

Strengthening the attractiveness of the public service in France

TOWARDS A TERRITORIAL APPROACH



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Towards a territorial approach



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Executive summary

A growing number of OECD countries are facing the challenge of making their public service more attractive, even as public policy management becomes increasingly complex and requires new skills. This paper seeks to identify the attractiveness factors of the public service in the French regions and across the member countries of the European Union, particularly within a context of major trends in public employment that are constantly changing. The first section aims to shed light on the attractiveness of the French public service in French regions, through a mostly qualitative focus on four regions (Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Île-de-France, Normandy). These regions are facing, in whole or in part, difficulties in attracting, recruiting, and retaining their public employees. The second section, in addition to a better understanding of the major trends affecting public employment across the European Union and OECD member countries and the implications for the Human Resources (HR) function, explores the measures implemented by other administrations in OECD member countries as well as the private sector to develop or adapt their human resources policies in order to better plan attractiveness efforts.

Acknowledgements

This policy paper on public governance aims to identify the factors that make the public service attractive in order to inform efforts to improve attractiveness. This work is based on a qualitative analysis methodology in four French regions and across OECD member countries. It was written by Dónal Mulligan and François Villeneuve, public policy analysts, under the strategic direction of Daniel Gerson, head of the Public Employment and Management Unit of the Public Management and Budgeting Division. Margaux Tharoux, public policy analyst, under the supervision of Claire Charbit, head of the Regional Attractiveness and Migrant Integration Unit of the Regional Development and Multi-level Governance Division, Regional Development and Multi-level Governance Division of the Center for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions, and Cities (CFE) contributed to the first section and developed the attractiveness profiles of the pilot regions. This policy paper was prepared by the OECD Division on Public Management and Budgeting, under the leadership of Elsa Pilichowski, Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate the OECD.

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1 Studying the attractiveness of the French territorial administration in four pilot regions

1.1. Introduction

Public policy management is increasingly complex, requiring new skills. Across OECD member countries, public services are seeking to respond to this challenge by developing proactive recruitment practices to attract and retain people and skills. These practices often focus on specific profiles, such as legal profiles, or hard-to-recruit fields, such as the data and information technology sector. However, gaps in terms of competencies are broader. Many OECD countries report difficulties in attracting a diverse range of competencies, as well as even greater difficulty in developing pools of young candidates to replace the successive waves of "baby boomer" retirements.

Nevertheless, the public service has competitive advantages in its ability to offer exciting career paths and opportunities to participate in solving the global challenges that affect society. However, this type of argument, which could give more meaning to public careers, is too often not communicated explicitly to potential candidates. This observation also clashes with the increasingly local expectations of citizens. This dichotomy between global issues and local expectations creates a dilemma for public services in OECD member countries. Within the European Union, regional disparities persist but are being reduced by a process of harmonising public management resources and practices across all territories. In France, the reduction of these disparities requires a capable territorial state administration.

One of the main objectives of the French public sector modernisation plans is to increase the attractiveness of French regions as places to live and work (Ministère de la Transformation et de la Fonction Publique, 2020^[1]; OECD, 2022^[2]). The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for quality public services throughout the country. However, not all administrations, including at regional level, are equally attractive to potential public servants, and some face particular difficulties in recruiting people with the skills they need. This can have a direct impact on citizens and risks aggravating existing regional inequalities.

The Directorate General for Administration and the Public Service (Direction générale de l'administration et de la fonction publique – DGAFP) is engaged in a series of projects aimed at modernising human resources management (HRM) in the public service, in particular by working on strengthening the attractiveness of the French public service at territorial level. This work is all the more necessary as successive deconcentration and decentralisation reforms have made it urgent to develop a more solid territorial Administration with the appropriate skills.

This section has been prepared as part of the project "Strengthening the attractiveness of the public service in France: towards a territorial approach" following a request for technical support submitted by the DGAFP to the European Commission's Directorate General for Support to Structural Reforms (DG REFORM), as part of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Within this framework, the OECD's action aims to shed

light on the attractiveness of the State public service in French territories, through a qualitative focus on four regions (Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Île-de-France, Normandy) facing, in whole or in part, difficulties in attracting, recruiting, and retaining their public agents.

1.1.1. The attractiveness of the public service

Research on employer attractiveness stems from the recognition of human capital as a key source of competitive advantage. One of the pioneering studies of employer attractiveness describes five key elements that promote it (Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005^[3]):

- Interest value, i.e., the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that offers an interesting work environment, new work practices, and uses the creativity of its employees to produce innovative, high-quality products and services.
- Social value, i.e., the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides a pleasant work environment, offers good relationships among colleagues, and fosters team spirit.
- Economic value, i.e., the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer who offers above-average salary, compensation, job security, and promotion opportunities.
- Developmental value, i.e., the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer who provides recognition, self-esteem, and confidence, coupled with a rewarding career experience and a steppingstone to future employment.
- Application value, i.e., the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer who offers the opportunity to apply what he or she has learned and teach others.

On this theoretical basis, the OECD has developed a framework for thinking about attractiveness that applies to the situation of the State public service in the regions. It identifies the nature of the job, the career, and the quality of life offered as the three drivers of this attractiveness.

- The "nature of the job" corresponds to the intrinsic nature of the tasks performed, their correspondence with the expectations of the candidates, and the extrinsic aspects related to the remuneration and benefits provided by the public sector.¹
- The "career" here corresponds to the fact that an opportunity for professional mobility, including in an unattractive territory, is a career accelerator that is part of a coherent and valued professional path.
- Finally, "quality of life" corresponds to access to quality public services (cultural, educational, digital, etc.) and adapted social services in a given employment zone.

Around these elements revolve personal considerations, which are more or less likely to encourage a potential candidate: personal situation (age, marital status, children), professional situation (career advancement, potential access to the public service or mobility), and geographic situation (relocation or not). This framework thus seeks to better take into account the concerns of potential candidates, whether public servants or contract employees, in order to strengthen the attractiveness of the State public service in the territories. This approach also seeks to be integrated into the context of other recent work on the subject.

This framework of reflection can be illustrated as follows and offers a grid for reading the challenge of the attractiveness of the State's territorial administration, detailed in this section:

¹ This definition is therefore different from the classic definition of employment in the French public service.

Figure 1.1. Framework for thinking about the attractiveness of the public service in the territories



1.1.2. The attractiveness of the public service and territorial attractiveness

This framework of reflection places an importance on the quality of life offered in each region, the notion of attractiveness of a territory being intrinsically linked to that of quality of life (Fagot-Largeault, 2002^[41]). A region will be all the more attractive to government employees if it allows them to live well. The OECD approaches quality of life in a region empirically by looking at its territorial components. The various dimensions detailed in the dashboard presented in Annex A, section “Attractiveness profiles of the four pilot regions” can allow the DGAFP and its partners to analyse the attractiveness profile of other regions not covered by this study.

While these factors remain broadly common to all individuals, it is important to note that their prevalence depends on the socio-economic characteristics of each public servant and/or applicant. For example, the quality of the living environment seems to play a more important role for the most qualified individuals (Tuccio, 2019^[5]), who may sometimes accept a lower salary in exchange for a more comfortable living environment. Similarly, a study of regional attractiveness in the European Union found a preference among younger workers for places with connected infrastructure, while middle-aged workers are more attracted to culturally rich regions (ESPON, 2013^[6]). Therefore, in order to attract public servants of particular categories as a priority, it is important for all public actors to implement policies that emphasise certain aspects of territorial attractiveness more than others.

1.1.3. Towards a better understanding of the attractiveness factors of public employers in the French State territorial administration

The OECD had the opportunity to conduct two series of interviews during the project:

- The first was conducted from November 2021 to January 2022 in the four pilot regions mentioned above with key players in the region in terms of human resources in the state public service, including the Regional Inter-ministerial Support Platforms for Human Resources Management (*plate-forme régionale d'appui interministériel à la gestion des ressources humaines - PFRH*), the directors of certain regional administrations, and a sample of Prefects (the representatives of the French State in the regions).
- The second took place from January to February 2022, with various DGAFP units, the Defence mobility agency, the regional administration training institutes (*Instituts régionaux d'administration - IRA*) of Lille and Metz, and a trade union.

These meetings enabled the OECD to develop an assessment of the attractiveness of the territorial administration of the State in the pilot regions. This section, which is intended to be qualitative, is based on the above-mentioned framework, developing three lines of inquiry on the attractiveness of the French State territorial administration (Administration territoriale de l'État – hereafter referred to as 'ATE').² First, we will discuss the nature of the job and the working conditions offered within the ATE. We will then analyse the opportunities for career development and mobility. Finally, we will consider the link between regional specificities and employer attractiveness from the perspective of the quality of life offered to public servants. Each section will be followed by proposals for action to improve the attractiveness of the ATE in France.

1.2. The nature of the job at the center of the attractiveness challenge

The nature of the job is one of the three components of the attractiveness of the public service in the regions. First of all, these jobs must be visible and understood by the greatest number of people, notably through the proactive use of tools to reinforce their attractiveness, such as dedicated portals or employer brands. It is also important to clearly define the salary conditions of the job before taking up the position as a source of extrinsic motivation. In an increasingly competitive labour market, it is also important for government agencies to have the tools to develop local "talent pools" based on a clear mapping of available skills and job openings. Finally, the issue of team-candidate fit is paramount, and requires the implementation of an open and motivating managerial culture.

1.2.1. Improving the visibility and attractiveness of jobs offered in the territories

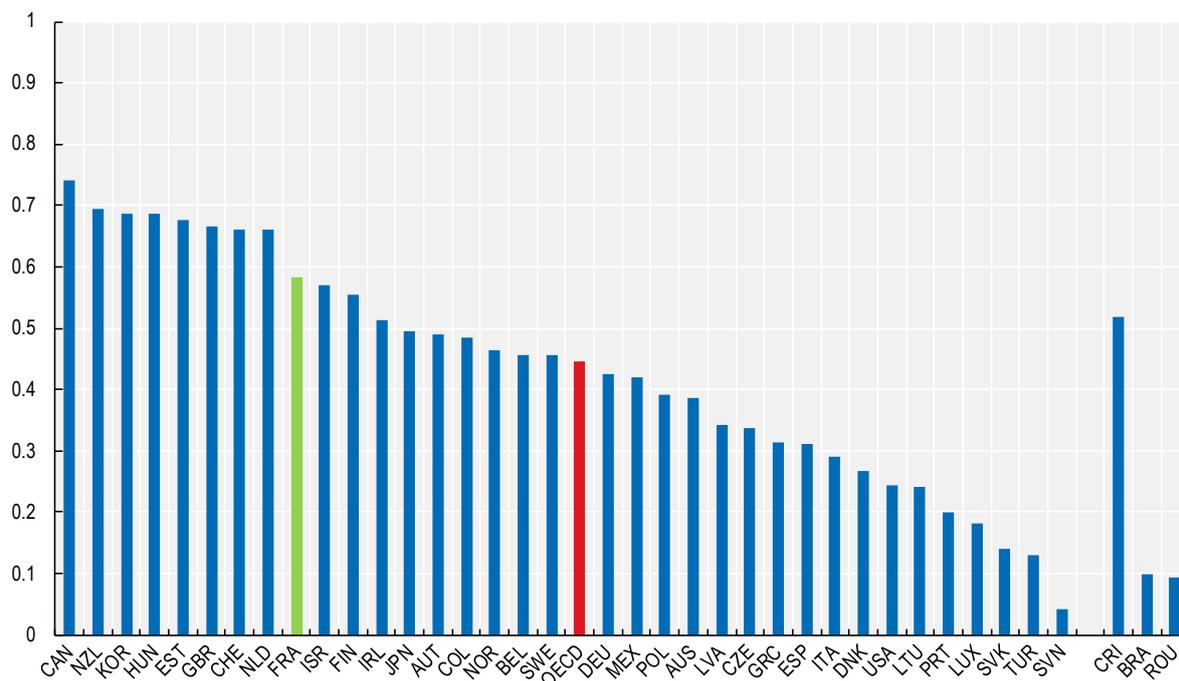
Across OECD member countries, the public service is generally the largest national employer (OECD, 2021^[7]). In France in 2019, the State public service (Fonction publique d'État - FPE) alone accounted for nearly 2.5 million employees, 12% of whom worked in the ATE (DGAFF, 2020^[8]). These figures reflect the great diversity of jobs in the territorial administration of the State, and in public service in general.

However, this diversity of professions seems to be little understood or noticed by the French public, and therefore by potential candidates for entry into the public service. This challenge is not unique to France, and is frequently found across OECD member countries, which are seeking to adapt their communication tools and strategies. Thus, 97% of OECD member countries have one or more digital portals on which public jobs are listed in order to increase the visibility of public job offers and their diversity (OECD, 2020^[9]).

