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## Report on Standards and Principles for the Establishment of an Effective System of Human Resources Management in Local Administrations

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## INTRODUCTION

This Report was prepared for the evaluation of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, project co-beneficiaries, for the purpose of ***“Developing Standards and Principles for the Establishment of an Effective System of Human Resources Management in Local Administrations”*** anticipated under Activity 1.1.5 of the Effective Local Service Delivery component of the Local Administration Reform Phase III Project (LAR III). Upon evaluation by the Ministries, the report shall be reproduced and shared with municipalities and relevant agencies.

As part of our efforts to develop principles and standards for a system of human resources management that, with a focus on municipalities, provides quality service and that is highly adaptable to changing conditions, and further efficient and productive, we first conducted a baseline analysis on municipalities. In order to do this, we conducted a literature review on Development Plans; Court of Accounts and relevant Ministry Reports and other documentation; examined the practices in European Union countries, and held various meetings and workshops with the relevant stakeholders. We shared our findings and recommendations with the authorities and stakeholders. Consequently, we produced 19 principles and 6 key standards under 9 topics to be evaluated by the Beneficiary Institution(s), as well as recommendations on the content of such standards. In the recommendations we offered in this report, we addressed issues of which conditions to meet and what to consider in order to deploy the most efficient and effective human resources, which is the most strategic resource in present conditions in terms of its use.

The first stage of the study involved conducting fact-finding interviews with relevant public agencies and municipalities; examining the legislation, Reports of the Court of Accounts and other relevant studies in the literature; and evaluating the reviews of the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Local Governments on Personnel Management. By conducting desk reviews on the human resources management standards and principles in selected European Union (EU) member states and establishing the good practices and lessons learned, a functional comparison was conducted with the practices in Turkey. After such efforts, the Comparative Assessment was prepared which compared the Baseline Analysis Report with the forms of management of local administrations in EU member states.

The Report on Standards and Principles for the Establishment of an Effective System of Human Resources Management in Local Administrations comprises four chapters:

- Chapter One: Development and improvement areas in human resources management (HRM) identified in local administrations in the first stage of Activity A.1.1.5;
- Chapter Two: Conceptual framework for the Principles and Standards,
- Chapter Three: Recommended human resources principles and standards in local administrations, examples and methods of application from EU countries;
- Chapter Four: The role of the administration in the application of the standards.

## 1 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT AREAS IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS

HRM is a procedure for associating the function of human resources with organizational objectives in order to enhance and drive efficiency. In other words, HRM is the practice of recruiting, distributing and managing the employees of an organization. It is employee management that emphasizes the employees as business assets; in this sense, the employees are sometimes referred to as the human capital. As a result of the examinations and interviews conducted during the fact-finding study, it was concluded that the stakeholders agreed upon the necessity of a change in local administrations that would allow for a rapid and efficient response by the human resources management to new performance objectives. In this framework, the areas of innovation and change, the reasons for which are established in the baseline analysis and comparative assessment reports, can be listed as follows:

### 1.1 Strategic Role of Human Resources Units in Local Administrations

There are certain salient essential differences in the transition from conventional human resources management to “strategic” human resources management. The first difference is the fact that strategic human resources management focuses on organizational performance instead of individual performance. Another difference involves an emphasis on human resources systems rather than focusing on individual human resources management practices in resolving business problems. In simplest terms, strategic human resources can be described as a model that establishes the relationship between the human resources architecture and the performance of an organization. In the modern management paradigm, the fundamental role of HR units is to strategically cooperate with senior executives; their roles are strongly interrelated and their cooperation yields an actual added value that is visible to and valued by the management as well as the employees. It aims to ensure that the human resources management process works in cohesion with organizational needs, expectations and strategy. **In order to implement the strategic human resources approach, the business/organization must have a strategic management approach and practices.** Strategic human resources require selecting and training the personnel in line with strategic goals, teaching them the ways of strategic thinking, and approaching the business through a holistic system.

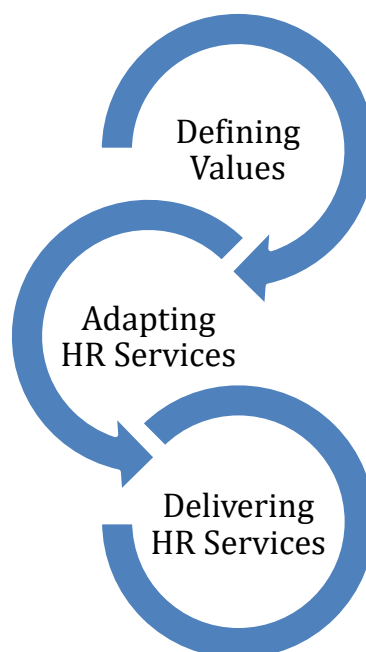
**Figure 1 Value Creation through HR Strategy<sup>1</sup>**

**Defining Values:**

1. Understanding HR strategies
2. Identifying HR strategies
3. Determining what is expected of HR.

**Delivering HR Services**

1. Building a distribution model for HR services
2. Enhancing institutional HR capabilities
3. Continuously improving HR operations
4. Communicating the value of Human Resources Services



**Aligning HR Services:**

1. Categorizing stakeholders
2. Prioritizing HR investments
3. Planning HR services

## 1.2 Classification of Job Positions and Occupations

Local administrations employ personnel working in three different status namely civil servants, contracted personnel and workers (permanent and temporary) in the frame of different laws and regulations. The *Regulation on Principles and Standards of Job Positions in Municipalities and Affiliated Entities and Unions of Local Governments* ensures the identification and standardization of the qualifications, number, titles and ranking of personnel in order for local administrations to carry out their services. While job position standards provide such benefits as the efficient use of national resources by having as many individuals as needed work in institutions; employing them based on the relevant workload by also considering the technology used by local administrations to meet their prescribed goals; determining the number of personnel required in respect of their qualifications, and preventing unnecessary employment; they alone may be insufficient. In the classification schedules in Annex-1 to the Regulation, municipalities and their affiliated entities and unions of local governments are divided into six main groups based on their legal status and service attributes, and further divided into sub-groups amongst themselves. The municipalities and their affiliated entities in each group can have the same number of standard job positions. Additionally, the standard job position schedules annexed to the regulation (Annex-2) determine the number of standard job positions for the municipalities and their affiliated entities in each group.

Issue one: The schedules are renewed by the central government. Such an approach is based on the assumption that the municipalities which, by law, have the same duties and are in the

<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/de/Documents/human-capital/creating-value-through-hr.pdf>, Creating Value Through HR Strategy

same group should be governed by the same number of directorates. However, while being obligated by law to fulfil the same duties, municipalities that are established based on the principle of decentralization and have autonomy may concentrate on different duties for such reasons as the physical and geographical conditions, development level, population structure (age, gender, educational level, etc.), ethnic and cultural differences, and most importantly, different social demands in their respective towns. By conducting on-site job analyses, municipalities can determine the number and type of directorates that should be available within their institution. When looking at current practice, the majority of the standard job positions that have been determined 1) are not filled by local administrations due to lack of need, or 2) are filled by personnel with a contracted or worker status rather than civil servants.

The second issue is that; no standard was found that is related to the employment of personnel with the required qualifications in order to boost quality in municipal services, as aimed for in article one of the regulation.

In order to ensure that job position standards are achieved, it is deemed appropriate to build a system in local administrations that is designed to establish “job classifications”, classify all positions in use and place them in a standard scale based on general duties, responsibilities, wage levels, and job-specific duties.

### **1.3 Career Positions**

Local administrations require qualified employees in order to be successful and produce quality services. They suffer from a shortage of well-equipped and qualified personnel, particularly due to the fact that qualified public personnel favour central public agencies. Furthermore, recent structural and functional transformations in the field of public administration require public personnel to obtain further training. One way to achieve this is to establish career positions in which to employ experienced individuals with a bachelor’s or master’s degree in municipal services in public administrations. Although the edification of qualified personnel is possible through pre-service programmes and in-service training for employees, this may be insufficient in ensuring a rapid and efficient service delivery expected by citizens. Therefore, in order to ensure the knowledge that is found in other public agencies and is based on sustainability and experience in public services, it is recommended that the career positions that are created are defined for local administrations and filled by experienced, licensed individuals with education in local administration.

As the works undertaken in terms of the services delivered by local administrations are specific to the services described, specialization and enhanced efficiency in such areas are significant factors to boost stakeholder satisfaction. With the new local administration philosophy, the concepts of quality of life, quality of services and citizen satisfaction have become much more important for municipalities in recent years. Evaluating the extent to which local administrations can meet the needs, expectations and demands of the citizens for whom they are responsible is extremely prominent for municipalities in their future planning. Since municipalities are considered successful as long as they deliver quality service to their citizens, we give importance to the designation of certain job positions within municipalities

as Career Specialties or Career Job Positions; the selection, placement and determination of required qualifications in line with the needs and requirements of the relevant positions; and the review of talent management and promotion conditions. This notion is also supported by Municipalities and UMT.

#### **1.4 HR Processes**

High performance can only be achieved through the efficient use of all institutional resources. In addition to resources such as technological infrastructure and financial capital, the human being is regarded as the resource that is the most difficult to gain and retain, but the most critical for success, in order for institutions to sustain their competitive power in a business world where competition increases day by day.

##### **Workforce Planning.**

Many local administrations fail to manage their workforce as a quantifiable resource. In this day and age, institutions consider the management of workforce forecast, planning, and supply and demand to be extremely difficult. On the other hand, they usually have profound knowledge of labour data. While such data is extremely valuable, they can also be used to make effective decisions regarding labour when supported by analytical tools. Workforce planning can be integrated with strategic and operational planning in order to ensure that short-term needs are met and long-term opportunities are seized. Workforce planning is carried out in line with the following activities.

- Determining the necessary capabilities and qualifications of current employees to meet future needs properly.
- Clarifying and making current business processes effective.
- Using external sources for part of operations in order to reduce costs without affecting the stakeholders.
- Performing workforce analysis and determining standard job positions by considering the process and targeted mode of operation.

##### **Qualified Employee Selection and Placement Systems**

While the civil servants, contracted personnel and workers employed in local administrations are selected through certain written and verbal examinations within the framework of different legislation, most of them do not go through any examination and selection process. The proper selection and management of human resources, which is considered to be the greatest wealth of institutions, is extremely important. The harmonization of selection procedures, principles and standards for all positions in recruitment and the provision of flexibility to facilitate transitioning between different categories will be crucial in the career development of employees.

##### **Reviewing and Adjusting the Relevant Legislation to Eliminate the Inconsistencies Introduced by Various Legislation (Laws, Decree-Laws, and others)**

Diverging practices may be observed in the Court of Accounts and Controller Reports due to the legislation sporadically containing extremely general definitions or differences in interpretation by various parties. Therefore, the legislation should be reviewed and adjustments or amendments made to eliminate the holes and gaps with regard to recruitment, appointment, assignment, promotion procedures, and transitioning subcontracted workers into job positions.

