service.

Transition from the Previous System to the "Insight Platform"

Previously, federal entities relied on separate systems to display HR indicators and statistical reports, with access limited to usernames and passwords. HR indicators and maturity levels were only displayed at the end of each year, and conducting analysis required navigating between multiple dashboards for each year individually.

Reports were also tied to the operational database, which made the analysis process more challenging.

Now, the Insight Platform provides a unified system that displays human resources maturity indicators and specialized reports tailored to the operational needs of each entity in real time. Access is enabled through the (National Digital Identity System, called UAE PASS), which allows users to verify their identity and securely sign documents electronically. Updated results are displayed in real time across four main pillars: readiness, efficiency, governance, and empowerment. The Platform also offers an integrated dashboard that provides instant, intelligent analytics on key indicators, including targets and performance levels, while linking reports to the data warehouse to enable historical data analysis and enhance data quality.

The previous systems required multiple complex steps to generate reports, using repetitive and slow processing logic that delayed access to data and reduced flexibility. In contrast, the "Insight Platform" offers a streamlined process that requires only a few simple steps to prepare smart reports, delivering instant results that can be accessed at any time. This enhances efficiency and significantly reduces the reporting time, which previously took several days.

Process Reengineering

- Reducing annual report preparation steps:** from 14 steps to just 2, while focusing on indicators that require improvement.
- Simplifying data processing:** from 8 steps to just 3, with data integrated and processed within a unified data warehouse according to strict quality standards.
- Designing customized reports:** The ability to prepare entity-specific reports on demand.

Operational Benefits of the Platform

- Reduced Time and Effort:** The Platform enables real-time display of HR maturity levels without requiring manual calculations.
- Immediate Performance Improvement:** It provides transparent results that support continuous improvement of HR performance across federal entities.
- User-Friendly and Accessible:** It features an interactive interface compatible with mobile devices, reducing reliance on support services via the Customer Happiness Center.
- Centralized Reporting:** It allows all reports to be generated quickly and efficiently from a single platform.

Performance and Usage Indicators

Since its launch in late September 2025, the Platform has been adopted by over 130 decision-makers and HR officials across federal entities. It provides indicators and analytical insights for 45 federal entities nationwide, while reducing the annual report preparation process from 14 steps to just 2 steps, demonstrating a high level of operational efficiency and flexibility.

The Future of the HR Insight Platform

Building on the current capabilities of the HR Insight Platform, the next phase (Baseera 2.0) represents a transformative shift toward an intelligent, unified government data ecosystem that empowers decision-makers with real-time, predictive, and actionable insights. This phase will focus on integrating advanced AI-driven analytics, enabling smart data exploration, and delivering dynamic, interactive dashboards tailored to leadership needs without requiring technical expertise. By strengthening data governance, expanding integrations with federal and private data sources, and enhancing user experience through intuitive interfaces and conversational insights, the platform will evolve into a strategic enabler of proactive decision-making. Baseera 2.0 will not only reduce reliance on traditional reporting but will also accelerate access to trusted data, improve performance monitoring, and position FAHR at the forefront of data-driven government excellence in alignment with national digital transformation priorities.