Since February 2019, France has used a public job board and information portal called *Place de l'Emploi Public* (PEP), a single portal comprising all job offers within the three levels of public service. PEP is based on its predecessor, the Interministerial Public Employment Exchange (Bourse interministérielle de l'Emploi Public), which only centralised job offers from the state public service. This tool allows the French administration to centralise its job offers and to reach a larger and more diverse public. This type of platform is essential in the development of proactive recruitment processes (Figure 1.2).

² Decentralised government services are the services that relay decisions taken by the central administration to the local level and manage government services at the local level. They account for more than 95% of all government employees. They should not be confused with the services of local authorities, which are decentralised and whose staff belong to the local public service and not to the State. Most ministries have deconcentrated services spread over several geographical levels. The deconcentrated services are generally placed under the authority of a prefect. The departmental directorates are headed by the departmental prefect. Regional directorates are under the authority of the regional prefect, who is the prefect of the department in which the capital of the region is located. <https://www.collectivites-locales.gouv.fr/institutions/administration-territoriale-de-letat>

Figure 1.2. Use of proactive recruitment practices, 2020



Note: Japan is not included because recruitment criteria are assessed with different tools depending on the type of exam. Denmark is not included due to the lack of common processes for central administration. Australia is not included, as each organisation decides on its recruitment procedures. The composite indicator of employer attractiveness is composed of the following aspects: (1) emphasis in recruitment materials; (2) measures in place to attract more and better candidates with the right skills; (3) use of methods to determine attractiveness criteria for qualified candidates; (4) adequate compensation systems to attract good candidates; and (5) measures in place to improve representation of underrepresented groups. The index ranges from 0 (no use of proactive recruitment practices) to 1 (high use of proactive recruitment practices). The variables comprising the index and their relative importance are based on expert judgments. They are presented for the purpose of creating a pilot index and are therefore subject to change. Missing data for countries were estimated by replacing them with the average.

Source: OECD (2021^[7]), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.

This centralisation of offers allows for a better reflection of the diversity of public service jobs, though it also risks diluting some of them among hundreds of other announcements in different fields, despite the possibility of filtering the offers through the use of search criteria. The implementation of functionalities that allow PEP's offers to be shared on other specialised platforms, such as LinkedIn for example, seeks to better meet the expectations of candidates and find them where they are. PEP has 55 000 job postings at any given time. The issue of the job offer ecosystem in which PEP operates is central to reaching its target audiences. One of the purposes of these platforms should not be so much to centralize ads for candidates who are already convinced of the potential of the public sector as an employer, as to proactively reach out to potential candidates by republishing certain offers on specialised sites that are more likely to convince them of the potential of the public service as an employer.

This adaptation of communication tools and strategies also involves the development of an employer brand for the entire central administration. In 2020, 47% of OECD member countries had a brand like this, which illustrates the importance of this tool for improving the visibility of the jobs and functions available in the public service (OECD, 2020^[9]). France has recently joined this list of countries by launching its public service employer brand called 'Choose the Public Service' (*'choisir le service public.gouv.fr'*). The French public service employer brand seeks to promote the public sector as an employer of choice through a brand identity that reflects the values of public service. The results of this important project will be monitored in the coming months to ensure that these efforts increase the visibility of public sector job offers.

and result in a quantitative and qualitative increase in applications. In addition, since July 2021, PEP has made it possible to strengthen the visibility and communication of public employers by allowing them to create a dedicated "employer page."

While this functionality is gaining momentum within the public service, this is not the case for deconcentrated regional administrations, which often do not have an employer brand or a dedicated employer page. The possible use, by some deconcentrated employers, of presentations of the positions, their challenges, the administrations, and the territories via other media (video or audio) can contribute to improving representations, reinforcing the employer brand, and facilitating the application process.

While employer brands can generate interest in the public service as a whole, local solutions specific to the ATE professions must also be provided. Public job fairs organised by PFRH or the presence of ATE employers on social networks are all practices that contribute to strengthening this visibility. The presence at local job fairs, and particularly public employment fairs, is a practice that is developing in the regions. The PFRH of the Grand Est region, for example, has already organised four public job fairs, including one online in order to adapt to health constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic. These fairs have brought together more than 50 public employers, allowing visitors to attend thematic conferences and to exchange with mobility/career advisors. In a similar way, the Hauts-de-France HRP organised "Mobility Thursdays" in 2019, presenting sub-regional and inter-public service mobility offers in each department within the region.

Finally, the visibility of jobs must be accompanied by the visibility of tasks and missions. There is a need for a better understanding of the titles of job offers and for communication around the missions of the ATE. These aspects are supported by numerous academic articles, which have many implications for the attractiveness of ATE.

In most OECD countries, only a minority of employees would work for the public sector if they had a choice between the public and private sectors (Cordes and Vogel, 2022^[10]). Job descriptions are therefore important, as they provide an opportunity to highlight the potential cultural fit between employees and organisations, which is one of the most salient factors in hiring and selection (Fowler and Birdsall, 2020^[11]). Moreover, the person-job fit tends to have a greater impact on career choices than the person-organisation fit, which means that job descriptions and associated communication strategies must be clearly aligned with the expectations and motivations of the target audience (Cordes and Vogel, 2022^[10]). While it is commonly accepted that recruitment strategies should be aimed at candidates who are already motivated to work for the public service, operationalising this can be problematic (Asseborg and Vogel, 2018^[12])—particularly because not all public service jobs necessarily require candidates with high levels of "Public Service Motivation", such as accountants or IT personnel (Asseborg et al., 2020^[13]). A public employer branding strategy based solely on societal impact may therefore not be effective in responding to competition in the labour market (Keppeler and Papenfuß, 2020^[14]). Highlighting the pro-social attributes of public sector jobs (such as societal impact, public service values, higher purpose) is advised only as a complementary rather than exclusive strategy, as both extrinsic and intrinsic perceived employment incentives are considerably more attractive to potential candidates.

In France, job descriptions may not be sufficiently informative to attract candidates that are not accustomed to the State administration. The presence of acronyms, too specific vocabulary, and an overly austere presentation can discourage applications but also give an impression of coldness and opacity. For example, the UK Department for Education is working on the link between clear language and increased attractiveness (UK Government, 2019^[15]). The editorial quality of job offers could be improved to be more approachable. Similarly, professional values and cultures would benefit from being explained through other media than just the PEP website. Some of the territorial services we encountered also mentioned as a difficulty the job titles that are strongly marked by old, specific administrative cultures that are not easily understandable for candidates who are not familiar with government. For example, the term "administrative secretary" covers functions that are far removed from what an administrative secretary in the private sector

does (writing notes, preparing bulletins/memos, etc. in the public sector), leading to possible confusion for candidates. Initial work has been underway since July 2021 to improve the drafting of job offers through including new fields covering remote working, management and salary range. The effect and democratisation of these innovations have yet to be measured in the deconcentrated administration.

Focus area 1: Improving the visibility and attractiveness of public service jobs offered in the regions

In particular through:

- The development of clear job descriptions with a minimum of jargon, and offering precise information, particularly in terms of the compensation offered
- The possibility to publish clear and simple job offers, redirecting them from the Public Employment job portal to specialised portals in the required field
- Employer branding work is central to ATE's activities
- Strengthening the participation of public employers in local job communication events
- Setting up focus groups with potential candidates or recent recruits to inform attractiveness policies and targeted communication campaigns

1.2.2. Reinforcing ongoing work to better clarify compensation to public servants and candidates

Public sector salaries often crystallize the debate on attractiveness. The central issue at stake here is to better understand the extent to which a salary perceived as non-competitive can affect the attractiveness of the public service. It should be noted that although comparisons are difficult, the average net monthly salary, including bonuses, of French public servants (ministries and public establishments) is higher than that of private and semi-public sector employees (DGAFP, 2020^[8]). The differences are more in favor of the public sector in categories B and C, whereas for categories A, and therefore positions with greater expertise, the private sector pays more.³ However, the weak evolution of these salaries over time reinforces the feeling that the purchasing power of public servants is declining. The prolonged freezing of the index point, which serves as the basis for pay scales and determines index pay, is not only a concern for public servants in their current remuneration but is also a problem in the evaluation of their future pensions, which are essentially calculated on this basis, with little account taken of allowances received. However, there are compensation schemes to compensate for difficult living or working conditions, such as:

- the temporary mobility allowance, which is paid on the dual condition that the mobility decided by the administration has actually been carried out and that there is a particular difficulty in filling a post;
- specific allowance linked to tenure (*l'avantage spécifique d'ancienneté - ASA*);
- territorial loyalty allowances in force within the national police force, the prison administration, or for certain geographical areas such as in the Seine-Saint-Denis department.

³ In the French public service, jobs are classified according to their level of recruitment across three categories, designated by the letters A, B, C. Each category comprises grades and jobs corresponding to different levels of responsibility, qualifications, remuneration and recruitment conditions, especially in terms of educational background. Category 'A' jobs require the most experience and educational qualifications, Category 'C' jobs the fewest.

It also includes allowances to compensate for the cost of living such as:

- a residence allowance;
- the specific installation allowance, intended to help certain employees assigned to the Île-de-France region or the Lille area when they take up their first job in a State administration.

In addition to this situation, compensation systems generally differ between ministries and between central and local government, despite the recent convergence of compensation systems in the medico-social sector. With the introduction of the compensation system linked to functions, hardships, experience, and professional commitment (*régime indemnitaire tenant compte des fonctions, des sujétions, de l'expertise et de l'engagement professionnel* – RIFSEEP) for public servants, which seeks to better adapt allowances to the duties and responsibilities of the position and to the performance of the public servant, the compensation system has been able to compensate for the relative stagnation of the indexed system that was in place until 1 January 2022. However, there is often less room for maneuver in the State public service (FPE), with very little flexibility for individualising pay at the territorial administration level.

There are also significant differences in compensation between ministries, which can also be an obstacle to mobility, whether for secondments between bodies or between the different levels of the public service. This observation is the subject of a large-scale compensation convergence project devoted to reducing the imbalances between ministerial departments in the administrative field (State administrators, State administrative attachés and administrative secretaries). In the ATE, this has led to a convergence of compensation in 2022, representing an increase of about EUR 200 gross per month on average for category A staff, and EUR 160 gross for certain category B staff. The Île-de-France region faces a particular challenge due to the concentration of central administrations in the Paris region. It is in the Île-de-France region that the difference in remuneration between the central administration and the ATE is felt the most, making this region appear particularly unequal. The 20 September 2021 bulletin on the guarantee of continued remuneration in the event of mobility within the deconcentrated services of the State seeks to address this situation and will have to be followed closely by the administrations.

In addition, the multiplicity of compensation schemes contributes to their lack of clarity for employees and makes the calculation of their future compensation very complex. Neither the employees nor the HR departments of the ministries have a system that allows them to make a large-scale and rapid calculation of the precise financial impact of a potential mobility move. This remuneration, which depends on many factors such as the entity ('*corps*') of origin, grade, or seniority, varies from one public servant to another. Its calculation is the subject of financial statements drawn up by the specialised payroll services at the request of the public servant or their recruiter. Despite increasingly short deadlines, the time required to draw up these statements can vary from 15 days to one month, making any competitive recruitment process more complex.

In concrete terms, this means that it is currently almost impossible for an employee to quickly find out the precise compensation associated with a given mobility. HR departments are currently unable to respond to numerous individual requests that do not necessarily result in mobility and are time-consuming in the absence of an automated computer system. The very fact of making such a request entails a risk for the employee concerned that their potential future employer will perceive it negatively. The lack of clarity on remuneration, even before applying, represents a high risk that some candidates will withdraw their application at the end of the mobility process. However, as the French public service has a transparent remuneration system, one option might be to develop a remuneration simulator that is as accurate as possible. This tool should be able to take into account efforts to adapt remuneration to the individual situations of public servants, for example through allowances linked to their particular family situation or their professional career path/history. An additional difficulty is to guarantee the transfer of rights and allowances and the stability of remuneration in case of mobility so that public servants are not discouraged from considering mobility during their career.

In addition, the geographical mobility that may result from taking up a position within the ATE makes the question of remuneration even more important. The personal considerations specific to each public servant, and in particular their pre-mobility geographical situation, mean that certain measures must be adapted to the needs of the candidates (see below 'Reinforcing the support of agents and the co-ordination of social action actors'). The issue of dual residence or regular travel to a spouse or family is not a subject that affects all employees in the same way (Cour des Comptes, 2019^[16]). However, these are considerations that can lead to a drop in the number of candidates, refusals of assignments, and therefore a drop in the level of candidates finally assigned because they are part of the end of reserve lists.

This issue also arises in the case of external applications. Potential candidates unfamiliar with the remuneration systems in the public sector may be concerned about the absence of data on the remuneration of the position on the public service jobs portal. However, the DGAFP is currently working on linking a salary range to each job offer, taking into account the various criteria mentioned above. The question of the visibility of remuneration is an important aspect that affects the attractiveness of the ATE. A LinkedIn study found that the salary range and benefits in job descriptions were the most emphasised elements by candidates as relevant to their search strategies (LinkedIn, 2018^[17]). In other words, not including salary information in job descriptions is likely to have a negative impact on the pool of potential candidates, especially compared to other employers who include this type of information in their recruitment campaigns. In a tight labour market with increased competition for in-demand skills and limited ability to adjust salary to match candidates' expectations, improving the visibility of starting salary and benefits - and providing clear details about how they are likely to change with career development - could give the public service a significant competitive advantage.