### Development Areas in the Employment of Women and University Graduates

One of the objectives of the Eleventh Development Plan is to provide decent work opportunities to and increase the employment of groups requiring special policies, especially women and young people. The Plan aims to develop practices that will facilitate women’s participation in the labour market and increase their employment. Since the employment statistics data in local administrations have not been disaggregated based on gender, age groups or educational levels, an analysis cannot be made in this area; however, when examining the data of the limited number of municipalities, it was identified that women’s employment level is extremely low. According to the recruitment statistics obtained from six municipalities during the fact-finding study, only 13% of the civil servants placed in standard job positions, 19% of the contracted employees, and 8% of the workers were women in the average of the last three years.

**Table 1 Recruitment by Gender in Sampled Municipalities**

Position	Years	Male (count)	Female (count)	Total (count)	Male (% of total)	Female (% of total)
<b>Standard job positions</b>						
	2018	471	74	545	86	14
	2019	455	69	524	87	13
	2020	478	72	550	87	13
	Total	1,404	215	1,619	87	13
<b>Contracted</b>						
	2018	40	13	53	75	25
	2019	10	2	12	83	17
	2020	66	12	78	85	15
	Total	116	27	143	81	19
<b>Worker</b>						
	2018	3,321	250	3,571	93	7
	2019	590	96	686	86	14
	2020	403	52	455	89	11
	Total	4,314	398	4,712	92	8

## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

Human Resources Management is an organizational function focusing on the recruitment/hiring, management and guidance of the individuals who work for a company.

HR units are concerned with employee benefits, wage, performance and rewards management, health, safety, organizational development, employee relations, motivation, etc. and therefore plays a crucial and strategic role in managing people as well as the workplace culture. If implemented efficiently, it can largely contribute to an institution's growth and stability, both of which are regarded as a process to bring organizations and people together to meet their respective goals. It helps with the full-fledged development of employees, which is why HR must be established and maintained within the frame of the principles and standards adopted by the institution.

## 2.1 Conceptual Framework

As indicated in previous sections, principles and standards may vary among different organizational models of different countries, or even within the same country (as in the cases of Belgium where two nations with different languages and traditions successfully coexist; and Spain which has 17 decentralized autonomous regions and has significant differences in cultural and organizational terms). Despite the difficulty of defining a universally accepted set of common principles and standards, there is a consensus on the need for well-defined principles and standards that align with the institutional culture and history of each country. The principles and standards should be identified and agreed upon on common ground in order for them to be adopted by all parties and stakeholders, independently from conflicts of interest, potential political pressures or other challenges.

Despite the financial crisis that has affected almost all EU member states in the last decade, the need to have tangible, open and commonly respected principles and standards in HRM has become even more prevalent. Therefore, adhering to key values, principles and standards, in addition to extreme measures (such as the removal of thousands of civil servants from office by Greek or Italian local administrations, or the suspension/reduction of salaries for nearly 10 years by Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese local administrations), has become increasingly critical.

### Principles

When examined based on its lexical meaning, the term "**principle**", which is of French origin, is defined as "*a fundamental thought, belief or element that serves as a foundation*". Other definitions for principle in the literature are as follows.

- Accepted or declared rules of action and behaviour.
- Principles derived from fundamental, primary or general laws or facts.
- Principles that have been accepted as facts in a given context, and that are intended to provide practical guidance.
- Principles are not mere instructions that are used to respond to when things go wrong or there is a dilemma.

### Standards

**“Standard”** is defined as a set of rules that determine the limits of characteristics which any given thing is required to have. The terms ‘standard’ and ‘standardization’ are described in EN 45020 “Standardization and relevant activities – General terms and descriptions” standard of the Turkish Standards Institute as follows.<sup>2</sup>

***“Standard:** Documents that have been created consensually, approved by a competent body, determining the characteristics or outcomes of the rules, principles or activities intended for common and repeated use, and aiming to ensure the most favourable arrangement within a particular subject or scope. The implementation of standards is optional rather than mandatory. **A standard must have been designated as a legislative provision in order for its application to be mandatory.***

***Standardization:** It is an activity that involves establishing the provisions required to ensure the level of order that is most appropriate for common and repeated use in a certain matter, by taking existing and potential problems into consideration”.*

The difference between principles and standards is that a principle is a fundamental assumption, while a standard is a principle or model or scale used for comparison purposes. As a verb, equipping with principles is referred to in the literature as introducing or fixing certain principles; establishing approved courses of conduct as a principle. On the other hand, a standard is defined as an accepted dimension, quantity, force, quality, etc.

## **2.2 Management and Human Resources Principles Identified by International Organizations**

### **2.2.1 International Organisation of Standardisation-(ISO)**

ISO is an independent, international non-governmental organization founded in 1946 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with 160 national standards organizations as members. Through its members, ISO brings together experts who, on a voluntary and consensual basis, are willing to share knowledge and develop International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges. For organizations asking how to improve the quality of their products and services and consistently meet their customers’ expectations, ISO has an answer. ISO 9000 family addresses various aspects of quality management and contains some of ISO’s best-known standards. **According to ISO, Quality Management Principles** are as follows:

- **Customer focus:** The primary focus of quality management is to meet customer requirements and to strive to exceed customer expectations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tse.org.tr/IcerikDetay?ID=2900>

- Leadership: Leaders at all levels establish unity of purpose and direction and create conditions in which people are engaged in achieving the organization's quality objectives.
- Engagement of people: Competent, empowered and engaged people at all levels throughout the organization are essential to enhance its capability to create and deliver value.
- Process approach: Consistent and predictable results are achieved more effectively and efficiently when activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as a coherent system.
- Improvement: Successful organizations have an ongoing focus on improvement.
- Evidence-based decision making: Decisions based on the analysis and evaluation of data and information are more likely to produce desired results.
- Relationship management: For sustained success, an organization manages its relationships with interested parties, such as suppliers.

## 2.2.2 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques – OECD)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international organization that works to build better policies for better lives. With 38 member countries, including Turkey, OECD works on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges together with governments, policy makers and citizens.<sup>3</sup> The '*OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability*' recommended by the Working Party on Public Employment and Management (PEM) was ratified by the OECD Council on 17 January 2019.

The PEM Working Party serves as a collaborative forum and platform for policy-makers and experts from public sector entities entrusted with civil service management responsibilities. The working party collectively addresses major public employment and management and human resources management challenges. Its goal is to strengthen the performance and strategic orientation of public sector organizations by helping countries to improve human resource investments, management and development to create the conditions for inclusive growth and resilient economies.

The *OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability* outlines how countries can ensure that their public services are fit for purpose for today's policy challenges and capable of taking the public sector into the future. The Recommendation is based on 14 principles under three main pillars, which have been developed through the Working Party on Public Employment and Management. The development of the Recommendation benefitted from a broad public consultation, which generated a high level of input from public servants, citizens and experts from around the world. The principles adopted and ratified by the OECD can be summarized as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/about/>

- **Values-driven culture and leadership:** Designing and implementing results-oriented and citizens-centred culture, leadership, policy and services guided by commonly understood values. Adopting a decision-making approach that demonstrates accountability and adherence to common key values, establishing a leadership model that is fit for the importance of the service delivered. Considering merit-based criteria and transparent procedures in the appointment of senior-level public servants, and holding them accountable for performance.
- **Skilled and effective public servants:** Having in place a trusted and capable public service with the ability to identify the skills and competencies it needs, and which aligns its employment systems to bring those skills and competencies in, develop them, and motivate their use. In order to do so, strengthening institutionalization, improving administrative and technical capacities and recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates through transparent, open and merit-based processes to guarantee fair and equal treatment.
- **Responsive and adaptive public employment systems:** Strengthening employment systems that will deliver a responsive and adaptive public service with the empowerment, resources and agility needed to effectively and efficiently address fast-changing, ongoing and emerging challenges. Identifying proactive and innovative strategies that take a long-term perspective in the design and implementation of Human Resources policy and services. Investing in foresight, innovation and analytical skills and capabilities. Determining and offering transparent employment terms and conditions that appropriately match the functions of the position. Encouraging diversity – particularly gender equality – in the workforce, ensuring equal accessibility to underrepresented groups.

### 2.2.3 Council of Europe

The “*European Code of Conduct for all Persons Involved in Local and Regional Governance*” was adopted on 7 November 2018 by the Council of Europe, the members of which also includes the Republic of Turkey. The ethical principles and standards approved by the elected representatives of local and regional authorities of the 47 Council of Europe member countries cover every individual in local and regional governments. The ethical principles and standards set by the Council of Europe at the European level perform five key functions.

- **Instructing** all actors involved in local and regional governance **on the conduct to adopt in the day-to-day performance of their tasks;**
- Informing the public about the conduct they are **entitled to expect** from all actors involved in local and regional governance **and the means to achieve them;**
- **Helping to establish an atmosphere of trust** in all actors involved in local and regional governance **and thus consolidating the relationship between the public and local and regional policy-makers;**
- **Advising** those who are tasked with ensuring the respect of those principles;
- **Enhancing** ethical standards.

The ethical principles and standards and the conduct expected of local administration employees, as adopted by the Council of Europe, that are associated with HRM are as follows:<sup>4</sup>

- Article 3 – Primacy of Law. All actors must at all times act in accordance with the law and serve the public interest.
- Article 4 – Accountability. All actors are accountable for their decisions and actions, and should be willing to give detailed grounds for these.
- Article 5 – Transparency. All actors shall foster the transparency, openness, and visibility of their activities, including policy and decision making, communication, and participation.
- Article 6 – Respect and Non-Discrimination. All actors shall respect each other. They shall actively work towards a non-discriminatory culture of fairness and tolerance that appreciates diversity.
- Article 7 – Merit. Human resources management should be guided by the principles of merit and professionalism.
- Article 8 – Impartiality. All actors shall show impartiality when taking decisions and actions, and avoid any form of prejudice and favouritism, including nepotism.
- Article 9 – Conflicts of Interest. All actors shall avoid any conflict or appearance of conflict between their private affairs and public duties. Conflicts of interest policies should be guided by the principles of transparency and accountability. All actors shall comply with any measure under the regulations in force requiring their direct or indirect personal interests, their other mandates, functions or occupations, or changes in their assets and liabilities to be made public and monitored.
- Article 14 – Reporting. Every organisation involved in local and regional governance should have a procedure on how suspicions of wrongdoing can be reported.
- Article 15 – Principles of data processing and privacy. The processing of data should be based on the principles of legality, proportionality, efficiency and respect for privacy.

The challenges of and requirement for ethical behaviour has also increased as the issues encountered in human resources management grew in number and complexity. The concerns about the ethical standards exercised by managers and employees have been established by questioning key topics in ethics, such as equitability, justice, correctness and social responsibility.