Focus area 2: Reinforcing ongoing work to better clarify compensation to public servants and candidates

In particular through:

- The implementation of a compensation simulator in case of internal mobility
- Greater visibility of the financial support arrangements for public servants who undertake a mobility assignment, taking into account the personal situations of certain groups (mainly single public servants and public servant couples)
- Including indication of a salary range on the job descriptions published on the public employment jobs portal

1.2.3. Setting up internal and external talent pools to meet the specific needs of hard-to-recruit jobs

The central and federal governments of OECD member countries note that the challenge of attractiveness is not a homogeneous one affecting the entire public service with the same intensity (OECD, 2020^[9]). On the contrary, some professions account for most recruitment difficulties and are more affected by a high current or projected rate of job vacancies. Within the scope of the French ATE, the list of these hard-to-recruit professions varies little in all regions, although difficulties are widespread in the most rural *Départements*, such as Eure and Orne. Functions that are hard to recruit for in the four target regions include software user assistants, computer security, webmasters, and developers, as well as occupational health and safety, and real estate. However, identifying these occupations is still fragmented, as the PFRH do not have all the necessary means to draw up a complete map of the situation in their region on a fine territorial scale (see Rethinking the positioning and missions of the PFRH). The fact that certain professions

are particularly hard to recruit has two main explanations: strong competition on the labour market to attract specialised profiles, and/or a general lack of attractiveness of certain professions and associated tasks.

Strong competition with other employers for certain fields is an issue shared by the majority of OECD countries. For example, 76%, 73%, and 64% of OECD member countries report difficulty attracting data professional skills, information technology professionals, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professionals, respectively (OECD, 2020^[9]). The Digital, Information and Communication Systems sector is thus a sector that reflects the challenges of attractiveness throughout the OECD. Strong competition with the private sector, which is better able to meet the expectations of these candidates in terms of remuneration, career paths and managerial culture generally explains this observation. Within the ATE, this competition is exacerbated by competition with other ministries or other parts of the public service. In the digital sector, the implementation of remuneration standards for digital professions seeks to limit competition within the FPE and to get closer to certain remunerations in the private sector.

At the same time, some professions are experiencing recruitment difficulties due to the nature of the tasks. The example of certain category B or C professions, such as slaughterhouse inspectors, is an example that affects all four regions analysed. In the regions of Hauts-de-France and Normandy, which have been strongly affected by the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, certain goods inspection activities are also suffering from a lack of manpower.

In addition to this distinction between types of jobs, there is a geographic distinction. As mentioned above, certain local difficulties can reinforce the general challenge of attracting ATE jobs. For example, other types of jobs may be in short supply in employment areas that are not very attractive or that do not have the training or higher education structures to provide local training. However, the possibility of local training is not a guarantee of recruitment. In fact, some areas have a limited number of trained personnel due to a lack of attractiveness of the field or initial limitations in the number of students, as in the field of human and animal health.

In addition to these issues related to the supply available on the labour market, there are also elements related to the demand of the deconcentrated services. For example, the sometimes exaggerated levels of skill requirements naturally lead to a limitation in the number of potential candidates. Managers are not always able to objectively determine the appropriate skill levels for the positions, or they detail academic requirements that are not always relevant or reliable indicators of success. This over-specialisation of positions raises the question of managers' ability to formulate their expectations and the quality of the recruitment process in general. Managers need to be supported in order to strengthen their role in the recruitment process and to be able to better objectify the level of specialisation expected of a position. A similar dynamic exists in Israel, where the Public Service Commission developed a pilot project to support hiring managers in developing realistic recruitment criteria for jobs that were hard-to-fill (Gerson, 2020^[18]). The recruitment process must also take better account of the soft skills and adaptability of candidates. This allows for a better job-candidate match, and ultimately leads to an improvement in public servant productivity, commitment to work and length of time in the job.

Given the importance of the roles carried out by professions in the public service that prove hard to recruit for, the question arises as to how the public service can create talent pools for vacant positions through a consistent and strategic use of forward-looking workforce management. There are three aspects to this issue:

- Through an interministerial approach, limited to the State public service. For example, this is already the case for senior management, which since 1 January 2022 has benefited from the creation of the Interministerial Delegation for Senior State Management (Délégation interministérielle à l'encadrement supérieur de l'État - DIESE), which aims to strengthen career development support and skills development for senior State managers.

- Through a local, cross-sector approach, as currently developed within the Local Public Employment Committees (Comité local de l'emploi public - CLEP), enabling local public employment stakeholders to share their challenges in relation to attractiveness and to develop common solutions. The first CLEP, which met in Île-de-France in May 2022, is a cornerstone of this approach that could be strengthened and further supported to develop actionable recommendations.
- Through an approach based on the local job market: universities and professional schools can be considered as pools of potential qualified candidates ready to enter the public service.

More generally, and in a context of declining application volumes, it is worth considering the most appropriate balance between "buying" skills (i.e. via recruitment) and "building" skills internally, i.e. via learning and development programs. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Government Digital Service (GDS) has developed an internal government "academy" to train existing public servants in digital service design. This is being done alongside increased efforts to attract specialist digital skills from outside the public service, such as through the No. 10 Innovation Fellowships Programme. This is a specific, time-limited project that seeks to attract exceptional talent to work on specific missions. The branding and recruitment communication of this program sets it apart from other entry points into the public service. In France, the PFRH are well positioned to be a key player in this area, and consideration could be given to helping the PFRH to engage with managers and decentralised HR departments to better assess their needs in this regard.

Focus area 3: Setting up internal and external pools to meet the specific needs of hard-to-recruit roles

In particular through:

- A strengthening of the regional interdepartmental mapping of skills in order to be able to suggest relevant mobility offers to candidates, as well as the mapping of job vacancies in local employment areas
- Support for managers to strengthen their role in the recruitment process and to be able to better articulate realistic requirements for jobs they recruit for
- A strengthened capacity to conduct strategic workforce planning
- A generalised implementation of Local Public Employment Committees (CLEP), as well as partnership with local employment actors such as the French unemployment agency (Pôle Emploi), the Association for executive employment (Association pour l'emploi des cadres - APEC), and 'Cap emploi' support for professional insertion of people with handicaps. Ensuring the diversity of participants and the regular follow-up of meetings and their associated action plan.

1.2.4. Improving the application of interdepartmental managerial values

Managerial culture is often discussed in the context of employee engagement at work. Academic articles on the subject show that the application of different managerial values has significant effects on voluntary separation and job performance (Sheridan, 1992^[19]). The leadership exercised within an administration therefore has an important influence on the attractiveness, as well as on the level of commitment and retention of public servants. Managerial culture thus has an important role on the attractiveness of public administrations of the OECD.

The objective of this report is not to evaluate good or bad managerial practices in the French administration. However, managerial practices have frequently been identified as an obstacle to attractiveness. In France, the public service still often suffers from an image of a hierarchical and bureaucratic managerial culture, out of step with the private sector but also with the other levels of the public service. However, this challenge of changing organisational cultures is not homogeneous, and each organisation, management and team has different practices. Each culture has its roots in different traditions and ways of operating. At the organisational level, this can result in departments with a very hierarchical managerial culture, with a high degree of formality in human relations, while other departments, often more technical, with less formal and more flexible managerial cultures closer to the "engineering" cultures of the private sector.

Management culture is particularly important in attracting and retaining candidates. Informal discussions between public servants and candidates, and the reputation of certain organisations, have an impact on the ability of administrations to attract candidates with the necessary skills. In addition, the tools available to candidates to learn about an employer (LinkedIn, Glassdoor, alumni groups, etc.) have shifted the decision-making balance in favor of candidates (OECD, 2022^[20]). In practice, this means that a strong management culture can attract talent, while a reputation for poor management or work-life imbalance can deter qualified candidates from applying.

The OECD has identified values-based leadership as a core competency of the senior public service across OECD member countries (Gerson, 2020^[18]). Helping managers identify relevant values and manage competing tensions in the application of these values is a good practice. A particularly useful way to do this is to create groups or communities of practice that offer managers at similar levels the opportunity to exchange approaches to common challenges and to question their practice, as is the case, for example, in Ireland and the Netherlands. In France, the MENTOR training platform for government employees offers a series of courses on management. The 360 degree evaluation of managers, despite the cost it represents, can be a relevant option to ensure the implementation of managerial values learned or developed among management. This type of evaluation highlights the complexity of managers' missions, which also consist of showing empathy, building team spirit, or creating cohesion. In this sense, the follow-up of the 360-degree evaluation experiment in the Directorate for the French State Territorial Administration (Direction de l'administration territoriale de l'État – DATE) conducted in 2021 by the Superior Council for Territorial Support and Evaluation (Conseil supérieur de l'appui territorial et de l'évaluation – CSATE) is a potential future good practice.

Focus area 4: Improving the application of interdepartmental managerial values

In particular through:

- The definition, dissemination, and operational implementation of the managerial values of the ATE, and even of the FPE. This new framework of values must be more attentive to more personalised approaches to management with a focus on career development and the development of skills. This framework should seek to move away from overly hierarchical management methods that are ultimately disempowering and discouraging both for external candidates and for existing employees
- The development of a collaborative approach in managerial cultures, through the comparative analysis of different ministerial and inter-ministerial managerial cultures in central administration and in the regions, for example through surveys of public servants
- Strengthening the role of the PFRH to support managers and develop training in line with managerial values
- The increased mobility of managers between the central and territorial administrations of the State should also facilitate the diffusion of a common managerial culture.

1.3. Towards a dynamic and adaptable career

Mobility or taking up a position in a region must be part of a coherent and valued career path. Each mobility and each public servant are different, and therefore requires adapted solutions and tools, particularly concerning their duration. In addition, the law on the transformation of the public service of 6 August 2019 introduced new contractual terms and conditions which could be used to address certain specific issues related to the attractiveness of the ATE. Finally, an efficient HR ecosystem, with actors with clearly defined and distributed competencies, at territorial level, can allow for a better identification of challenges and solutions. The PFRH have a role to play in this ecosystem.

1.3.1. Enhancing mobility towards ATE in career paths and designing regional careers

Geographical mobility to an unattractive region, as well as sub-regional mobility that involves a change of employer, represent a small percentage of all mobility in the French public service, but remain an essential tool for the assignment of public servants in the regions. Behind the term geographic mobility, there are two types of mobility:

- Short-term geographic mobility, such as secondments to deconcentrated administrations, or the type of regular mobility undertaken by Prefects
- Long-term geographic mobility, which corresponds to situations in which public servants wish to settle in the territory on a medium/long-term basis.

In the first case, although some bodies, such as the prefectural corps, see mobility as an integral part of their career development, this is rarely the case for the majority of public servants. The main objective of these mobilities should be to use them as "career accelerators". However, in France, it sometimes seems difficult for public servants to perceive the professional incentives for mobility. For example, there is little formal recognition of the skills acquired during a mobility or salary increases at the end of a secondment. The August 2019 law on the transformation of the public service seeks to remedy this by introducing

"ministerial management guidelines" (*lignes directrices ministérielles de gestion*). These may allow for an "exit bonus" (*bonus de sortie*) such as obtaining a sought-after job more quickly following a minimum period of time spent in unattractive territories. The effects of this reform will have to be monitored over time, as 38% of executives wish to move to a deconcentrated service (Ministère de la Transformation et de la Fonction Publiques, 2021^[21]). In addition to the professional value of mobility, there is also the issue of personal constraints related to short-term mobility, such as double residence, additional transportation costs, children's schooling, etc.

The second case is directly related to the regional public employment ecosystem. In the Grand Est region, for example, in 2015, changes in *Département* were most common at age 26, while departures from the Grand Est were between ages 23 and 30 (Insee, 2018^[22]). These ages generally correspond to pivotal early career moments, underscoring the importance of making local career paths. A public employee should have the means to spend part of their career in the region of their choice. In concrete terms, this frames the local public employment market as an ecosystem that should value intra-regional mobility when the nature of the job allows it. Certain cross-functional or interdepartmental careers can thus represent an interesting field to experiment with regional career paths. Mobility should therefore be encouraged in order to offer public servants frequent opportunities for development and to prevent stagnation once a certain position has been obtained. This mobility should be able to apply to the three branches of the public service.

According to a report by the French Court of Auditors (Cour des Comptes – CDC) in 2019, whose opinions were confirmed by the interviews in the four pilot regions of this project, a particular challenge is the assignment of public servants to available jobs through posting or mobility options (Cour des Comptes, 2019^[16]). Thus, requests for geographic mobility by public servants are primarily directed at areas considered to be the most attractive and not necessarily those with the greatest needs. Actual mobility is much less important than desired mobility. Spontaneous geographic mobility does not meet the needs of jobs to be filled in unattractive areas, as the adjustment is made primarily through the first assignments of new public servants resulting from competitive examinations. Some geographic areas have a large number of young public servants eager to leave what they consider as an undesired assignment as soon as possible, creating job instability. Conversely, other regions, particularly in the southern and western parts of metropolitan France, have few new public servants arriving. This has increased the average age of the public servants in place but has also slowed down their career paths. In unattractive areas, many positions remain unfilled or are filled too late after long vacancy periods, which is detrimental to the quality of public service. A reflection on mobility in areas suffering from a deficit of attractiveness could be supported through the indicators mentioned in an interdepartmental auditing report (Inspection générale des finances et Inspection générale de l'administration, 2021^[23]). This could make it possible to define accelerated career paths, formally or informally, for public servants who accept transfers to these regions.

It is also worth mentioning that, although the objective is to encourage more mobility, too much mobility in a public employment system could also have negative effects, such as dilution of institutional knowledge, fragmentation of values, or lack of responsibility for multi-year or longer-term projects. Beyond efforts to promote mobility, the PFRH would be well placed to reflect on how mobility can and should be linked to the type of career path that might be of interest to candidates and existing staff. In Ireland, for example, the recent public service strategy enshrines the objective of greater mobility, in the context of the wider implementation of flexible working models (Government of Ireland, 2021^[24]).

In France, some interviewees noted particular difficulties in retaining first-time employees in less attractive regions beyond two or three years. While this generates costs in terms of recruiting and training new talent, it may also reflect a broader trend toward more varied career paths. This raises a question about the nature of the positive effects that this type of mobility can have, such as the regular input of new ideas and perspectives. In other words, candidates may be more willing to spend a relatively short period of time in a less attractive region if they know that this stay is part of a career development project that will not necessarily require them to spend excessive amounts of time in these less attractive regions.

Focus area 5: Enhancing mobility towards ATE through career paths, and design regional career paths

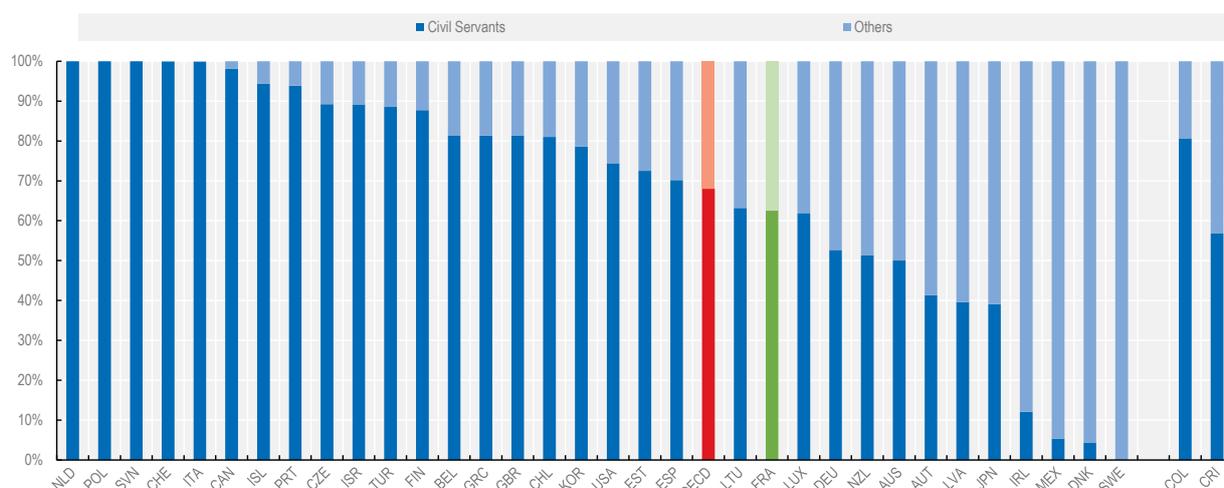
In particular through:

- The formalisation of a local public employment ecosystem allowing for regional inter-ministerial and inter-public service mobility
- Valuing mobility to the ATE in the career path of public servants through the implementation of a system of "career springboards" for public servants who undertake mobility to areas identified as unattractive

1.3.2. Towards a more strategic use of entry points to the public service

OECD countries have a variety of contractual arrangements to meet different needs (Figure 1.3). Similar to France, a distinction is generally made between public servants whose employment is protected by a specific employment framework, and contractual employees. Career public servants allow countries to have a highly professional public service dedicated to the public interest, while contractual workers generally provide a higher degree of flexibility in terms of recruitment and management.

Figure 1.3. Public servants and other central government employees, 2018



Note: Data for Denmark, Israel, Japan, Mexico, and New Zealand are for 2019. Data for France, Germany, Korea, and Poland refer to 2017. Data for Colombia, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Türkiye, and the United States are for 2016. Data for Slovenia refer to 2015. Data on other public sector workers were not available for Hungary, Norway, and the Slovak Republic. For Korea, data for public servants were compiled by the Ministry of Personnel Management and data for "other public employees" were compiled by the Ministry of Employment and Labour. For Portugal, "other public employees" includes fixed-term executives. Public servants defined as public servants under a specific public legal framework or other specific arrangements are referred to as "tjenstemænd" in Denmark.

Source: OECD (2019)^[25], *Government at a Glance 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8ccf5c38-en>.

In France, public servants enter the public service following a competitive examination for entry into a body or job category. The exam assesses the skills of candidates through written and/or oral tests. The Cour des Comptes (French National Audit Office) noted in 2020 that "competitive examinations giving access to entities or job categories are a long and costly recruitment process which favor equal treatment in access

to public jobs and the long-term management of bodies, though sometimes to the detriment of adaptation to the immediate needs of administrations and users" (Cour des Comptes, 2020^[26]).

This statement, confirmed by our observations, is all the more worrying since the number of candidates for the competitive examination has been declining almost continuously since 2005 (there were 650 000 candidates for external competitive examinations in the FPE in 1997 compared to 228 000 in 2018 (Ministère de la Transformation et de la Fonction Publique, 2020^[11])). Mathematically, and with the number of examinations remaining almost stable over the same period, this translates into a declining selectivity rate since 2009, with fewer and fewer candidates per competitive examination. Within the scope of the ATE, this means that even where budget has been approved for positions, they might not be filled at the end of competitive examinations due to a lack of candidates or because candidates have turned down the offer of the competitive examination. This observation can also be made for the public training schools (Instituts régionaux d'administration) that select and train candidates to fill a variety of (mostly) corporate functions such as in Human Resources, finance, procurement and management. However, the decline in the attractiveness of these competitive examinations is not constant: the 2019 exams had a very low attendance rate (34.5% of registered candidates sat the exams), but this figure was 61.6% for the spring session. This significant difference is mainly explained by the implementation of two sessions of competitive examinations in 2020. The average rate has been around 50% since 2012. In this context, the public service transformation law of 6 August 2019 has introduced more flexibility in the implementation of competitive examinations. For example, the use of national competitive examinations with local assignments makes it possible to increase the visibility of positions and respond to local attractiveness challenges. This an interesting avenue in strengthening the attractiveness of certain positions.

The decline in the attractiveness of competitive examinations as the main means of entry into the public service may have several explanations that go beyond the scope of this report, but which may be linked to the lack of interest of candidates in the concept of career itself, the perception by some candidates of a long process requiring too much preparation, or a general lack of attractiveness of the public service. Similarly, fluctuations in attractiveness cannot be separated from cyclical trends attributable to numerous societal or economic factors (in the event of an economic crisis, for example).

However, the latter point tends to be contradicted by an increase in the percentage of contractual workers in the FPE, reaching 17.8% of the FPE workforce as of 31 December 2018 (DGAFP, 2020^[8]). This was before the introduction of the law on the transformation of the public service of 6 August 2019, which facilitated and diversified the methods of entry into the public service. Indeed, contractual workers can now access management jobs, all jobs in state public institutions, and the majority of permanent jobs in state administrations. However, this flexibility granted by the law to meet specific needs in the State territorial administration (ATE) is not yet used to its full potential. Cultural and administrative obstacles limit the possibilities of recruiting contractual employees. Ministries have differing degrees of centralisation of human resources management procedures in their deconcentrated services. Thus, the decision to hire a contract employee rather than a public servant must sometimes be made at the central level, limiting the room for maneuver of the deconcentrated services and adding to bureaucracy. Ministerial oversight of human resources management can, and should, be accompanied by greater freedom of movement for the deconcentrated services in order to make the most of economies of scale, especially regarding the wage bill. This can be achieved, for example, through better involvement of managers on the ground, who are expected to be the direct supervisors of new recruits, or through closer management dialogue between central and deconcentrated services. Some departments have expressed the need to train managers in recruitment despite the existence of recent pedagogical guides dedicated to the State administration (DGAFP, 2020^[27]).

Moreover the use of contractual staff is rarely part of a clear staffing strategy, including a budgetary one. Such a strategy should make it possible to define the conditions under which contractual jobs would be opened up and seek to support as much as possible those contractual employees who wish to remain in the public service to take competitive examinations. The *Département* of Seine Saint Denis is a pioneer in

this last aspect, contributing financially to the costs of preparing for the competitive examinations for its agents.

Some OECD members have begun to consider how to improve capacity to conduct strategic workforce planning. For example, Australia is currently mapping the internal capacity to identify skills gaps and develop a range of solutions to attract, develop and retain talent in the Australian public service. Given the role of the PFRH in strategic workforce planning, it may be useful to consider how workforce analysis could better integrate attractiveness and the use of contract workers in a strategic and ongoing manner.

In addition, the significant development of internship and apprenticeship opportunities, whose visibility is being strengthened with the establishment a dedicated portal (Place de l'apprentissage et des stages - PASS) intended to publish all offers. This can also provide a response to the challenge of attractiveness by creating pools of talent. These internships and apprenticeships are in no way intended to compensate for staff shortages, but they can be interesting tools for familiarising a wider public with the diversity of public service jobs. They enable trainees and apprentices to acquire practical knowledge of public service jobs in real-life conditions. The development of a real structured policy for the reception of apprentices and trainees in the public service thus enables public employers to detect future talents and build a pool of talent.

However, the efforts invested in apprenticeships must be followed by means to retain apprentices, (such as through support in sitting competitive examinations) and to develop local and/or mobile talent pools. In this respect, an experimental scheme for access to the public service was opened in 2020 to apprentices with disabilities at the end of their apprenticeship in the public sector. Article 91 of Law No. 2019-828 of 6 August 2019, on the transformation of the public service, institutes a procedure allowing for disabled people to acquire official public servant status (*'titularisation'*) at the end of an apprenticeship in the public service, after verification of their professional aptitude by a commission.

This development of mixed forms of training such as apprenticeship or training combining work and study is also in line with the development of professionalising approaches in universities and higher education institutions.

A promising new avenue, which has yet to be confirmed, is the implementation of the "Talents in the Public Service" (*Talents du service public*) plan, which is part of France's equal opportunity policy. The aim of this plan is to diversify recruitment in the public service by giving confidence to young people to apply and making professions more attractive, and to promote diversity in the public service with regard to young people from modest backgrounds who are eligible for a higher education grant based on socio-economic criteria.

Focus area 6: Towards a strategic use of entry procedures in public service

In particular through:

- A better welcome for newcomers to public service with more effective induction and integration sessions, and clear career prospects adapted to the contractual modality used
- A clear definition of the conditions under which the use of contractual staff should be used, and the development of tools to allow managers and recruiters to integrate them with a certain degree of autonomy into a transparent budgeting strategy
- Simplification and professionalisation of competitive recruitment procedures, which could involve rationalising the number of competitive examinations or perpetuating the measures put in place during the Covid-19 health crisis, such as the electronic transmission of the documents required to take part in the competitive examination or the use of videoconferencing during the examination.
- A reinforcement of national competitive examinations with local assignment, when the deconcentration of recruitments is neither possible nor relevant
- A strengthening of tools similar to the "*Prépa Talents*" to encourage applications from young candidates from modest backgrounds
- A development of the accompaniment of contractual employees, apprentices, trainees but also public servants with high potential to pass a competitive examination, and the use of the full range of possibilities of the 2019 law

1.3.3. Strengthening and clarifying the ATE HR ecosystem

Major global trends affect countries and public services and present challenges for HR departments. Digitalisation, demographic changes, and the potential for remote working are all examples of trends that offer opportunities to reshape workforces and workplaces, as well as the cities and towns in which public services are located. These trends affect the public service and, with it, have a ripple effect on the HR function whose role is to hire, retain and develop staff with the skills and motivation to meet these challenges.