Within the framework of the “Technical Assistance for Increasing Ethical Awareness among Elected and Appointed Public Officials Project” financed by the EU and the Ministry of Treasury and Finance under IPA II and the beneficiaries of which include the Turkish Ethics Board for Public Officials, the Ethical Guidelines that covered various local administration operations including recruitments was published on 30.12.2020.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/european-code-of-conduct-for-all-persons-involved-in-local-and-regional/16808d3295>

<sup>5</sup> See *Yerel Yönetimlerde Seçilmiş ve Atanmış Kamu Görevlilerinin Etik Farkındalığın Artırılması İçin Teknik Destek Projesi, Etik Rehber Yerel Yönetimler [Technical Assistance to Increasing Ethical Awareness Among Elected and Non-Elected Local Government Officials, Ethical Guidelines for Local Administrations]*. pp.117-140.

## 2.3 Relationship Between HRM and Ethical Code of Conduct

Ethical issues, including human resources, generally has five dimensions:

- **Expanded outcomes:** Ethical decisions produce outcomes that go beyond themselves. For instance, moving a certain unit, e.g., a Municipal Site, to another district because of its activities will affect employees, their families, relevant citizens or the companies with which the Municipality works.
- **Multiple options:** Decision making usually involves multiple options; therefore, the key issue is the extent to which the rules can be bent. For example, providing an employee with family problems with flexible working conditions while failure to provide the same for another employee requires reviewing various options.
- **Complex outcomes:** Decisions with ethical dimensions often require evaluating beneficial outcomes hand in hand with unfavourable outcomes. For instance, abolishing some other positions to retain certain job positions during an institutional period of change will produce favourable and unfavourable outcomes for the employees.
- **Uncertain outcomes:** The ethical consequences of the outcomes of decisions are sometimes unknown. For example, should the family situation or lifestyle of the most gifted and successful employee affect his/her advancement in the institution?
- **Personal impacts:** Ethical decisions may impact people's personal lives and loved ones. For example, filling a position that is in fact a permanent position by hiring a contracted employee without requiring any conditions will hinder the expectations of the personnel with career goals. Such a decision may affect the personal lives and families of the relevant individuals, as well as their relatives.

Responding to situations with ethical aspects requires taking into consideration the individual's behaviour and the conformity of such behaviour with the law, the ethical standards of the institution, and professional ethics standards. Abiding by the laws alone is not enough to ensure that conduct is ethical, as laws and regulations may not necessarily respond to all of the problems of institutions and human resources professionals. Instead, employees are guided by adopted values and personal code of conduct and such guidance is implemented by employers through human resources management. Ethical culture is a part of the institutional culture and refers to common assumptions, values and beliefs, i.e., rules, policies, regulations, directives, day-to-day behavioural norms, ways of dressing, the language used, the physical environment, stories, myths, and rituals. Ethical culture is established and maintained through the complex interaction between formal and informal systems.

**Table 2 Systems of Ethical Culture**

Formal Systems	Ethical Conduct and Unethical Conduct	Informal Systems
Executive Leadership		Role Models
Selection System for Qualified Employees		Norms
Policies and Codes		Rituals

Training		Stories
Authority Structure		Language
Decision-Making Processes		
<b>HARMONIZATION</b>		

Source: Trevino and Nelson, 2011:153

The systems used in building an ethical culture and the ways to implement them harmoniously are directly proportional to the placement and management of HR functions.

### **Formal Systems**

Formal systems refer to the defined, written set of rules and systems that create and maintain the ethical culture of an institution. They include:

Executive Leadership (Leader): Executive leaders affect culture in both formal and informal ways. Senior leaders can create, maintain or change formal and informal cultural systems by what they say, do or support. Their communications send a powerful message about what is important in the organization. Thus, they influence a number of other formal culture dimensions.

Selection System for Qualified Employees: Selection and placement systems are the formal systems that are in place for recruiting and hiring new employees. They are vital to hiring people who fit the corporate culture. When considering the ethical culture, organizations can avoid ethical problems and maintain their organizational reputation by recruiting the right people. This may include conducting background checks, checking references, administering integrity tests, and surveying applicants.

Policies and Codes: If formulated impartially, as far removed as possible from conflicts of interests and within the framework of accountability, and shared with all stakeholders transparently; policies, procedures, implementation manuals can facilitate the work of decision-makers and demonstrate the establishment of an ethical culture.

Training: Training programmes should align with ethical culture systems. In particular, the orientation programme, i.e., the introductory training, conducted at the start of employment should comprise all cultural values such as organizational policies, modus operandi, code of conduct, and modes of communication.

Authority Structure: Ethical cultures should guide individuals to take responsibility for their own behaviour, question orders to behave unethically, and report misconduct or problems. A strong ethical culture incorporates a structure that emphasizes and supports individual responsibility and accountability at every level.

Decision-Making Processes: In an aligned ethical culture, leaders make ethical concerns a formal part of all decision making. The emphasis on ethics in decision making should be addressed in important meetings and explained to managers that they should pay attention

to this issue in their work. For example, it should be made into a habit to evaluate a potential decision in terms of various stakeholders.

### **Informal Systems**

Informal systems indicate whether the formal ethics-related systems represent reality or façade.

Role Models: Role models may be senior managers, immediate superiors, or more experienced co-workers. Mentoring involves a more senior person taking a junior person under their wing, providing information, career strategies, codes of conduct, written and unwritten rules. Heroes are symbolic figures who set standards of performance by modelling certain behaviours.

Norms: They are standards of daily behaviour that are accepted as appropriate by members of a group. They exert a powerful influence on individual behaviour in organizations, and can serve to support an ethical or unethical culture.

Rituals: They tell people symbolically what the organization wants them to do and how it expects them to do it. Rituals communicate the organization's ethical culture tangibly and favourably. Events such as meetings, parties, ceremonies can be used to easily convey messages to employees.

Stories and Myths: They may be anecdotes about a sequence of events drawn from the organization's history, and their characters are usually employees. The moral of the story expresses the organization's values.

Language: It is used to communicate in-house values. In a strong ethical culture, ethics becomes a natural part of the daily conversation in the organization. Employees feel comfortable talking about ethics with each other and with their managers.

### 3 RECOMMENDED HUMAN RESOURCES PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS

#### 3.1 PRINCIPLES

**The overall objective of human resources management** is to ensure the success of employees, and therefore the success of the organization. Human resources management aims to enhance the effectiveness and strength of the organization, whereby strength refers to an organization's power to achieve its goals by making the best use of all available **resources**. Human Resources Principles are the key elements that are built upon to achieve such goals.

As a result of the meetings held with the Advisory Board of Local Administrations Reform, it was deemed appropriate to adopt the following 20 (twenty) principles related to the nine (9) below-mentioned areas of human resources management:

- 1. HR Service Delivery:**
  - a. Interact with the respective organization and its surroundings in an open, proper and honest manner, in line with ethical principles and codes of conduct.
  - b. Deliver respectful, non-discriminatory, effective, efficient and timely services.
  - c. Operate by developing relationships with the stakeholders with whom they interact, within the frame of strategies determined through teamwork.
  - d. Give importance to diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion at all levels.
  
- 2. Organizational Development:**
  - a. Make it systematic and sustainable to build an organizational structure and system that is aligned with changing conditions, by performing a data-driven analysis of the procedures and processes required to meet short, medium and long-term goals in Local Administrations.
  - b. Determine data-driven and/or quantifiable objectives and goals to obtain strategic results efficiently and effectively.
  
- 3. Workforce Planning:**

Effectively planned workforce becomes better equipped with the human resources with the qualifications and competencies needed by local administrations to achieve their objectives and goals.
  
- 4. Recruitments and Appointments:**
  - a. Employ candidates that are fit for the job qualifications, have the behavioural and professional competencies, and meet the requirements of the area of work and the job in merit-based recruitment and selection processes, and thus ensure the permanence of the personnel in the organization.

- b.** Pay attention to the protection of meritorious, specialized personnel in rotation applications and appointments, due to the impact of institutional emotional memory on learning and institutional performance.
- 5. On-the-Job and Orientation:**
  - a.** All new recruits are entitled to expect comprehensive and effective on-the-job and orientation processes that provide the appropriate guidance, support and knowledge for their respective job qualifications.
  - b.** Explain the duties, responsibilities and powers, work environment, equipment, management philosophy, organizational culture and what is expected of the personnel in order to facilitate the adaptation of the recruited personnel to their job and the organization during orientation; share with and introduce institutionalized knowledge (legislation, policies, strategies, procedures and various standardized practices, etc.) to co-workers.
- 6. Performance Management System:**
  - a.** A human resources performance management system is developed and implemented to measure and evaluate performance in talent management.
  - b.** HR improves individual and organizational performance by fostering responsibility, commitment and development, and ensures the mutual understanding of the business and strategic goals of local administrations.
- 7. Training and development:**
  - a.** Continuous learning and improvement are regarded as a significant investment in the personnel at all levels in order to optimize the efficiency of employees.
  - b.** Local administrations adopt a learning organization approach that captures rapid changes and ensures the implementation of transformation when required.
- 8. Industrial Relations:**
  - a.** Work towards ensuring fair rights and responsibilities for all employees throughout their operations.
  - b.** Do what is necessary to prevent and eliminate discrimination in employment.
  - c.** Provide solution-focused support in collective agreement negotiations.
  - d.** Make policies and take the necessary action to resolve internal and external complaints through negotiation, cooperation and compromise.
- 9. Occupational Health and Safety.**

Minimize the cases of occupational accidents and diseases and ensure a high level of health and safety standards for all personnel in and around the workplace.

## 3.2 STANDARDS

Standards are designed and provided to assist local administrations with developing efficient HR management policies and practices. Local administrations may implement the recommended standards based on their present situation in terms of the diversity of their institutions and how such institutions are structured and financed. To that end, they may determine how to implement the Standards by considering how to reach the underlying overall objective of the Standards, taking into consideration their fitness to their operations and their resources.

As with the identification of the principles, six (6) key standards in human resources management were determined as a result of the meetings held with the Advisory Board. The number of the standards may be increased based on the specific needs of provinces. The six key standards are as follows:

1. Local administrations shall use strategic human resources management *methods and practices* to deliver effective HR services.
2. HR policies and procedures shall be developed, formalized, approved and documented.
3. *The necessary works in the delivery of services by local administrations shall be classified, their standards shall be determined, and job descriptions for each position shall be formulated based on organizational needs.*
4. *Local Administrations shall adopt fair, transparent and comparable recruitment, appointment and assignment policies and procedures.*
5. *A performance evaluation system shall be built, by which the working performance of each employee within a given period shall be evaluated by their superiors in a fair manner and at least once a year.*
6. Local administrations shall adopt the “Learning Organizations” approach that shares, manages and internalizes knowledge.

The HR standards that were determined aim to meet the HRM needs of the local administrations in the country, enhance their organizational productivity, and ensure that they provide citizens with better quality services. The standards, which are also beneficial in terms of inspection, are key criteria sought by senior management in resolving HR-related problems. They were formulated based on our national culture and key management principles while also drawing on the best practices in developed countries, notably the EU, and in international organizations of which Turkey is a member.