One of the key questions in relation to ATE is how the structure of human resource management (HRM) functions contributes to the ability to attract and retain talent. However, the HR function in the ATE has many different HR actors and roles. In some cases, this limits its capacity to act and may blur the allocation of responsibilities for public servants and potential candidates. HR management responsibilities are divided between central HR departments and local HR managers within joint secretariats at *Départementale* level (*secrétariats généraux communs départementaux* - SGCDs). The PFRH play a support and co-ordination role at the interministerial level. Although there may be advantages to such specialisation, the interviews conducted in the course of this project emphasised the need to strengthen communication and co-ordination between the various HR actors. In addition, the services offered at ministerial and interministerial level may overlap, particularly in the area of training or social support provided by the employer. For example, in the area of social support provided by the employer, an employee in the region may receive benefits from both his or her home ministry and interministerial benefits, which can make the systems less clear.

Linking up within a clear ecosystem could help meet this challenge and develop skills to increase the clarity and effectiveness of these strategic HRM functions. The local public employment committees (CLEP) could

be the relevant bodies for this enhanced co-ordination within a proper ecosystem. This increased co-ordination should allow, among other things, joint work on recruitment obstacles, an improvement in the reception of new arrivals, an enhancement of the public service's employer brand, and the structuring of bridges between all public service employers.

The issue of autonomy for deconcentrated services in managing recruitment processes is intrinsically linked to the nature of the stakeholders. The 22 December 2021 bulletin⁴ allows Prefects more autonomy in the human resource management of deconcentrated services, e.g. through the facility to redeploy up to 3% of staff from one budget program to another, according to “local and governmental priorities”. While the use and consequences have yet to be evaluated, this policy of strengthening the autonomy of deconcentrated services is promising. This flexibility can thus facilitate human resource adjustments, a better matching of resources with needs, and thus allow for new career opportunities.

Path 7: Strengthening and clarifying the ATE HR ecosystem

In particular through :

- The definition of a single point of contact for employees considering or undertaking mobility, with a potential strengthening of the role of career-mobility advisors, as well as the development of a reflection on their interactions with local HR managers
- Clarification of the role of each HR stakeholder in the ecosystem, followed by a clear and unique definition of the roles and responsibilities of each

1.3.4. Rethinking the positioning and missions of the PFRH

The PFRHs are an intermediary for the DGAFP in the regions, but too often find themselves limited in terms of resources and staff to carry out their missions. This hinders their visibility within the local public ecosystem. According to interviews with the pilot PFRHs, they are generally only recognised as full-fledged actors when it comes to the training offers they provide. The PFRH are responsible for compiling catalogs of cross-cutting continuing education courses, particularly in management, under the supervision of the DGAFP and its master plan for lifelong professional training for State employees. This policy is an important lever for developing a common managerial culture within the State.

Other missions of the PFRH remain underdeveloped. For example, strategic workforce planning requires constant contact with all ministerial stakeholders, but results only in a collection of data that is fragmented and often difficult to compare because of incompatible modules across the different human resources management information systems (HRIS). There are two main challenges to implementing an ambitious data analysis policy. First, while HRM systems are theoretically interoperable assuming the necessary harmonisation of modules, there is no common platform for government HR managers to share their data. PFRH are therefore dependent on the goodwill of the administrations concerned to receive the data necessary to conduct workforce planning. Moreover, the question of implementing this type of workforce planning would require upskilling of public servants regarding the collection, processing, and analysis of such data.

The time seems right to continue to reflect on the future of the PFRH by choosing between a refocusing of their functions on the steering of HR policies, and an increase in the scope of their missions, means and staffing to make them the central actors of human resources in the regions and departments, at least for

⁴ Bulletin NOR TFPC2138898C concerning the extension of the right of choice of their collaborators by the decentralised authorities and the implementation of the redeployment of 3% of the staff on the perimeter of the territorial administration of the State (ATE).

certain professions and fields. This observation is in line with the recommendations made in the State's recent Territorial HR Strategy relating to how the PFRH are organised and the skills required of advisors to take on a broader range of functions (Ministère de la transformation et de la fonction publiques, 2022^[28]). The structuring of Local Public Employment Committees (CLEP) will be a useful step in going deeper into the dynamics of hard-to-recruit sectors and occupations at local level and refining knowledge of public employment at territorial level.

Focus area 8: Rethinking the positioning and missions of the PFRH

In particular through:

- Improve PFRH access to workforce and recruitment data and internal capacity to generate meaningful information to inform policy decisions and support management
- Increasing the visibility of PFRH by strengthening communication about the full range of services they offer
- Expand the range of training offerings provided by the PFRH to include coaching, mentoring, intercollegiate/thematic working groups, and team building
- Positioning PFRH at the forefront of piloting flexible working methods and building an evidence base for innovative work and management practices

1.4. The importance of a good quality of life and a reinforced support

The attractiveness of the ATE has a strong territorial dimension through the link with the quality of life offered at in a particular area. One way to mitigate this challenge is to work remotely from another area. In a more direct way, and in order to reinforce the attractiveness of certain territories, public authorities can improve their image by providing a higher degree of support to public servants. This support can be targeted at jobs that are most hard-to-recruit but can also include support measures targeting the family of the public servant. Finally, the promotion of regions themselves is an essential element in strengthening territorial attractiveness.

1.4.1. Leveraging remote working to improve job attractiveness

Remote working has experienced an unprecedented boom with the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has brought about a clear separation between jobs that can be done remotely and those that cannot. This distinction highlights that there are some limitations to the degree to which remote working can improve the attractiveness of the public service. But on the whole, public administrations have been a driving force for this change to working habits and have demonstrated that it is possible to adapt work arrangements. Some activities that were seen as not suitable for remote working for security or sensitivity reasons have seen a shift during the crisis. Remote work alone seems to be a factor of attractiveness and retention. Recent data from LinkedIn shows that remote work jobs accounted for less than 20% of all job postings but received more than 50% of all applications (LinkedIn, 2022^[29]). Additionally, posts that mention such flexibility receive an average of 35% more engagement than those that do not (LinkedIn, 2022^[29]). These numbers do not predict the quality of the candidate profile, but they do indicate the appeal of remote work. Remote work is also positioned as a complementary method to on-site work, which can compensate for certain territorial attractiveness deficits and respond to the socio-economic demands of workers, especially young people, some of whom have seen their expectations change during the health and social crisis.

The practice of remote working thus presents advantages but also challenges that must be taken into account to reinforce the attractiveness of the regions for public servants.

In France, decree No. 2020-524 of May 5, 2020 widens the modalities of remote working by allowing 'remote work up to three days per week up to a total of 12 days of continuous remote work over a month. In theory, this development makes it possible to concentrate one's face-to-face working time over eight days, which can increase the attractiveness of a labour pool struggling to recruit. However, this flexibility may come up against three obstacles:

- Less economic dynamism of the territory concerned, as the public servant does not settle permanently, potentially with her or his family in the local area.
- Geographical isolation of employees who use remote working options to the maximum extent possible, representing a risk to team and organisational cohesion.
- The impossibility for some jobs to be done remotely (security or physical reception reasons).

It is thus essential to keep in mind the advantages offered by remote working, especially in the context of territorial attractiveness. It allows public servants to limit their professional travels (with a positive benefit to health, costs, stress), and thus to reduce the congestion of public transports and roads.

In a context of rising energy prices, the mandatory use of a vehicle can be a barrier for employees who cannot use public transportation or bicycles. The issue of public transportation is particularly significant in the Île-de-France region, where the time it takes to commute to work is almost twice as long as outside the Île-de-France region (39 minutes versus 24 minutes) (Observatoire des Territoires, 2019^[30]). In the coming years, the Grand Paris Express lines will gradually densify the Île-de-France transport network, providing new mobility solutions for Île-de-France employees and expanded residential choices. While waiting for the end of the works, the development of remote working, which has been largely driven by the covid pandemic, can be an alternative to long and arduous commutes and allow public employees to choose housing farther away from the regional offices.

The issue of transportation is intimately linked to that of housing. A reliable public transportation network and good service allow residents to live farther from their place of work and help reduce pressure on housing in nearby cities and suburbs. In the sparsely populated areas of the Grand Est, for example, more than 12% of housing is vacant and could be a solution for some public servants (Insee Analyses Grand Est, 2017^[31]). Remote working thus has the potential to alter the dynamic of choosing housing in relation to distance to workplace, and vice-versa, as living near the workplace no longer has to be considered a priority. It can benefit public servants who wish to live in more rural areas – with potentially larger housing sizes – but also more urban areas, which can be important when transportation times are too long.

Focus area 9: Taking advantage of remote working to improve the attractiveness of positions

In particular through:

- Clarification and emphasis in the job descriptions of the remote working nature of the role and the number of remote working days allowed per week
- Hybrid approaches using third-party locations or workstations located in other secure administrations closer to the public servants' home (sub-prefectures, public finance agencies, police stations, etc.) for work on files requiring secure information systems
- Training for managers to encourage them to take a more managerial approach emphasising objectives, results and performance, rather than one based strictly on presenteeism
- A reflection within each administration on the best way for public servants to implement remote working while maintaining links with their team to reduce the risks of professional and social isolation
- Reflecting on the how the 13 July 2021 agreement on remote working can balance the objectives of improving attractiveness through remote working and developing local economic dynamism

1.4.2. Strengthening support for employees and co-ordination of related public actors

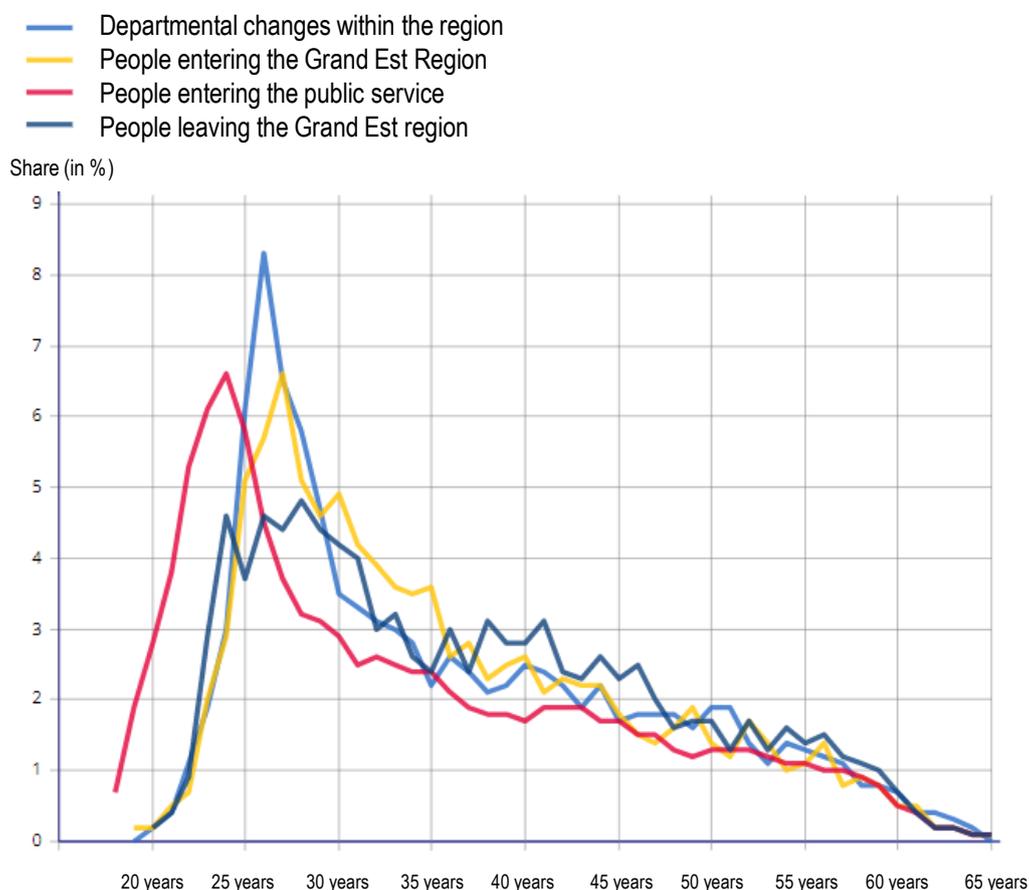
Mobility can be considered in temporal terms (see Enhancing mobility towards ATE in career paths and designing regional careers). It can also be considered in geographical terms: mobility within the ATE of the same region, which requires a lesser degree of support, differs from mobility to or towards the ATE. Mobility towards the ATE creates many personal challenges that must be taken into account in the context of increasing the attractiveness of the public service. Thus, the duration of a mobility and the personal considerations of public servants give rise to three scenarios with different implications:

- A situation in which agents are sufficiently close to the place of residence associated with their former job so as not to have to move, as may be the case in the ATE in Île-de-France, or in rural departments adjacent to metropolitan departments.
- A situation known as "dual residence", which entails additional costs and is generally only possible for the highest levels of the administration or for agents at the end of their career.
- A move from home.

Personal considerations specific to each public servant, and in particular their pre-mobility geographical situation, mean that certain measures must be adapted to the needs of the candidates. The study conducted by the French national statistical office (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* - INSEE) on the geographic mobility of the entire public service in the Grand Est region is enlightening in this regard (Figure 1.4). First of all, sub-regional mobility accounts for a large share of mobility, particularly among younger employees. Moreover, most interregional mobility is with neighboring regions, and does not always involve a change of residence (Insee, 2018^[22]). In addition to this, category A public servants under the age of 36 represent 41% of mobile public servants in the Grand Est region. This point is critical, as some single, often younger, public servants may refuse a job offer because of too high a relocation cost (Guler, 2012^[32]).

Figure 1.4. Mobility within the public service of the Grand Est region

Age distribution of public employees in the Grand Est who are not stable in their department, according to the nature of their mobility



Source: INSEE (2018), Low attractiveness of public service in the Grand Est.

The support of employees and social support by public employers thus play an important role in the attractiveness of the region. This diagnosis is confirmed by the results of a recent survey of managers in the public service, which emphasize that 38% and 32% of the public service executives surveyed identified the need to strengthen professional and extra-professional support as levers that could encourage mobility (Ministère de la Transformation et de la Fonction Publiques, 2021^[21]). The many HR actors mobilised in the regions and by the ministries would thus benefit from strengthening the support functions for agents in these two dimensions, thus simplifying the mobility process.

The social support within the ATE includes both a regional interministerial element and an element specific to each ministry. Within the interministerial social support, individual benefits are managed by the central administration and are identical throughout the country. This is the case, in particular, for the installation assistance for government employees (*aide à l'installation des personnels de l'État - AIP*), which can be a lever for attractiveness. On the other hand, collective services are managed at the regional level (permanent and temporary housing, and daycare places). The supply therefore varies according to the regions and living areas. Funds are delegated to the regions according to the needs expressed. It should be noted that the current childcare offer does not include other childminder types, such as the network of

certified childminders (*assistantes maternelles*). The difference in services offered from one region and one department to another limits the visibility that public servants or candidates have on their support.

This support is not limited to the simple move but must also be carried out in the daily life of the public servant. For example, the question of occupational health is a key issue for public service employees and trade unions. Public employees benefit from occupational health services, which are often perceived as insufficient. While the evaluation of occupational health systems goes well beyond the scope of this report, this issue stands out particularly at a time when the public sector itself is having difficulty attracting occupational health professionals capable of performing these functions.

In addition to occupational health, the subject of health is a determining factor for public servants and the French in general. Indeed, in a context marked by the health crisis, the lack of health facilities and the presence of numerous "medical deserts" in a region may constitute a particular obstacle to the installation of public agents. As a result, recognising that health "is a condition for a happy life (Région Grand Est, 2020^[33]) and the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2022^[34]), the Grand Est region has committed, through a 2021-2027 health roadmap, to offering health professionals support for the creation of practices and health centres in rural areas. Promoting access to these centres for public agents would help to overcome the weakness of the medical network in certain areas. In order to improve its attractiveness for health professionals, the region also plans to provide grants for interns doing an internship in priority areas or health centers, and to support the creation of reception and accommodation facilities for future health professionals setting up in the Grand Est. In addition, a one-stop-shop for public servants and their families to consult medical professionals is being set up in the department of Eure, where several experiments are taking place to recruit and retain public servants. It will be important for other regions and departments suffering from a lack of doctors to monitor the results of this action on the territorial attractiveness of the FPE.

Focus area 10: Strengthening support for employees and co-ordination of related public actors

In particular through:

- A clearer definition of the conditions of eligibility for social support benefits, and an automatic simulation carried out before a move/transfer
- Collaborative mechanisms, such as a web portal, to ensure a good flow of information that could reduce the mismatch between supply and demand

1.4.3. Identifying the conditions for supporting spouses in a context of contrasting regional economic dynamism

The economic dynamism of a region or catchment area is a key element in the decision-making process of candidates for mobility or for a first job. An employment area that is not very dynamic or that has a low variety of sectors can be a barrier to relocating public employees with families who want to work. Large metropolitan areas may be more attractive to joint-income couples, in part because of a greater potential for job opportunities. Studies show that since the 1960s, dual-career couples have moved to major U.S. metropolitan areas at a greater rate than single people (Dora L. Costa, 2000^[35]). In other words, the challenge of inducing geographic mobility is likely to affect dual-career couples differently than single employees. Since the areas facing the greatest attractiveness challenges within the ATE are generally territories perceived as not very dynamic, it is important that candidates and their families have access to professional support for finding employment.

Support for employees must go hand in hand with support for spouses, which is currently not included in the scope of interministerial social support and is only implemented in rare cases where the spouse belongs to the same ministry, or thanks to the proactive stances of certain ministries such as the Ministry of the Armed Forces. Given its specific professional culture, in order to strengthen the retention of military personnel, the Ministry of the Armed Forces has been implementing a "family plan" since 2018, which seeks, among other things, to improve the supply of childcare, the supply of housing in areas where there is a shortage of rentals and offers a moving platform that facilitates the procedures and does not require any advance payment. Support for spouses is also a priority of the plan, through the "Defence Mobility" program. This support is made possible by the existence of dozens of local offices that enable spouses to think about their mobility and find professional opportunities through partnerships with the hospital and local government services and the employment office. These examples of measures are strong signs of the mobilisation of public authorities to facilitate and reinforce the mobility of military personnel by creating a global mobility contract and could be the subject of shared reflection within the regions, departments and State services confronted with a lack of attractiveness, within the framework of support measures for agents, provided that an appropriate ministerial resource ceiling is validated.

In addition, the influence of the local economic and social context on the well-being of residents—including public officials—must be taken into account. Indeed, the local economic dynamism affects the morale and behavior of the inhabitants, even when they are not personally affected by its good and bad developments. Numerous econometric analyses highlight the impact of variations in the employment rate at the macro and micro levels on various symptoms of malaise, such as the malaise declared by citizens and the abstention rate (Algan, Malgouyres and Senik, 2019^[36]) (Tella, MacCulloch and Oswald, 2003^[37]). Conversely, residing in a commune that has become more affluent (increase in median income) is associated with lower individual anxiety (Algan, Malgouyres and Senik, 2019^[36]).

Focus area 11: Identifying the conditions of accompaniment of the spouses in a context of contrasted regional economic dynamism

In particular through:

- An increased role and resources for the PFRH in supporting spouses in certain specific cases, for example for occupations and/or employment areas that are hard-to-fill.

1.4.4. Capitalising on the cultural and environmental capital of the territories to attract and retain public servants

The attractiveness of the region, through its heritage and nature, is an important factor in the recruitment process. Beyond economic indicators, the well-being of public servants also depends on the image they have of their territory. Marketing strategies that showcase the dynamism of territories can help shape this impression. Territorial brands have a dual function: to promote the territory's assets beyond its borders, thus contributing to its attractiveness to people outside the region; and to mobilize local actors around a territorial project (OECD, 2022^[21]). The participation of stakeholders in the development of a territorial brand is crucial to the success of this approach (OECD, 2022^[21]). In this sense, it is a matter of supporting the development of a "link brand" rather than a "place brand". Several initiatives aimed at developing and perpetuating a territorial brand already exist and can enable inhabitants to better appreciate certain aspects of their locality, considered as common goods. This is the case, for example, of the Metropolis of Greater

Nancy in the Grand Est region, which is developing a tourism offer based on the attractions of the Vosges and rural areas, as well as on the cultural offer of the city of Nancy.

However, this attractiveness must also be reinforced once public servants have made the decision to move to a new region. This points to a regional integration of public servants in order to discover their new region. In Seine-Saint-Denis, the institutional attachment is the subject of important work with the setting up of a seminar dedicated to new arrivals in a prestigious local place (the museum of art and history of Saint Denis) to underline the specificities of the territory, to make it better known and to allow public servants to appreciate its richness and diversity. This helps to reinforce the values and meaning of the missions as well as the emotional attachment to the territory.

The natural and cultural arguments are different in each catchment area but remain solid arguments in terms of attractiveness. For example, the environment in the broadest sense has become an essential element in the attractiveness of territories: in 2008, the proximity of a green space was for 72% of French people an important criterion when choosing a place to live (IPSOS/UNEP, 2008^[38]), in 2016 this figure was 85% (IFOP/UNEP, 2016^[39]). In the Grand Est region, the city of Metz is now one of the greenest cities in France, thanks to its regular efforts to green its streets (Observatoire des villes vertes, 2020^[40]). The city has been able to strengthen its attractiveness through numerous events, such as the 2019 G7 Environment Forum, which are held in the heart of its natural and green spaces. The annual "Art in the Gardens" operation is one example, as is the "Jard'in Metz" walking tour in the city centre gardens.

At the same time, the cultural capital of a territory has a strong impact on the well-being of its inhabitants and thus on its ability to attract and retain individuals (OECD, forthcoming^[41]). In particular, cultural programs can be a powerful driver of social inclusion, helping to bring communities together and reconnect different groups. The *What Works Centre for Wellbeing* in the United Kingdom found that mental health and functioning increased with cultural engagement. Their work suggests that culture may be an under-utilised tool for improving well-being and repairing the social fabric (Trouvé and MacLachlan, 2022^[42]).

While the importance of the natural and environmental capital of a territory remains globally common to all individuals, it is important to note that their prevalence depends on the socio-economic characteristics of each agent. For example, the quality of life - which cultural and environmental amenities shape - plays a more important role for the most qualified people (Tuccio, 2019^[5]), who can sometimes accept a lower salary in exchange for a more comfortable living environment. Similarly, younger workers prefer locations with computer and communication infrastructure, while middle-aged workers are more attracted to culturally endowed regions (ESPON, 2013^[6]). These factors underscore the importance of attractiveness policies targeted at different agent profiles, for different job profiles.

Focus area 12: Capitalising on the cultural and environmental capital of the territories to attract and retain public agents

In particular through:

- Communication to candidates emphasising employment and career opportunities, but also the specific assets of each living area and their quality of life
- Supporting new recruits during regional integration (*onboarding*)
- A territorial marketing strategy common to all the local public actors highlighting certain territorial assets selected in a concerted manner

1.5. Conclusion

This section seeks to better understand the regional dimension of public sector attractiveness in four French pilot regions: Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Île-de-France, and Normandy. Overall, the challenge of the attractiveness of the State public service in the regions is a multifaceted one, both personal and professional. Around the concepts of employment, career, and quality of life, there are many considerations specific to each individual. These differences are compounded by the unique characteristics of each region. The four regions analysed in this report each face similar territorial challenges, between predominantly rural departments in demographic and economic decline, departments hosting large metropolitan areas, and the attraction of Paris. The public authorities, the DGAFP in the first place, can strengthen the attractiveness of the State public service in the regions. This strengthening can be operationalised through three pillars:

- The development of interdepartmental and cross-departmental **talent pools**. Collaboration between central and regional actors must become a systematic reality in each region. The various CLEPs currently being created are bodies that make it possible to agree on common challenges and the solutions to be found. The creation of these pools also depends on the ability of administrations to quantify the challenge of attractiveness and to put in place an ambitious strategic management of the workforce through a wider use of data.
- A real policy of **visibility** for public service jobs and the State's territorial administration. The DGAFP is currently working on a number of projects to meet this challenge, such as the employer brand for the public service, or the clarification of compensation expected by employees moving to or joining the public service. These efforts will probably take the longest to bear fruit, since they require a change in the image of the public service, which is often perceived as too bureaucratic and complex, and a better understanding among the French population of the missions of the State's territorial administration.
- The **enhancement** of jobs and career paths within the State's territorial administration, particularly in the least attractive territories. First of all, it is a matter of underlining the importance of the skills and abilities of public servants, and the impact of the actions of these agents who are often in direct contact with citizens, business leaders, experts, etc. Finally, taking up a position in an unattractive territory must act as a concrete career gas pedal and be recognised as such by the administrations.

Strengthening the attractiveness of the public service is a topic that affects all OECD member countries differently. France, and more particularly its territorial administration of the State, faces specific challenges, which have been documented in this section, which has highlighted the many good practices implemented by the DGAFP, the regional directorates, and many other public employment actors. Future work could involve comparing these practices with those of other OECD public administrations, and to define the basis for increased co-operation among regional public employment actors.

2 Anticipating employment trends and establishing good Human Resource practices in the public service

2.1. Introduction

Across the public service of OECD member countries, new skills and competencies are required to meet new types of challenges. Can the public sector attract and recruit people with the skills and motivation to operate in this environment? And is it able to offer meaningful work and development opportunities to recruit and retain these people?

The public service does not operate in a vacuum, and is strongly impacted by major societal, economic, and environmental trends that have a significant effect on the ability of OECD governments to recruit and retain public servants, both at the territorial and central government levels. The European Commission has identified five major challenges to which public administrations must adapt, including the impact of demographic change and the speed of technological change, as well as the impact and importance of the "green transition," which have or will have direct effects on public employment (Commission européenne, 2021^[43]). These phenomena are confirmed across OECD member countries. First, the average age of the inhabitants of OECD member countries is increasing, a trend also observed within their public services. Second, the digital transition is redefining the ways of working and the skills needed. Finally, decentralisation and deconcentration reforms are trends chosen by public authorities, forcing them to rethink the capacity of the public service to extend into the territories. These trends are not unique to France. In the age of globalisation, these developments are becoming increasingly rapid and cross borders more easily and quickly. This means that many European and OECD administrations are seeking to respond and adapt to them.