### 3.2.1 Standard 1: 1. Local administrations shall use strategic human resources management methods and practices to deliver effective HR services.

- a. **Purpose:** The core purpose of strategic human resources management is to establish a general perspective to be followed in resolving critical problems regarding the personnel, which is achieved by integrating the institutional strategy with the human resources strategy and ensuring their horizontal integration with HR policies.

**b. Current situation:** The HR units in local administrations deliver conventional HR services by only embracing administrative functions and operationally implementing the decisions generally taken by unit managers and mayors. Rather than planning recruitments, promotions and training according to the strategies formulated as a result of long-term analytical studies, HR activities are carried out based on short-term needs and at the request of other units. In the current situation, the HR units in local administrations have a reactive approach, i.e., after a problem occurs in the due course, the causes and effects of the incident are examined and the work is reorganized to eliminate disruptions. It is recommended that local administrations adopt a proactive approach in order to meet the needs of developing organizations and the changing human structure. The term proactive, which indicates the exact opposite of the reactive approach, is used for communities, organizations or individuals that have embraced a modern management approach. In short, it refers to taking the necessary measures and carrying out on-the-job arrangements by conducting risk analyses and foreseeing potential problems before the occurrence of any disruption to the system.

**c. Rationale:** HR plays a key role in changing, improving and strengthening organizational culture and has countless effects including the organizational image. The harmony between HR and Local Administration strategies is proportional to the capability of the administration to foresee and respond to the citizens' needs and maintain its competitive edge. Organizational culture fosters diligent research, planning and development including employee behaviour and competencies, and the successful performance of strategies by local administrations. The benefits of HR strategy planning include:

- Developing efficient HR management to ensure quality service delivery.
- Avoiding costly and unfavourable surprises that prevent the achievement of goals.
- Addressing key issues in time to prevent crises.
- Fostering overall success by ensuring that employees focus on organizational objectives, boosting their productivity and ensuring sustainable motivation.
- Providing a strategic focus to guide training and development initiatives.
- Providing leaders with tools to help them focus on and implement strategic objectives.

**d. Local Administration Practices in the European Union:** In principle, the strategic HRM approach is followed by 8 EU member states (although not actively by all).

Local administration in most EU countries follow the example of central governments in terms of systems, tools, methodologies, IT practices and models and adapt them based on local needs (e.g., France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy). Contrarily, in the cases of Belgium and Sweden, it is usually the local administration that is innovative in HRM, and therefore serves as a reform laboratory that allows innovation to spill over to other local administration units.

EU countries have various good HRM practice models, some of which are as follows:

a) In Belgium, municipalities carry out strategic workforce planning over a 6-year horizon (in line with the political cycle).

b) Local administrations in Greece have been developing digital job descriptions and organizational structure in recent years (determining the strengths and weaknesses of human resources, the shortcomings in terms of skills and competency, etc. at the local and regional level)

c) Municipalities in Portugal ensure the internal assessment of organizational capacity and limits and external environmental assessment by using the SWOT analysis method to determine external opportunities and threats.

#### **e. Methods and Tools for Standard Setting:**

Strategic HR management is a process of vertical and horizontal integration. When aligning HR plans, programmes and practices with the higher strategy plan of the organization, it ensures that the different elements mutually align with and support one another. In order to formulate a realistic and feasible HR strategy, firstly;

- Feasibility studies are evaluated,
- Desired outcomes are determined,
- Objectives are set, and
- The means through which to achieve these objectives are determined.

The following tools can be used to formulate a HR strategy:

#### **- Current situation is examined and analysed:**

Being a strategic business partner means carrying out HR operations by considering the long-term organizational objectives. In order to do so, HR managers (notably the Mayor, and top local administrative executives, HR Unit employees, and other municipal unit executives) include the following actions in their work:

- They assess the long-term outcomes of HR decisions by taking into consideration how various organizational components interact with one another. Before implementing any changes, the impact of HR decisions must be explored and analysed comprehensively.
- A local administration with strong financial, purchasing, legal and computer technologies is able to forecast future expenditure as well as budgeting and helps to maintain a workforce that is equipped with the required qualifications.
- They improve the analytical questioning skills of HR unit personnel and spend their time by managing change through teamwork, coaching managers, planning and implementing HR practices that implement the strategy effectively rather than in operational areas such as recruitment and training. They analyse organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The SWOT approach paints a clearer picture of external stakeholders, in that, it stands for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**. As a strategic planning tool, SWOT analysis

lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to the company. The current situation can be better understood by conducting a SWOT analysis which includes an internal assessment of organizational talents and limits as well as an external scan to estimate external opportunities and threats.

**-Vision, mission and value statements are formulated:**

- The vision statement is a document specifying the existing and future objectives of local administrations. It should be designed as a guide to help the local administration with making decisions that align with its philosophy and stated objectives. It can be regarded as a roadmap on where the organization would like to be positioned within a given period.
- The mission statement can be used by local administrations to describe the reasons for their existence in simple and concise terms. The mission statement is usually a sentence or short paragraph explaining the organizational culture, values and ethics.
- The objective statement is a key starting point for teams or individuals to plan their works and determine whether they are successful. Objective statements are essential to succeed. A well-detailed and properly documented objective statement will fully identify the outcome that the organization is striving to produce.
- The principles statement includes key ideas or rules that explain or go over how something occurs or works. The key principles of governance usually include the following: Participation, representation, fair conduct of elections; responsiveness; efficiency and effectiveness; openness and transparency; rule of law and ethical conduct; competency and capacity; innovation and openness to change.

**- HR objectives are set:**

The role of HR includes developing an HR initiatives plan to ensure and foster the behaviours, cultures and competencies required to meet organizational objectives. Result-oriented objectives generally include:

- Properly assessing workforce and qualification needs and keeping training up-to-date.
- Developing and maintaining competitive wages and rights by taking existing financial limitations into account.
- Managing performance and designing a rewards system that motivates employees.
- Keeping track of what other public or private bodies do to recruit and maintain talent.
- Preparing training content and programmes that foster key values, including an ethical code of conduct.

**- HR objectives are aligned with the business strategy:**

Intra-unit strategic planning can be a good way for HR units to initiate the functional alignment process. Furthermore, regardless of whether strategic planning starts in the HR unit or another unit or is managed at an organization-wide scale, the HR unit activities will become an integral part of successful strategic planning. Therefore, even if the strategic plan does not openly address HR-related matters, HR personnel should pay attention to

aligning the HR functions with all aspects of the strategic plan. Although each municipality has a different strategic plan, the demographic and other characteristics of the existing labour force have a major impact on how organizations recruit personnel which, in turn, has a major impact on the performance of the organizational strategy.

### **3.2.2 Standard 2: 2. HR policies and procedures shall be developed, formalized, approved and documented.**

- a. Purpose:** The purpose of this standard is to define the organizational approach and objectives through policies and procedures and communicate them to all employees and stakeholders, in order to prevent any violation of the law, legal and regulatory proceedings, contractual obligations and all kinds of human resources requirements.
- b. Current situation:** Decisions and behaviours that were caused by various problems in legislative interpretations and practices due to the multifarious and complex nature of the human resources legislation of local administrations, that reduced the motivation and organizational loyalty of employees, and that needed to be corrected either intentionally or unintentionally, were identified. The wrong decisions and misapplications, which were also addressed in this study, together with the respective justifications, are frequently reported by the Ministry of Interior Controllers, and by the Court of Accounts due to their financial impacts, on an annual basis. Although the issues are reported each year and occasionally corrected, there is no guarantee that they will not be repeated. It was also detected that a violation that had taken place in a municipality and later corrected had been repeated in another municipality and year. Although the circulars issued by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization through the Opinions on Personnel Matters of the General Directorate of Local Governments strive to prevent such misapplications, it is still not possible to make a generalization on the extent to which this practice, which was initiated in 2019, is efficient.

Compiling HR practices, which are extremely likely to produce similar issues in municipalities of all sizes, in the form of written rules under policies and procedures will guide HR managers in preventing any misinterpretation or misapplication. Some of the issues we have encountered in our studies include the following:

- The scale of merit is not used in the recruitment of personnel of contracted employee and worker status. If it is not specified in the legislation, selection generally does not take place based on merit.
- Those in exceptional job positions are appointed to other civil servant positions and provided with powers without undergoing any assessment.
- The criteria for establishing examination commissions do not meet the needs (e.g., not comprising of individuals with the qualifications suitable for the position).
- Impartial criteria are not determined beforehand in interviews.
- The personnel that have been recruited are not employed in their original positions.

- Ensuring the participation of the HR Unit in the division of powers and responsibilities in all HR operations. The HR Unit is still merely the practitioner of the decisions taken by the Mayor and unit managers.

For the above-mentioned reasons, adjusting all HR operational policies to ensure that they can respond to the current needs of municipalities by also considering the principle of decentralization and putting the relevant operational processes in writing can ensure highly efficient delivery of HR services, while the transparent nature of the process can meet the public sector's obligation to share information with the citizens as required in a free society.

- c. **Rationale:** Within the frame of the laws that are a set of rules established by the government legislative bodies, which are the most fundamental tool in establishing a qualified human resources management, as well as the regulations comprising regulatory rules; the continuous and healthy operation in organizations depends on policies and procedures that focus on improving operational activities. The unambiguous propositions comprised of the principles that serve as guidance in meeting HRM objectives in local administrations are called policies.

As a concept, **“Policy”** refers to a set of general instructions that outline an organization's plan against a problem. Policies are flexible by nature, reflect the organizational mission and are supported by strategies while a **“Procedure”** explains a certain action plan to execute a policy.

Procedures are generally an established method of carrying out a specific duty through steps in a designated order. They are strict by nature and demonstrate who holds responsibilities and powers in each business process, the entire working steps, and all of the forms used (the entire documentation). A procedure, which is a dynamic document, refers to a certain way of carrying out an activity. It follows a logical process, explains the applicability of policies in practice, and is supported by programmes. As a path that has been determined to execute a process, the **procedure** defines such information as who did the series of works, how did they do it, did they report it, which records were kept throughout this process, did they carry out controls, etc. Its benefits are as follows:

- HR policies and procedures ensure uniformity of practice in line with the legislation in force.
- It clarifies the expectations of managers and employees, in that, each individual within the organization can clearly describe their jobs.
- It ensures knowing what to do when unexpected problems arise, thus facilitating their resolution.
- It relieves organizations of depending on individuals; it ensures further organizational longevity by establishing a general system.
- It aligns organizational policies with the law.
- It ensures the standardization of processes, which increases quality.

- It establishes all of the risks involved in the performance of a job. It strengthens organizations' ability to develop a proactive attitude.

It is a horizontal method that requires developing robust policies and procedures to relieve local administrations of political pressure and support the sustainability of HR interventions within any political framework. Furthermore, it is also critical to define an administrative and political level that requires formulating policies and procedures. There are three main options (or a combination thereof) with regard to the nature of the policies or procedures:

- a. Formulating HR policies and strategies for the HRM of local administrations at the central level (e.g., relevant Ministerial units, joint committees, etc.);
- b. Formulating (decentralized) HR policies and strategies at the regional level by Metropolitan Municipalities;
- c. Formulating (fully decentralized) HR policies and strategies at the local level by each local municipality.

#### **d. Local Administration Practices in the European Union:**

- In principle, all 8 EU member states have clear HRM policies and procedures (albeit not necessarily effective) in place. German municipalities have a set of clear HRM policies and procedures in place that aim to build a legal and administrative environment in which all potential developments are foreseeable and the rule of law prevails without exception.
- Belgium and Sweden place major importance on ensuring the best possible working conditions for employees in local administration through tangible policies, aiming to make working in local administration attractive by investing in significant resources and ensuring a long-term working environment.
- Monetary and non-monetary incentives are critical to guarantee the long-term employment of the personnel and ensure high performance levels. France and Italy have been striving towards ensuring high performance by competent employees through monetary and non-monetary incentives (despite financial limitations).
- Local administrations in Belgium use a competency framework that is built into HRM and adapted based on specific needs, whereby the analytical level of the competencies is determined based on position and level of seniority (through a behavioural approach). This framework is regarded as one of the most sophisticated competency frameworks currently applied in European local administrations.
- Italy tries to expand its personnel evaluation through collecting feedback from the receivers (citizens) of the services delivered by local administrations, and including it in the evaluation of organizational units and respective employees. Italy follows an extremely strict policy on gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment, with a strong focus on promotion and awareness.

#### **e. Methods and Tools for Standard Setting:**

The most important step of drafting secondary legislation such as policies, procedures, guidelines, etc., is research and consultation.

**An exemplary model:**

- The problem and the subject are defined.
- One or more individual(s) are appointed to coordinate the policy development process, as it may take longer than a few months. The appointed individuals are selected from among those with the authority to guide the process.
- The policy development method is established: The process involves research, consultation and policymaking duties. The coordinator(s) develop a plan on which duties should be carried out by whom and when.
- Research is conducted.
  - o The policy documents drafted by other organizations on the same subject are examined.
  - o The existing regulatory framework is researched.
  - o Meetings are held with experienced personnel and other relevant individuals to note the experiences and knowledge in the organizational memory.
  - o Surveys are conducted.
  - o Annual reports, activity reports, strategy documents and papers are examined.
  - o Sectoral research, publications, journals, etc. are examined.
- A discussion paper is drafted: The aim of the discussion paper is to explain the goal, the nature of the problem or topic, summarize the information obtained from research, and recommend a series of policy options. The discussion paper will be an important tool in the consultation process.
- Consultation Meetings (Stage One): The first step of the consultation process involves the distribution of the discussion paper to all stakeholders (relevant parties). It may be necessary to send notifications to directly reach stakeholders and remind them to read the discussion paper. It is crucial to obtain as much feedback as possible from stakeholders, which can be achieved through workshops, public meetings, the municipality website, and meetings with individuals. It may take a few months to ensure that the consultation stage is thorough.
- The draft policy document is prepared: When there is adequate time to complete the consultation processes, the next step is to formulate a draft policy document.
- Consultation Meetings (Stage Two): When the draft policy is completed, it should be published on the organization's news bulletin and website, and later discussed in meetings and on forums and distributed to key stakeholders. In this stage, asking stakeholders for help may be necessary to make adjustments in the statements, clarify the meaning, and make policy adjustments before the policy is finalized.
- Adoption process: When the policy development process coordinator is reasonably satisfied that all policy-related matters and concerns have been voiced and addressed, it is time to finalize the policy. The final policy document is officially adopted by the

appropriate authority (management, organization or umbrella organizations), through a proper record in the minutes.

- **Communication:** After the policy is officially adopted, it is disseminated among the organization and the stakeholders. Training programmes may be required to ensure that the organization's personnel is fully informed and able to follow the policy. If not well-communicated, the policy can fail.
- **Review and evaluation:** The implementation of the policy should be monitored. The policy may still require further adjustments, and the reasons for its existence may change. General practice is to set a date to review the policy, which can be on an annual or triennial basis. This merely depends on the nature of the policy.

**f. The policies, procedures and guidelines deemed appropriate to be prepared or reviewed in Local Administrations can be listed as such:**

- **Recruitment policies and procedures (Selection and Placement):** The purpose of a recruitment policy is to appoint candidates with suitable qualifications, skills and experience, to the vacant positions in order to ensure efficient delivery of service to the local administration. The justifications for the policy are conformity, consistency, lawfulness, credibility, and transparency (See Standard 4).
- **In-house secondment procedures:** It aims to clarify in-house secondment conditions and establish rules that are parallel to non-institutional appointment procedures and criteria. It is observed in current practices that occasionally, individuals lacking the necessary qualification are seconded to a management position, without any time limitation.
- **Conflict of interests policy:** Its purpose is to safeguard the interests of the local administration in the case that a municipal officer considers taking an action or making an arrangement that may benefit his/her private interests and/or potentially lead to further benefits.
- **Critical positions in local administrations (Career Positions):** Critical positions are those that, if left vacant, will have a significant unfavourable impact on the service capacity of the local administration. They can be managerial, technical, or an important supporting position by nature. The critical positions in the Local Administration can be determined and special recruitment, appointment and re-evaluation methods can be developed for them.
- **Procedure on working conditions:** It includes working conditions, working hours, stress, level of safety, or hazards that impact the workplace. Improving the working environment and conditions will make significant contributions to personnel motivation, and therefore, performance.
- **Procedure on remuneration and supplemental pays:** Local administrations make various payments to employees in return for doing their jobs. The wages, supplemental pays, benefits in kind to which personnel in different categories are entitled to in their respective categories should be clearly defined in the employee handbook or the company policy and procedure guidelines, and communicated to the employees.

- **Qualification assessment system:** Qualification standards and related performance evaluation systems are key systems for employment requirements and employee development in municipalities.
- **Performance management procedures:** The purpose of an effective performance management system is to ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the work they are expected to do and receive continuous feedback on their performance against expectations, to distribute rewards accordingly, determine the opportunities for improvement, and address performance. A comprehensive performance management system ensures that employees have further input for their personal career advancement and allows managers to better identify, know and reward individuals based on a set of mutually agreed criteria. Performance management is associated with job descriptions, organizational development and change.
- **Policies and procedures on in-house complaint management:** It aims to provide and maintain a working environment where people are treated with dignity, honesty and respect. Local administrations make an effort to ensure that the working environment involves mutual trust and is free of discrimination, intimidation, pressure, mobbing or exploitation.
- **Policies and procedures on external complaint management and conflict settlement:** The purpose of a formal complaint procedure is to ensure that all complaints are addressed in a fair and consistent manner. If successful, an informal approach will be appropriate; however, if the informal resolution of the concerns is unsatisfactory, then a formal complaint procedure should be followed.
- **Privacy policy:** It establishes the principles and rules with which every local administration employee with access to classified information and documentation must comply. Where relevant, this policy should be followed hand-in-hand with the letter of appointment and/or employment contract applicable to local administration employees and personnel, and other applicable working rules, policies and procedures.
- **Ethical codes:** A well-written set of codes of conduct explains the mission, values and principles of an organization and associates them with the standards of professional conduct. The code specifies the values that the organization would like to foster in leaders and employees, and in doing so, defines desirable behaviours.
- **Policy and process review:** Effective policies and procedures, including guidelines, are living documents that must grow and adapt within Local Administrations. Although the key elements and purpose of a policy, which may be to keep people, equipment, assets and information safe, will most likely remain the same; the details regarding how to achieve them should be adaptable to organizational changes. Former policies may put the organization at risk, not comply with new laws and regulations, or not address new systems or technologies and thus lead to inconsistent practices.

### 3.2.3 Standard 3: The necessary works in the delivery of services by local administrations shall be classified, their standards shall be determined, and job descriptions for each position shall be formulated based on organizational needs.

- a. **Purpose:** To set standards in local administrations in a broad area ranging from selecting and training qualified personnel, standard job position planning, upskilling and the limits of responsibility of personnel; to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources; to ensure that the personnel are informed of their work-related duties and responsibilities and objectives and that they fulfil them at the expected level.
- b. **Current situation:** Local administrations are carrying out their employment processes in line with the principles set out in the “Regulation on Principles and Standards of Job Positions in Municipalities and Affiliated Entities and Unions of Local Governments” and the classification schedules annexed thereto. While Article 1 of the said regulation specifies its purpose as “... to ensure the effective and efficient use of public resources, a balanced distribution of local services, enhanced quality in the services delivered by municipalities, the employment of personnel with the **required qualifications, titles and quantities**”, the term “**required qualifications**” clearly does not refer to the qualifications of the personnel to be employed in job positions, as there is no instruction as to job position qualifications.

The regulation contains existing decisions and classification schedules, job position titles, procedures for determining and establishing job positions, job position changes, the use of standard job positions, their registries, decisions related to contracted employees and permanent and temporary worker positions, the use of surplus job positions, and other various provisions. The annex to the regulation involves the various distributions of the job positions in local administrations, grouped from A to F, and the job position registries of civil servants. However, it does not contain the job classification, job standards and/or job descriptions, or a framework for the required qualifications. Based on meetings held with municipalities, it is understood that some municipalities have standardized job descriptions which they apply in recruitments; others, while having job descriptions in place, adapt it to the employed individual despite merit requirements; while others do not have any at all.

Since the civil servant position registries can be determined based on the annex to the regulation, it is assumed by experts that a job classification exists. Therefore, we believe that in order to support employees in planning their careers and HR units in performing their works during recruitment, appointment and performance evaluation processes, preparing standard job descriptions for the civil servants, workers and contracted employees in municipalities; drafting a job classification and job standards guide; and setting up job descriptions including job specifications based on position titles will be a significant guide for municipalities that seek the principles of openness, transparency, and productivity.

- c. **Rationale:** It is an indisputable fact that robust human resources management must exist in order to ensure effective, efficient and economic delivery of local, common and qualified services by municipalities. A well-prepared job classification leads to fair, equitable and consistent remuneration, ensures that high-level jobs have higher requirements in terms of performance and talents, and allows for succession planning for higher-level roles. It is a systematic approach that aims to evaluate a position in qualitative terms in order to assess the value of a job.

Municipalities can make effective, efficient and economic use of their available resources by employing personnel with the titles, qualifications and numbers required for service delivery. Such personnel can be identified through position standardization studies. Standard job positions are one of the key instruments in establishing an effective, efficient and economic human resources management. The term “kadro” (job position) is of Italian origin and refers to the table that demonstrates the individuals who perform the works of an organization, the duties which they undertake, and the quantity, quality and level of such duties.