Addressing the challenges of recruitment and retention requires thinking about the changing role of the human resources (HR) function within forward-looking public administrations. Two key questions emerge in this regard: what is the role of the HR function today, and what will be its role tomorrow? Global trends are affecting public administrations in general, and shaping the challenges that HR departments must respond to. Digitalisation, demographic shifts, and the potential for remote work are all examples of trends that offer opportunities to reshape the workforce and workspaces within public administrations, as well as the lives of public employees. Each of these trends has an impact on the public service, and with it, a ripple effect on the HR function whose role is to attract, recruit, retain and develop staff with the skills and motivation to meet these challenges. The megatrends can be an opportunity to adapt the HR function, making it more efficient and closer to public servants. In the coming years, HR departments will have to

provide more individualised support to employees, with the aim of implementing genuine talent management.

This chapter was developed as part of the project “Strengthening the attractiveness of the public service in France: towards a territorial approach”, following a request for technical support submitted by the DGAFP to the European Commission’s Directorate General for Support to Structural Reforms (DG REFORM), in the framework of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Beyond a better understanding of the major trends affecting public employment across the European Union and the OECD, and the implications for the HR function, the objective of this section is to explore the measures implemented by other OECD administrations and the private sector to develop or adapt their human resources policies in order to anticipate and strengthen the resilience of the public service to the impacts of these megatrends. This section thus goes hand in hand with previous chapter Studying the attractiveness of the French territorial administration in four pilot regions, establishing a diagnosis of the situation of the attractiveness of the public service in four French regions particularly confronted with attractiveness challenges: Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Île-de-France, Normandy. These two reports should ultimately make it possible to identify the factors of attractiveness of the public service in the French regions and across the OECD and provide a solid basis for the development of a platform to develop and pilot HR practices and indicators related to attractiveness.

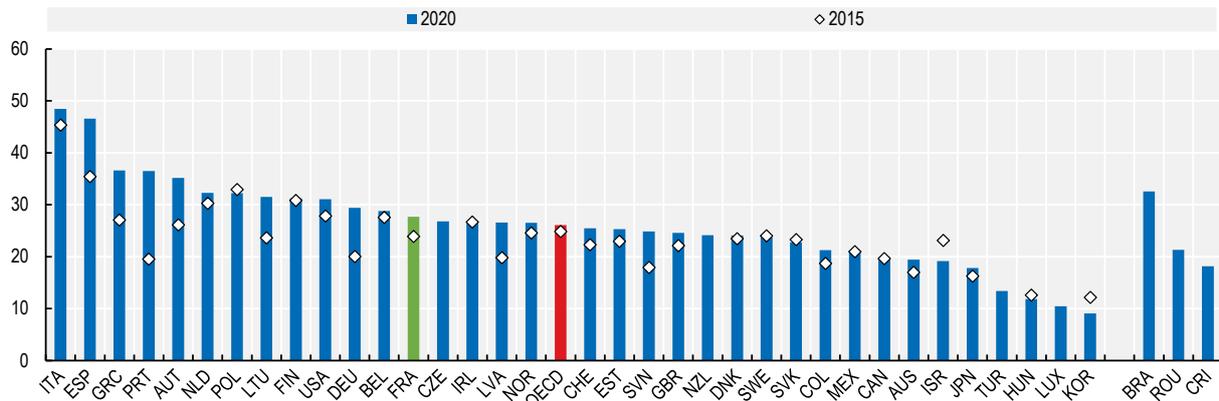
This section first analyses the evolution of the human resource skills, practices and tools needed to adapt to the megatrends that affect the ability of the French State territorial administration (Administration territoriale de l’État – hereafter referred to as ‘ATE’) to recruit the skills it needs. First, it examines the consequences of the rising average age in OECD member countries, which is resulting in an aging public service: with many workers retiring in the coming years, HR personnel are on the front line of attracting and developing the workforce of tomorrow. This includes not only a focus on attracting younger candidates, but also managing a multigenerational workforce, including attraction and recruitment strategies for a wider variety of skills and age categories. This section then focuses on aspects of the digital transition. With digital tools reshaping the nature of work and facilitating remote work opportunities, the talent pool for the French administration is potentially much larger and different than before. Finally, this section seeks to highlight the impact of decentralisation and deconcentration reforms on the public service in some countries with similar experiences. The section concludes with a discussion of how the HR function can adapt to make talent management the cornerstone of its work at each stage of the public employee’s career, ultimately leading to a better fit with the major trends in public employment.

2.2. Demographics

2.2.1. *The impact of aging and demographic changes*

By 2050, the OECD estimates that one in four people in the most advanced economies will be over 55 (OECD, 2020^[44]). This trend is accelerating, with a significant aging of the populations of OECD member countries: over the past few decades, the share of the population aged 65 or older has almost doubled on average, from less than 9% in 1960 to more than 17% in 2017 (OECD, 2021^[45]). As shown in Figure 2.1, this trend is reflected in the composition of the government workforce. Some countries, such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, have particularly high and growing concentrations of workers aged 55 or older. Others, such as Israel, Hungary, and Korea, have fewer older workers in 2020 than five years earlier. France is slightly above the OECD average (26%), but with more pronounced aging.

Figure 2.1. Percentage of public employees at the central level aged 55 or older, 2020 and 2015



Note: Data for France correspond to 31 December 2018. Data for Denmark and Finland are for February 2020. Data for Hungary are for 2018. Data for Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Poland are for December 2019. Data for Colombia are for 2020. Data for Korea are for 31 December 2020. For Hungary and Luxembourg, the age groups for 2020 are 18-35 and over 56. For Poland, the age classes for 2020 are under 30 and 50 or older. The data for Poland for 2015 and 2010 are over 51. Data for Estonia do not include senior officials, such as ministers, the minister of justice, the president, or the state comptroller. For Greece and the United Kingdom, the data refer to 2016, not 2015. For Italy and France, the data refer to 2014, not 2015. For Estonia and Sweden, the data for 2015 are full-time equivalents (FTEs).
Source: OECD (2020), Survey of the Composition of the Central/Federal Government Workforce.

However, these figures are not uniform across national territories, and some elements must be taken into account to explain the real dynamics of ageing in OECD member countries. First, rural areas are the most affected: by 2050, projections suggest that half of European economies will have to manage population decline in their rural areas (OECD, 2022^[46]). This is despite the fact that older people in the European Union are generally more likely to live in these predominantly rural areas (Eurostat, 2019^[47]) and that young people are migrating to urban centers (Augère-Granier and McEldowney, 2020^[48]). This poses a challenge for the delivery of public services in the less connected regions of countries, especially where digital skills are lacking (OECD, 2021^[49]). Population decline, aging, and out-migration affect the local labour pool, with a knock-on effect on the attractiveness of public service at the regional level.

Second, population aging and low fertility rates in many OECD member countries may reinforce the growing labour shortages that many businesses and governments have already identified prior to the COVID-19 crisis (OECD, 2020^[44]). This will generate additional pressure on efforts to recruit younger cohorts to bring in new ideas and skills, particularly in fields where there is strong competition from other employers for the best candidates—such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) (OECD, 2022^[20]) and/or in the digital and information and communication systems (DCIS) field (see The challenge of making the digital sector attractive).

Finally, older workers are staying in the workforce longer, and are healthier and more productive than before (OECD, 2020^[44]). In this context, it is important to address some of the barriers older workers face in the workplace, including the various stereotypes they face, which can evolve into discriminatory actions. Indeed, employers are likely to have a negative bias towards older people, considering them to be in poor health, with more limited motivation, cognitive abilities, and flexibility (Birkelund, 2016^[50]).

Thus, OECD member countries face two main demographic challenges, with several implications for human resource management in the regional public service. Two key areas can be distinguished:

- Faced with an ageing population and therefore an ageing workforce and potential candidates, the public service, both nationally and regionally, must develop HR policies to meet the needs of an increasingly older public service. Public employers in the regions must improve their ability to

recruit and manage older public servants by offering career paths at each stage of their careers and by ensuring the transfer of knowledge to new public servants.

- In this context, the public service must prepare for the inevitable wave of retirements by attracting and recruiting younger candidates. In addition, younger candidates also bring new ideas and technical skills to the public service. These are essential for OECD member countries to implement complex, cross-cutting policies, such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRP)⁵.

2.2.2. An aging French public service in aging regions

In France, some projections predict that one in four people will be 65 years or older by 2040 (Insee, 2020^[51]). Demographic change thus represents a major challenge for public administrations and their ability to attract and recruit the skills they need. In France, the public service has an average of 2.4 employees aged 50 and over for every employee under 30, whereas this ratio is only 1.3 in the private sector (DGAFP, 2021^[52]). Similar to other OECD countries, France is characterised by an older public service than the private sector (DGAFP, 2021^[52]). This is in a labour market that is also marked by a general aging trend. The State's territorial administration (ATE) is characterised by an even higher average age than the rest of the administration (Cour des Comptes, 2022^[53]). The Cour des Comptes presents this challenge as follows:

In view of the particularly high average age of ATE agents and the lack of attractiveness of certain territories, the challenge is now to prevent retained positions from remaining vacant for lack of candidates.

In 2019, the most recent year for which this data is available, more than 40% of public servants were 50 or older. The number of public servants over age 60 increased by more than 5% between 2018 and 2019, and this trend is expected to continue in the coming years (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). Contract workers, on the other hand, represent a younger group, in which only 20% are 50 years old or older (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). The percentage of contract employees over 30 has increased by 9% in 10 years (DGAFP, 2021^[54]).

Nevertheless, each French region has its own demographic differences. The Île-de-France region is characterised by a relatively young population, which is aging less rapidly than the other French regions (Insee, 2021^[55]). At the departmental level, Paris - where the ministries are concentrated - is losing inhabitants at a rate of 16 500 per year, while Seine-Saint Denis is gaining approximately 15 000 inhabitants per year, thanks in particular to a high birth rate (Insee, 2020^[51]). Although the Hauts-de-France region is the second youngest region in France after Île-de-France, its population stagnated between 2013 and 2019, potentially resulting in an aging population (Insee, 2022^[56]). Normandy, categorised as a young region until the mid-2000s, now has an older-than-average population, with 88 inhabitants aged 65 or more for every 100 young people under 20 (Insee, 2022^[57]). Finally, the demographic profile of the Grand Est region is close to the national average, although the percentage of inhabitants with no or few qualifications exceeds 30% in the less densely populated departments (Insee, 2022^[58]). Finally, 19% of the region's public servants were over 55 years of age in 2015, the most recent year for which data is available at the regional level. As of 31 December 2020, the share of public employees over 55 years of age is: 19.9% in Hauts-de-France; 21.6% in Grand-Est; 20.7% in Normandy; 21.3% in Île-de-France (DGAFP-SDESS1). The analysis of the age profile of the regions is only partial, however, as the regional labour markets are often inter-regional and able to attract candidates from outside the region. However, it seems clear that this significant and rapid aging is generating significant challenges in the public and private labour markets, both at the national and regional levels.

⁵ Following the emergence of COVID-19, the National Recovery and Resiliency Plan (NRRP) seeks to organise investments for the recovery and resilience of EU member countries. To cite just one example, the EUR 750 billion *NextGenerationEU* recovery plan represents a major challenge in terms of co-ordination between public actors and the capacity of administrations to manage these investments.

2.2.3. The implication of demographic change for the public service across the OECD

Recruiting older talent

The OECD recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability emphasises the importance of “developing an inclusive and safe public service that reflects the diversity of the society it represents” (OECD, 2019^[59]). This includes adapting talent attraction and management mechanisms to the age and experience of public servants. An older population implies an older candidate pool. In France, for example, the average age of those entering the public service is 34.7 years (+0.4 years compared to 2018) (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). Candidates are thus more likely to have significant academic or professional experience before entering the public service.

Public services in OECD countries are increasingly seeking to better communicate with target audiences, including tailoring their message to the platforms used by certain audiences. Attraction and employer branding strategies seek to address the communication channels, messaging preferences and networks most likely to reach mid-career professionals. Such a distinction becomes critical for certain positions that require specific experience. For example, 71% of OECD member countries collecting this data recognize the attractiveness of senior officials as a challenge (OECD, 2020^[9]). Assuming that senior officials are likely to be older rather than younger, this underscores that recruiting older talent in the context of an aging labour market is likely to affect the work of recruiters in the coming years. This prompts questions about the differentiators between younger and older employees. For example, the perceived level of organisational support is a more important factor in the decision to remain in the organisation for older workers than for others (Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel, 2009^[60]). However, many public services in OECD countries emphasize hiring young talent in their recruitment and advertising campaigns. The risk is that this excludes older people who do not feel represented by the employer brand message, or by the proposition of shared values targeted only at younger audiences.

- In France, the company **Décathlon** noted this in 2011 when it conducted a recruitment campaign to improve the number of older workers who were generally wary of the company’s much-promoted “young” image.