Standard job positions refer to the standardized designation of the most suitable (non-redundant) job positions in terms of title, number and the qualifications sought, to ensure that an organization carries out its duties in a goal-oriented, effective and efficient manner. However, the current regulation does not determine a framework for the required personnel qualifications or the duties and responsibilities of job positions. Therefore, we believe that a position standardization study should be handled as follows:

1. **Job classification** is the process of determining the relative ranking of different jobs in an organization. It is important because the hierarchy in which a job is classified constitutes the basis for various HR decisions. It is a systematic approach that aims to assess the importance and value of a position in qualitative terms. The main purposes of job classification are:

- Helping with recruitment and selection by defining important qualification standards.
- Helping to design and develop performance and evaluation standards.
- Allocating the responsibilities that help implement the responsibilities suitable for the organization’s mission and vision, and the business plans and strategies of the organization.
- Determining career and growth paths at organizations.
- Establishing wage standards.

2. **Job standard** is a general reference to the responsibilities, duties and qualifications for a specific classification. The single and most important function of a job standard is to establish a common understanding and terminology in discussing job roles and skills, and clarifying the skills improvement and reskilling initiatives undertaken at the academia, the industry, and the government scale.

**3. Job description** refers to all of the information that includes the individual under whom each position works, what their duties and responsibilities are within the organization, the place and importance of the job within the organization. It also specifies all qualifications, experiences and skills that are required in the individuals to be hired. The benefits of job description include the following:

- A job description synchronizes the recruitment and selection process, thus facilitating the job of HR units. It makes it easier for firms to find suitable candidates.
- It provides an explanation as to what the organization is about and what it can offer to candidates.
- It provides an overview of the vacant position and indicates the company expectations.
- It helps the candidate to familiarize with the workplace environment instantly.
- It defines the selection criteria for candidates.
- It makes it easier for recruitment officers to scan the resumés of potential candidates.
- It serves as a criterion for employee orientation and training.
- It helps candidates to find the job that is most suitable for their skills and qualifications.
- It helps in personnel performance analysis and evaluation.

**d. Local Administration Practices in the European Union:**

In principle, all 8 EU member states have (various) job descriptions and profiles as well as a well-developed job classification system in place. There is no optimal way to develop job descriptions; they are closely related to the scope, characteristics and culture of the local administration. They are also a significant instrument in protecting civil servants from cases of political pressure, nepotism and maladministration.

One of the most advanced examples of job descriptions is seen in a Belgian local administration (specifically, Flanders). It covers the external parameters required for the effective performance of the job in addition to various critical factors that define and affect the scope and purpose of the job, and it is updated on a periodical basis (every 2-3 years). The Belgian local administration has included the behavioural aspects required for each job description, fully aligning it with their competency framework.

**e. Methods and Tools for Standard Setting:**

**1. The most commonly used methods for job classification include:** Job groups (Job families), Jobs based on their functions, position titles, job position role:

- **Job groups (job families):** Group of jobs that involve similar works and require similar training, skills, knowledge and expertise. The family is based on function

rather than organizational structure. Career progress is most commonly seen in a job family. (E.g., Finance)

- **Classification based on functions:** A certain area of profession within a job family. It is a job category that can group work or function based on similar characteristics or skills. (E.g., Procurement)
- **Based on position titles:** Classification based on the set of duties and responsibilities defined in the job description (E.g., HR Manager, Accounting Director)
- **Based on job position role:** It defines the role taken on by an individual employee in performing his/her work. An individual can steer multiple roles.

1. **Job standards are created for each job classification.** As a system, job classification provides the administration with the power to perform various functions at once, rather than a single function. Different positions are named and designated in terms of titles and ranks, by taking job specifications into consideration.
2. **The duties, responsibilities, powers and working conditions for each job or job position in the organization is described, and the required qualifications and competencies for the job are shared in writing.** This allows for clarifying the purpose of the job and its relationship with other jobs.

**Career Positions:** Local administrations require qualified employees in order to be successful and produce quality services. They suffer from a shortage of well-equipped and qualified personnel, particularly due to the fact that qualified public personnel favour central public agencies. Furthermore, recent structural and functional transformations in the field of public administration require public personnel to obtain further training. One way to achieve this is to establish career positions in which to employ experienced individuals with a bachelor's or master's degree in municipal services in public administrations. It is recommended that when making job classifications, the required positions in local administrations are grouped as career positions.

3. **Job Analyses: Job analyses are performed to ensure job classification standardization and create job descriptions.** As one of the key instruments, it is the process carried out to determine the activities and responsibilities covered by a job, its importance in relation to other jobs, the qualifications required for the performance of the job, and the conditions in which the job is performed. Although human resources (HR) can collect certain job analysis data from officers, it is important that the job is analysed rather than the individual who performs it.

Job analysis is the process of obtaining, recording and examining the information that covers the type of the job, the time required for the job, the equipment used for it, the powers and responsibilities assumed during its performance, the related departments, and the qualifications in the personnel who will perform the job. In other words, it refers to the collection, examination and evaluation of information regarding a job in order for the job to be performed effectively and efficiently with less effort and lower costs. Job analyses are used in the following areas:

- Workforce planning
- Performance management
- Recruitment and selection
- Career and succession planning
- Training and development
- Wage management
- Health and safety
- Risk management.

**3.2.4 Standard 4: Local Administrations shall adopt fair, transparent and comparable recruitment, appointment and assignment policies and procedures.**

- a. Purpose:** It refers to defining the path that must be followed in order to ensure that the recruitment conditions and selection processes for the personnel to be hired in local administrations take place in a lawful and ethical manner. Recruitment processes that have been structured clearly from beginning to end and that are shared openly will reinforce the perception of justice.
- b. Current situation:** Local administrations employ personnel in job positions that have been determined by the Regulation on Standard Job Positions in three different status. While the selection and recruitment conditions for civil servants designated through standard job positions need to be improved in the relevant legislation, they have a definite framework and are subject to a selection examination. As selection examination is not mandatory for contracted employees and temporary and permanent worker positions, there is no means available to measure how appropriate the recruited personnel are in terms of merit. Occasional views are expressed regarding the inappropriateness of the decisions that have been taken. Furthermore, the recruitment of personnel in municipal companies pursuant to the Decree-Law 696 does not involve any screening and selection based on any criteria.

In 2020, the number of personnel in local administrations, together with company workers, amounted to 707,732 people; approximately 15% of which represented civil servants, 4% contracted employees, 81% permanent workers + temporary workers + municipal personnel company employee (worker). In other words, only 15% had been subject to an examination while the majority of the 85% did not undergo any screening test whatsoever. Although some municipalities implement a system to screen contracted employees and workers through their own in-house guidelines, this is apparently not a common procedure.

- c. Rationale:** The most critical HR management function that is undertaken is to hire individuals to fill job positions, regardless of whether they are hired from within or outside of the organization. A recruitment process that is carried out objectively and the same for all, with the right tools and methods, is described as “fair”. Today, fair recruitment is

regarded as competency-based recruitment where competency is, in the simplest terms, the ability to perform a job successfully and most effectively.

Qualified employees who are highly loyal will help an organization to achieve its goals and objectives. The recruitment process begins with describing the job, looking through a pool comprising qualified individuals, selecting the best individual for the position, and finally guiding the individual towards the position and the organization (if s/he was hired from outside of the organization). When an organization hires, promotes or transfers an employee, it makes a commitment to that individual and becomes obligated to ensure that the individual has all reasonable opportunities to fulfil the job satisfactorily; the purpose is to hire meritorious employees, selected through quantifiable systems within the frame of pre-determined evaluation methods and transparent principles and standards, ensure their development, and provide public services through productive employees that benefit the organization as well as the society.

- d. **Local Administration Practices in the European Union:** In principle, all 8 EU member states follow a merit-based approach with regard to the recruitment policy for local administration employees. A Belgian local administration follows a personalized approach, in which a person is evaluated in terms of skills (through written examinations), competencies (through psychometric evaluation), and personality (through panel interview).

Sweden and Belgium attach great importance to attracting talented university graduates (through competitive wage programmes, fostering a balanced working life, lifelong training programmes, career paths, etc.). In Belgium, if a young student delivers an excellent performance in an internship programme, s/he may receive a competitive offer for direct employment after graduation.

The Belgian local administration adopts a tailor-made approach, where:

a) All eligible candidates are evaluated in terms of **skills** through open-book written tests, by emphasizing the legal, organizational and economic aspects of the local administrations. The tests are quite competitive and aim to assess the fundamental skills and knowledge level of the candidates. In order to ensure the merit-based selection of the most talented employee and transparency, the questions are prepared by a municipal panel committee comprising experts/senior executives. It should be noted that the competition is open to all Belgian residents, regardless of nationality, who have language skills and a prerequisite university degree.

b) **Required competencies** are measured through a psychometric evaluation carried out by specialized companies.

c) **Personality** is evaluated through a panel interview involving relevant experts.

Sweden and Belgium work hard to make local administrations attractive for talented university graduates (through competitive wage programmes, fostering a balanced working life, lifelong training programmes, career paths, etc.).

#### **e. Methods and Tools for Standard Setting**

**1. Preparing job descriptions:** The reason for preparing job descriptions is to document the duties and activities required by the position to meet the strategic and short-term objectives of the organization within the existing organizational structure. The final outcome will determine the types of skills and experiences that individuals require to succeed in this role. Job descriptions serve as the foundation of selection and placement, performance management and information management operations. A job description includes the following:

- Typical roles, duties and responsibilities of the position.
- How the work performed by the position supports the organization's objectives.
- The competencies/experience required for the position to perform its job.
- Special requirements such as security clearance or criminal record checks (if any).
- Level of authority and/or independence of the position.
- The impact of the position on the organization (e.g., the relationships which the position is expected to maintain with stakeholders and others).

**2. Developing selection procedures and processes that are transparent and fair for all relevant parties:**

- The criteria used to select the suitable individual are determined and documented.
- A procedure is developed for the establishment of the selection committee.
- The roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the selection committee members are clearly described.
- It is ensured that the majority of the selection committee members are familiar with the job and the position.
- It is ensured that at least one member of the selection committee is an employee that is capable of assessing the technical knowledge and skills of the candidate.
- HR representative is a member (with or without voting power) of the selection committee.

### **3. Reviewing assignment and appointment procedures and processes and arranging the processes clearly and concisely within the framework of the relevant laws:**

- Assignment of the contracted personnel to manager job positions in acting capacity.<sup>6</sup>
- Regulating the appointments from a vice-mayor position to a manager position not complying with procedures laid down in the Regulation on Principles of Promotions and Title Changes of Personnel of Local Administrations.
- Reviewing the conditions for transferring the personnel in exceptional job positions to any position, regulating them within the framework of parallel criteria to the conditions set out in the principles of promotion and title changes of local administration personnel, formulating policies that ensure quality service delivery, do not delay the career plans and affect the motivation of personnel.
- The strategies are formulated for appointment as new hire and outward appointment, the framework for the conditions is specified by procedures.

### **4. Developing strategies to increase the number of female employees in technical and administrative positions:** For example:

- An equal opportunities statement can be produced and added as a note to vacant position announcements.
- A Violation (e.g., harassment) Notification System can be established – Complaint Management and Mechanisms can be restructured.
- Child care units can be established or women can be provided with supplemental payment in return for kindergarten and childcare services.
- Survey questions about equal opportunity applications for women can be added to the employee satisfaction study, and the personnel can be asked their opinion in this regard.
- Advertisements that include both genders can be used. The visuals can represent women and men equally, job adverts can include visuals from both genders.
- Gender-based Violence Training can be conducted – training can be prepared separately for managers, mid-level and lower-level employees.
- A “Gender Bias Awareness Training” for managers and mid-level and lower-level employees.
- Self-confidence training for women – training on rights and effective communication.

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<sup>6</sup> The General Communique No. 99 under the Law on State Servants that regulates “appointment as temporary substitute” provides that where an acting servant who have the qualifications required of the regular appointee cannot be found, the vacant job position or vacated for any reason shall be filled by appointment as temporary substitute by deputies of the regular appointee, or in absence thereof, any personnel with closest qualifications to the regular appointee so that the service shall continue without fail. Article 6 of the Principles on Employment of Contracted Personnel that entered into force by publication in the Official Gazette of 28.06.1978 issue 16330 provides that “the persons in question may not be employed in any position other than the one written in their contracts.” That same regulation has no provision to the effect that contracted personnel may fill in the performance report for civil servants or become the supervisors to state servants. It is thought that such practice undermines the career and principles of merit as laid down in the Law No. 657; bypasses the provisions laid down in the Regulation on Principles of Promotions and Title Changes of Personnel of Local Administrations; prevents institutionalization; weakens financial control and exacerbates risks in the organization; will lead to reduced motivation and efficiency of the personnel by postponing or abandoning their career plans; and will result in the loss of qualified human resources needed by the organization to deliver quality services.

- A quota can be imposed to top management positions to ensure 30% female employment.
- Wages can be reviewed. If there is a gap between the wages paid to female and male employees, planning can be made to eliminate it.
- Diversity recruitment assessment can be conducted – recruitment statistics in units with fewer women can be assessed periodically.
- HR can keep gender-sensitive data and draft its reports accordingly.

**5. Developing strategies to encourage fresh university graduates to apply to vacant administrative positions in local administrations.** The focus should be on making it attractive for talented university graduates to work at municipalities. For example:

- Cooperating with universities to formulate strategies for recruitment tours and meetings. Recruitment specialists can go on the road and visit different main locations, meet candidates face-to-face, regulate the interview process and attract talent from remote locations. Recruitment tours are ideal for organizations that are looking for specific skill sets or that would like to mass recruit for a new department or facilitate the recruitment process. If executed well, recruitment tours have the power to turn candidates into valuable employees.
- Holding conferences and meetings to promote the operations and types of jobs in local administrations, in cooperation with university career centres.
- Avoiding making fast decisions in interviews. Conducting the interviews in non-conventional environments or taking the candidates on a short field trip to de-stress them before the official meeting.
- Using the right keywords in job adverts.
- Ensuring the right timing. Checking whether the recruitment schedule aligns with the academic schedule, as this will affect the availability of newly graduated talents. For example, more prospective graduates will be job seeking near the end of the academic year.

**3.2.5 Standard 5: A performance evaluation system shall be built, by which the working performance of each employee within a given period shall be evaluated by their superiors in a fair manner and at least once a year.**

- a. **Purpose:** Performance evaluation, which refers to measuring personnel productivity, is a tool that determines, in qualitative and quantitative terms, what is obtained as a result of a planned and purposeful activity, and that can be used for training and career planning purposes. It has three main goals.
- **Managerial goals:** Performance evaluation results are one of the most important indicators that are assessed by organizations in career and personnel planning. They are prioritized by managers, particularly in decisions regarding promotion, dismissal, appointment and transfer. Other managerial goals are used in determining the personnel who can work in jobs that require further responsibility, workforce planning, and determining wages and social aids. Performance evaluation is one of the most important tools used in the stage of determining personnel wages.

- **Development goals:** It is extremely important in terms of creating a perspective regarding the personnel. As a result of the evaluation process, the strengths and weaknesses of employees can be determined and corrective and constructive decisions can be taken with regard to individual wishes and requirements.

**Educational goals:** Personnel evaluation data is a valuable source in determining the employees that require training. The evaluation studies carried out for each individual can be used to determine the individual strengths and weaknesses of employees. Such information also helps in determining the educational and development needs of the organization.

- b. Current situation:** Local administrations do not have a performance evaluation system in place. The performance evaluation system for civil servants was abolished in 2011 pursuant to the amendments to the Law No. 6111 on Civil Servants, formerly known as Regulation No. 86/10985 of 8.9.1986 on Performance Evaluation of Civil Servants introduced based on the Law No. 657. No model was proposed to replace the performance evaluation system for civil servants. However, while performance evaluation reporting for civil servants and performance evaluation reporting had similar aspects, they were essentially two different systems in terms of purposes, implementation and place of use.
- c. Rationale:** Performance evaluation is defined as a formal and productive procedure to measure the works performed by an employee based on his/her work responsibilities, and their outcomes. Performance evaluation plays a direct role in providing periodical feedback for employees to become more aware of their performance metrics. The benefits of a performance system, which is one of the most important tools of modern human resources policy, can be listed as follows.
- Provides reliable information on employees and their works;
  - Creates ideas and opportunities for improvement;
  - Increases the work motivation and productivity of personnel;
  - Eliminates uncertainties regarding expectations, reduces concerns;
  - Helps to improve and reinforce performance;
  - Ensures that success is rewarded by identifying remuneration and rewards standards;
  - Exposes poor performance, establishes its causes and solutions, provides a way to review the situation of the inadequate employee;
  - Ensures that the employee focuses on work;
  - Identifies the training requirements of inadequate employees, explores how to meet them;
  - Improves management skills;
  - Regulates the relationships among employees to enhance group work.
- d. Local Administration Practices in the European Union:** In principle, all 8 EU member states carry out some kind of performance evaluation and has a system in place to evaluate

performance (although not all of them do so effectively). A Belgian local administration has a well-developed competency framework for employment levels based on the job description and yearly performance evaluation (that dynamically evolves and adapts to new trends, developments and needs throughout the years). The performance evaluation cycle also includes a holistic assessment of all relevant hierarchical levels (by following a 360-degree evaluation model), an assessment of working conditions, and the options offered by the municipality to employees.

Italy uses a merit-based performance management system through an arrangement that ensures performance evaluation in local and regional management. Performance evaluation only focuses on a strict evaluation of the employee based on pre-defined objectives, but it also includes an evaluation of the performance of the organization (an organizational unit determined based on the job qualifications of the employee). At the municipal level, goal setting regarding organizational performance should be approved by the Mayor, who is supposed to select 3 independent experts to conduct a performance evaluation of each unit. Personnel performance evaluation is important to ensure a comprehensive approach by taking into consideration various factors that affect organizational and individual performance. In the case that both levels are assessed to be positive, the employees are provided with financial incentives.

- e. **Methods and Tools for Standard Setting:** Performance evaluation can contribute to employee growth mainly through two methods. First, employees who have an opportunity to make a self-assessment can learn their mistakes and take corrective actions on their own. The second method involves an exchange of views between superiors and subordinates as a result of the evaluation process. This practice should be perceived as an advisory service rather than controlling or holding an employee to account. In other words, this practice involves identifying the problems and coming up with solutions together. Performance evaluation is not a performance evaluation report for civil servants.

***HR Unit should be responsible for conducting this process, including performance evaluation management.***

There are various performance evaluation methods, mainly grouped under two categories as conventional and modern; there are 11 conventional and 6 modern methods. A system is built by combining these methods to determine the most suitable model for local administrations. It is commonly recommended that public agencies use a unique method that combines the Management by Objectives and Graphic Rating methods.

- **Management by objectives** was first introduced in 1954 by Peter Drucker, according to whom an employee's performance can be evaluated against the objectives set by the management of an organization. The objectives are communicated to employees, then an employee's performance is compared against these specific objectives and evaluated accordingly. If the employee fails to meet the pre-established objectives, the management decides on a new strategy to meet the objectives that have not been met.

The graphic rating scale is one of the most popular, simplest and oldest techniques in performance evaluation. It is also referred to as the linear rating scale. In the framework of this approach, employees are assessed based on various criteria, such that each criterion is categorically divided as poor, very poor, good, very good and excellent. Furthermore, each criterion carries a certain numerical value. The assessor marks the category that best describes the employee and reaches a conclusion by adding up the values.

### **3.2.6 Standard 6: Local administrations shall adopt the “Learning Organizations” approach that shares, manages and internalizes knowledge.**

**a. Purpose:** It is to turn local administrations into institutions that use methods and models that are open to transformation, transparent and innovative through experience and internal knowledge, in addition to conventional training models. The purpose of learning is not only to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees but also to establish flexible and dynamic learning organizations through organizational development and growth. A learning organization can be described as an organization that ensures/facilitates learning for all its members and transforms itself continuously. In a sense, it can also be referred to as a peer-to-peer training model. This definition places particular emphasis on four important concerns, which can be considered important in themselves.

- It highlights the organizational aspect that actively ensures/facilitates and documents individual learning. Accordingly, merely having members who have learning tendencies is not a sufficient condition to be called a learning organization.
- It highlights the entirety of the members of the organization. It is not sufficient to focus on certain groups, as the system describes a **collective** one in which the learning of an individual or a group affects that of others, and ultimately, all members learn together.
- It focuses on the organization’s experience of continuous change and adaptation and on learning about the period of change itself, while also guiding individual learning.
- It draws attention to recreation/production and transformative learning processes.

**b. Current situation:** As transforming into a learning organization implies forming a new culture, the learning organization method is not currently adopted.

**c. Rationale:** The term learning organization means “an organization in which learning is valuable, continuous, and most effective when shared, and that has adopted the notion that each experience is a learning opportunity”. Learning organizations generally ensure continuous learning opportunities, in that:

- They use learning to meet their objectives.
- They associate individual performance with organizational performance.

- They encourage inquiry and dialogue by making it safe for individuals to openly share and take risks.
- They are always aware of and interact with their surroundings.

The foundation of a learning organization is the learning individual, who ultimately form learning teams and a learning organization. Peter Senge (2002, 155) explains that organizations learn only through individuals who learn; individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning, but without it no organizational learning occurs. Learning as a team improves the ability of groups of individuals to see the bigger picture that lies beyond their individual perspectives.

Individuals in learning organizations understand the impact of their actions, as well as their works, on the works of others and the interdependence among works. In traditional organizations, conflicts are resolved through power and hierarchical impact while in learning organizations, they are resolved through a learning process that develops based on cooperation and the integration of different opinions.

In the traditional structure, the role of the leader is to create the organizational vision, build an appropriate reward and punishment system, and control the employees as a whole. On the other hand, its role in a learning organization is to create a shared vision, authorize employees, keep participation alive, and foster an efficient decision-making process all over the organization through authorization and charismatic leadership. Becoming a learning organization will increase employee loyalty, stakeholder satisfaction, and business results.

The learning organizations approach combines systems thinking with personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. According to Peter Senge, it is possible to establish learning organizations, which have five disciplines:

- **Personal mastery.** It is the discipline of personal development and learning.
- **Mental models.** It involves the stage of individuals' awareness of, testing and developing knowledge related to the flow of life.
- **Shared vision.** It means all employees in the organization settle on and share a common objective.
- **Team learning.** It refers to the organization's employees becoming involved in teamwork and improving themselves through dialogue and discussion.
- **Systems thinking.** The system is crucial for success in the organization. The purpose is to see the whole rather than individual parts. Senge refers to systems thinking as the "Fifth Discipline".

The courses of action of learning organizations are generally described as follows:

- They have **open communication channels** in every direction.
- They emphasize **learning and tangible data** when making decisions.
- As the learning is **shared**, peers **benefit from the experiences of one another**.
- Employees are **willing to recommend solutions** to problems.

- Employees look for **ways of how to be more helpful**.
- Employees **question and try to learn** the fundamental assumptions of the organization and the views of other employees.

#### d. Local Administration Practices in the European Union:

In principle, all 8 EU member states have various procedures and practices in place with regard to the lifelong learning and career development of personnel. However, due to the financial crisis as well as the COVID-19 crisis happening in the last decade, training funds, lifelong learning activities, etc. have suffered a significant decrease. Despite financial limitations, Greek local administrations have an extensive programme in place that supports local administrations (financed with EU structural funds) in equipping their employees with the latest technological skills, competencies and abilities. The National School of Public Administration and Local Government of Greece is granted a significant role in the organization and delivery of a series of special training programmes.

Swedish local administrations prepare personalized programmes to improve personnel skills, competencies and abilities (for personal development purposes only, without providing any career objectives).

Similarly, Italian local administrations strive to motivate employees by providing special training, despite financial limitations.

#### e. Methods and Tools for Standard Setting:

##### An exemplary method for becoming a learning organization:

The most commonly used method in establishing the learning organizations model starts with building “Communities of Practice” which can also be described as “Peer-to-Peer Experience and Information Sharing Community”.

*The concept of Community of Practice (CoP) or “Peer-to-Peer Experience and Information Sharing Community” refers to the process of a social learning process whereby people with common interests in a certain subject or problem cooperate to share information, come up with solutions and make innovations. Communities of Practice are consistent groups that are formed as a result of such regular interaction.*<sup>7</sup> They have three key characteristics:

- **Area of work:** A common area of interest that ties and keeps the group together is necessary to have a multidimensional look at the subject.
- **Community:** Communities that have been tied together through common activities (e.g., meetings, discussions, etc.) around a common study area requires working as a team.

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<sup>7</sup> E. Wenger, R. McDermott, W. Snyder, 2002 “Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge”, p.4.

- **Practice:** Community of practice members are also practitioners; what the members do demonstrates their participation in the community and what they learn from it affects what they do. Occasionally, the community establishes and implements a common action plan.

The learning model for learning organizations is through Communities of Practice which, like every community, has its own lifecycles. For each lifecycle phase, specific design, facilitation, and support strategies exist that help achieve the goals of the community and lead it to its next stage of development. The lifecycle phases include:

- *Inquire:* Identifying the vision, goals, objectives and target audience.
  - *Design:* Defining the activities, group processes, and roles that will support the community's goals.
  - *Prototype:* Piloting the community with a group of key stakeholders to test assumptions, refine the strategy, and establish a success story.
  - *Launch:* Rolling out the community to a broader audience to increase the number of participants.
  - *Growth:* Engaging members in collaborative learning and knowledge sharing activities that meet individual, group, and organizational goals while creating an increasing cycle of participation and contribution.
- Sustain:* Cultivating and assessing the knowledge and “products” created by the community to inform new strategies, goals, activities, roles, technologies and business models for the future.

Communities of practice can be established on their own as well as under the leadership of a higher institution. For example, Article 3 of the Law No. 5216 defines Metropolitan Municipalities as *“a public entity having administrative and financial autonomy which comprises at least three district or first-tier municipalities, **coordinates the functioning of such municipalities**, discharges its statutory duties, responsibilities and exercises statutory powers, and whose decision-making body is elected by voters”*. Based on this definition, Metropolitan Municipalities can lead the establishment of communities of practice and coordinate their works. Thus, a network can be created among all municipal employees within the boundaries of the metropolitan municipality to ensure information and experience sharing, which will enhance cooperation among municipalities as well as ensure more efficient and productive service delivery.

#### 4 OWNERSHIP BY MANAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING STANDARDS

Transitioning to management through principles and standards in Human Resources Management may shake the foundation of all HR habits and processes in local administrations. When faced with such a major change, it is extremely normal for employees to respond differently to and resist change. At this point, the greatest duty and responsibility falls upon senior management with a strong sense of ownership. Having adopted such an approach, the management or managers must clearly explain the new developments to employees and ensure that they adopt this new system. Senior management takes the lead

in forming an atmosphere and culture that involves change, innovation, risk-taking, taking pride in the work performed, and constant improvement of the goods or services delivered to the public.

Leadership by senior management is one of the most important driving forces behind the overall quality management approach in terms of improving employees, advancing the organization, increasing performance and determining strategies. It produces an effect of a driver within the organization, which is why the senior management's faith in HRM principles and standards philosophy and principles is crucial.

There are three fundamental reasons that require senior management to have HRM principles and standards in place: Pragmatic reasons (based on a cause-effect relationship), strategic approach, and mutual solidarity between local administration and society (citizens).

Pragmatic reasons refer to the responsible use of authority by the municipality; otherwise, the municipality risks losing it. A strategic approach will bring organizations to a position where they are able to review their value chains and realize what harmful and beneficial actions are beforehand. Therefore, municipalities get the chance to take action without waiting for warnings by stakeholders. Furthermore, they become involved in a visionary structure that handles issues before they become a problem.

Engaging in constructive dialogue with stakeholders is an increasingly popular approach. Therefore, by engaging in constructive dialogue with their stakeholders, local administrations also carry a responsibility to act in line with the code of conduct as required by the legislation as well as social life and organizational social responsibility. In that context, senior managers must take on crucial roles.

In addition to reviewing the chain of values and the competitive environment, organizations must also identify key values that determine what they will and will not do and what to focus on with regard to social responsibility issues. Senior management, which deals with the day-to-day businesses of organizations, must take a careful look at the organizational chain of values and analyse their economic and social impacts. They must determine the factors that harm or have the potential to harm society, and take action to mitigate the damages they cause.

Leadership can be referred to as the source of values and beliefs that mobilize a community to deal with internal and external problems. Once the assumptions of the leader are validated and operated, they become shared assumptions in the community. The most important matter for leaders is to understand organizational culture and depth and the functionality of assumptions, and the ability to manage the concerns against objections to the assumptions.

Recently, the concept of a values-based 'responsible leadership' has been developed, according to which leadership is a normative phenomenon based on ethics and values. Accordingly, leaders and their followers develop a collective identity that, through a sense of commonly shared values, extends beyond the self-interests of the organization and

themselves (Groves and LaRocca, 2011:2, as cited in Maak and Pless, 2006:102). Therefore, responsible leadership means the processes that affect stakeholder values and ethical principles, and the relationships among leaders and all stakeholders whose sustainable outcomes focus on the local community, and the social and natural environment. Pless defines responsible leadership as a “values-based and thorough ethical principles-driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change (Groves and LaRocca, 2011:2). Responsible leaders can effectively contribute to shaping the organization. In exemplary definitions of the role of responsible leadership, a leader is described as an “Agent of Change” and “Coach”. Senior management affects the culture formally and informally; they can create, change or sustain culture through what they say and do. Their communications send a powerful message about what is important in the organization. Thus, they influence a number of other formal systems.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The rapid and multipronged change in the world has brought forward a radical reorganization particularly in the management approach and conventional bureaucratic structures. In accordance with such theoretical and real changes, the social role of public administrations and in doing so, the methods to be applied and the institutional setups to be built by it, have been called into question. In general terms, a public demand was communicated that is sensitive to society's demands, gives importance to participation, has clear objectives and priorities and is accountable, transparent, smaller but more effective.

Public administration witnesses momentous changes during globalization and strives to adapt to the different conditions and requirements of our time. Top items of the current agenda include such concepts as participation in government, democratic governance, decentralization, service delivery quality, performance management, and including new management techniques in business management into the structural and functional public administration processes. Such efforts, which have also emerged in Turkey, the impact of technological advancements on management, increased operational qualifications in the management of the services that are delivered particularly by local administrations, and global developments such as urbanization and localization trends.

Municipalities fully require public relations due to the fact that decision-making and executive bodies are elected by the public and they are the closest managerial units to the public. In that regard, municipalities, in particular, have priority over other local administrative units in terms of effective, appropriate and efficient service delivery.

The law defines mayors as the head of municipal administrations and the representatives of the municipal entity. As defined by law, the main duty of a mayor is, as the top administrator of the municipal administration, to govern the municipal organization and protect the rights and interests of the municipality. Accordingly, Mayors and other senior executives can create, change or sustain culture through what they say and do. Their communications send a powerful message about what is important in the organization. Thus, HRM is a form of management that is carried out not only by the HR unit but hand-in-hand with top and mid-level management.

The effectiveness and success of municipalities, which deliver services to citizens throughout all stages of their lives from birth to death, is proportional to the loyalty of the qualified personnel to the organization in which they work. Such loyalty can be ensured through strictly implementing HR principles that have been adopted by the organization, and transparent, fair and ethical business standards.

Therefore, Human Resources Management has gone beyond merely being the duty of Personnel or Human Resources Units and become a concept where the entire management takes on various roles. Human Resources is the unit that builds the systems that lie at the heart of such efforts and that assumes a practitioner/executive role, and most importantly, a

strategic role. The experts and employees in such units are expected to have qualifications that are specific to the unit.

It is expected that, since recommended principles and standards will have positive impacts on a change in the organizational culture, senior management will internalize such principles and standards and guide HR units as the leader in the period of change. A leader is a manager that makes a difference within the organization, easily builds and maintains a sustainable balance, and increases organizational productivity, effectiveness and operability compared to its previous operations. When examining best practices and according to the results of academic studies, leadership styles are closely associated with such human resources functions as business analysis, personnel selection, training and R&D management, wage management and career management; the power of such an association may vary in relation to the organizational structure applied, the organizational culture established by employees, and the competencies and potential of employees.