Older public employees are also characterised by more diverse and numerous life experiences. Some companies are seeking to accommodate this reality, rather than the other way around, by offering “re-entry” programs specifically for older workers with key skills who have been out of the workforce for some time.

- **Criteo**, a French advertising technology company, has developed a return to work program for specific positions. The program is designed to support the transition back to work for individuals who have taken a year or more off from their careers, usually for parental or medical reasons. The program lasts six months and includes flexible work models, mentoring, learning and development opportunities and an extensive onboarding program.
- **Société Générale** bank runs a similar program called “Career Arc” for people who have been away from their jobs for an extended period of time (two years or more). It is a six-month internship with tailored activities such as career development or networking. The program targets hard-to-recruit roles in the financial services industry such as technology, banking, sales, trading, operations, human resources, legal, audit and project management.

However, recruiting older public servants is only the first step: public administrations must make the best use of the skills of these employees. Indeed, despite the fact that scientific articles linking age and productivity at the individual level remain inconclusive, a workforce of different ages leads to organisational productivity that is greater than the sum of the individual productivity of employees (OECD, 2020^[44]). Thus, despite an older adult population that is healthier and more educated than ever, their talent often remains underutilised (OECD, 2020^[44]).

Public services also need to manage older workers' transition to retirement more strategically to make their final years in the workplace as productive and fulfilling as possible. One of the key findings of a recent OECD project on managing older workers in the Slovenian public administration is that older workers want a gradual “launch pad” to retirement rather than an abrupt halt once they reach mandatory retirement age (OECD, 2021^[61]). This also has the benefit of increased commitment from these agents. Features of a phased retirement include flexible work schedules and ways to engage with colleagues to pass on knowledge and critical information.

- In anticipation of a large wave of retirements from the public service, **Germany** has implemented a knowledge transfer program to mitigate the risk of losing institutional knowledge. One of the features of this program is a provision for a position to be filled by two people instead of one for a limited period of time in the context of an upcoming retirement: the staff member about to leave the public service, and his or her replacement. In addition to mitigating the loss of institutional knowledge, this facilitates the integration of the new incumbent.
- Similarly, in **Austria**, the Federal Ministry of Finance has institutionalised a “knowledge mentoring” program based on a departmental analysis of workforce demographics, which each manager is required to complete once a year. The strength of this program is that it supports strategic workforce planning in an aging context, both by identifying upcoming retirements and by ensuring the transfer of skills and expertise.

Thus, adapting to an aging workforce is not limited to adapting attractiveness processes, but also covers more strategic thinking about various aspects of workforce management, including work preferences, knowledge transfer and succession planning. As the public service faces the need to identify future skill needs and create work cultures that are attractive to all age groups, increased investment in talent management practices can help European public administrations build a workforce with the skills and motivation to meet a range of future challenges.

Communicating more broadly with younger and more diverse candidates

An aging population means not only managing the older workforce, but also putting in place mechanisms to attract, recruit and retain younger candidates with new ideas and skills. 66% of OECD member countries are directly targeting younger candidates to fill skill gaps in the public service (OECD, 2020^[9]). Such a strategy is made all the more important in the context of the relative attractiveness of the public service: only a minority of candidates would choose to work for the public service if they had the choice (Van de Walle, Steijn and Jilke, 2015^[62]).

Such mechanisms address several challenges. First, they ensure the continuity of the missions of retiring employees. The focus here is on missions rather than jobs, which may disappear or change with retirements. Second, they ensure that the public service has the capacity to meet the emerging needs of citizens. Recent university graduates may have specialised expertise in new disciplines that the public sector needs, such as mega data or artificial intelligence. In this case, recruiting young talent is a critical way to acquire much-needed skills in the job market. Finally, other generational insights can be useful for the public service to better understand the habits and expectations of the citizenry it serves.

However, the need to attract young future public servants also arises in a context where young people also tend to trust the state less (OECD, 2022^[63]). Moreover, young candidates in the labour market have a broader choice of potential employers than ever before, including those who want to work for the public good: for example, the “tech4good” sector, social impact startups, nonprofit organisations, and even the environmental, social, and corporate governance arms of private sector companies. High-potential candidates, such as those with sought-after analytical skills, may not be attracted to the state as a potential employer. Thus, it is important for private and public sector employers to tailor their recruitment campaigns to meet the career expectations of young talent.

- In **Ireland**, the central recruitment agency for the public service (Publicjobs.ie) organised an awareness campaign to introduce high school students to public sector jobs. High school students were challenged to create a 30-second video explaining the appeal of a career in the public service to other students. The contest was announced on TikTok, a social network widely used by young people. Prizes offered ranged from the opportunity to interview the Irish Prime Minister on career development to a visit to an Irish Coast Guard helicopter base or a chance to participate in a police simulation exercise organised by the Irish police.
- In **France, WelcometotheJungle**, a recruitment platform initially specialised in job offers in tech start-ups, now has clients in the public sector such as the Ministry of the Interior and the French external intelligence service (DGSE). The goal of this platform is to differentiate the employer in a competitive job market by presenting it in a more dynamic way, notably through testimonials from employees of all levels of seniority, information on the nature of the workforce, and images of the workplace.

Finally, another practice to attract young talent is to reduce the information asymmetry between external candidates and recruiters by highlighting various aspects of the company's culture.

- Recognising the importance that external candidates place on independent reviews, **Leroy Merlin** uses a tool to publicize the rating that employees, interns, and candidates give the company based on their experience with the company. The overall goal is to improve transparency in the recruitment process and break down as many barriers as possible between the candidate and the company. The company shares tips on how to best prepare for the testing stages.

2.3. Digital transformation

The digital transformation that has been underway for several decades has profoundly changed the societies and economies of OECD member countries. It has also impacted public administrations in the way they work and respond to citizen" expectations. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the importance of a flexible and adaptable public service, allowing us to see that governments with a high digital maturity are more capable of managing technology and data, and therefore more responsive and resilient (OECD, 2020^[64]). This digital maturity requires the inclusion of technology in the design of public policies and services to meet user needs.

On the one hand, citizens are becoming more and more proficient with digital tools and are demanding public services that are accessible online. On the other hand, public services have put digital tools at the heart of reforms to simplify and modernize the administration. These two elements oblige public administrations to ensure that they have the resources to continue to meet citizen's expectations. In a post-pandemic context, they need to be employers of choice capable of attracting the necessary talent and skills. This also requires the use of digital technologies, in particular to appear attractive to candidates and public agents.

2.3.1. Remote work

Remote work as a major trend in the evolution of the public service

The COVID-19 pandemic and successive lockdowns have been accelerators of remote working across OECD member countries and their governments. The forced implementation of remote working has highlighted the different levels of prevalence of remote working across countries and industries, which may be explained by the impossibility for some tasks to be performed remotely, as well as by cultural barriers, sometimes justified (Joint Research Centre, 2020^[65]).

The increase in remote working since the start of the pandemic remains a trend for governments to watch closely. Across the OECD, 97% of countries with data on the subject identify partial remote work as being more widely used and demanded by staff than before the emergence of COVID-19 (OECD, 2022^[66]). This has clear implications for the attractiveness of the public service. Indeed, remote work and flexible working arrangements in general is generally perceived as attractive to applicants (Moens et al., 2022^[67]). Ensuring its use and highlighting its possibility in job postings beyond the pandemic can be an attractive factor. Companies in the private sector and in the tech industry have understood this and are already banking on remote working options to differentiate themselves on the labour market and attract and retain the best candidates.

Remote work, when properly measured, is a work modality that enhances the attractiveness of jobs. It is frequently associated by applicants with a better work/life balance, greater autonomy in working hours and methods, greater job satisfaction and lower stress levels, and ultimately better productivity (Moens et al., 2022^[67]). However, it is also associated with certain risks, such as professional isolation (Bin Wang et al., 2020^[68]) or reduced collaboration between colleagues. The Portuguese administration, for example, had the opportunity to confirm these results by analysing the feedback from public agents (Government of Portugal, 2021^[69]).

However, the overall impact of remote working is still not fully understood (OECD, 2020^[70]). Some of the gains may be outweighed by disadvantages that public decision-makers need to consider, such as the challenge to team cohesion, the difficulty of integrating newcomers, or the role of the physical presence of public servants in a living area. Indeed, in a context of regional attractiveness challenges, remote working is a new tool that can allow people with specific skill sets to go to the office only for a limited number of days, avoiding too long transportation times, or even a potential move. The other side of the coin is the implications on territorial economic dynamism, as public servants are also consumers, pointing to the need to further monitor these linkages.

In the longer term, it is possible that these flows will balance each other out, and that investment in digital skills, in quality digital infrastructures and in strengthening the attractiveness of the public service in the territories will allow for a more homogeneous distribution of agents around the country.

An agreement to regulate remote working in the French public service

In France, the COVID-19 pandemic has given a boost to the use of remote working in public administrations. In the FPE excluding teachers, 6.4% of public employees were using remote working options in 2019, before the start of the pandemic, compared to 51% in the first wave (OECD, 2020^[9]). Remote work, instituted in the public service and the judiciary by the decree of 11 February 2016, is also governed by the framework agreement on the implementation of remote work in the public service of 13 July 2022, which must be deployed in the three branches of the public service. Each public administration is responsible for defining a strategy specific to its needs, based on national regulations and the above-mentioned agreement. The use of remote work is governed by certain principles, in particular the voluntary nature of the work and a maximum of three days of remote work per week. It is the employer's responsibility to provide the digital tools necessary for the employee's activity. Authorisation to work remotely also depends on the nature of the tasks performed, not all of which can be performed remotely.

Two important aspects distinguish France from a majority of OECD member countries: the place given in this agreement to the right to disconnect and the creation of a remote working allowance.

- The right to disconnect recognises the importance of physical and mental health.
- The compensation aspect is given concrete form through a fixed allowance of EUR 2.5 per day of remote work, up to a maximum of EUR 220 per year (as of 1 January 2022).

Remote work is an asset for strengthening the attractiveness of the French public service in the territories. This aspect is developed in the first chapter “Studying the attractiveness of the French territorial administration in four pilot regions”.

Remote working across the OECD

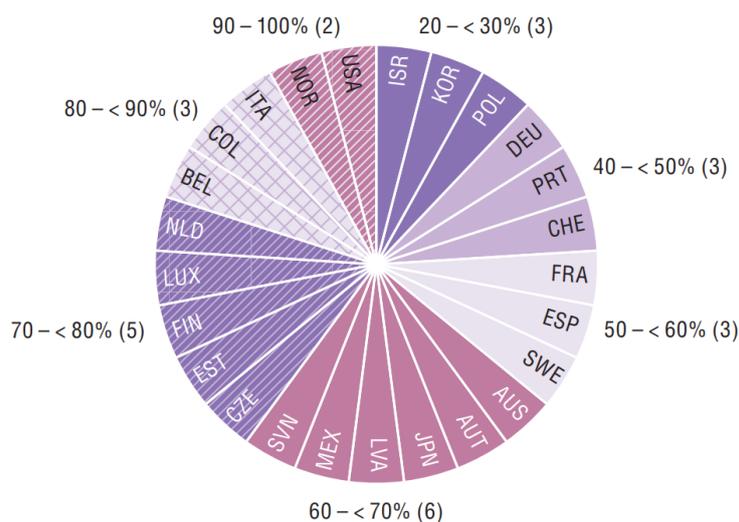
Uneven rollout of remote working during the first wave of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the various limitations associated with the use of remote working in government. The first of these limitations concerns the very possibility of remote working for some jobs. High-tech and knowledge-intensive sectors such as finance (93% of jobs suitable for remote working), communications (79%), or education (68%) are more likely to have a high concentration of remote workable jobs than manual labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture, construction or catering (less than 20%) (Joint Research Centre, 2020^[71]). The public administration and defense sector has almost 65% of jobs suitable for remote working (Joint Research Centre, 2020^[71]). This figure reflects the diversity of public service jobs that are more or less suitable for remote work. In France, while a majority of category A or equivalent public servants can perform their tasks remotely, it can be more difficult for some category B and C jobs not performed at a desk. However, it can sometimes be complex for some public administrations to identify potential remote workable jobs.

- In the **United Kingdom**, for example, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has developed a comprehensive decision tree to estimate whether a job can be performed in a hybrid manner or not (CIPD, 2021^[72]).

In practice, not all jobs capable of being performed remotely are performed remotely. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted different realities in central government. For example, while 56% of OECD member countries had between 50% and 80% of their central staff remote working in the first wave of COVID-19, similar to the estimate of jobs capable of being performed remotely working in government, some countries fall far outside this spectrum (Figure 2.2). This can of course be explained by a different health impact per country, but also by different policies.

Figure 2.2. Share of the central government workforce who worked remotely during the first wave of the COVID-19 crisis, 2020



Source: OECD (2020), Special Module on COVID-19 of the OECD 2020 Survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability

In addition, successive confinements have allowed for a better analysis of the negative effects of remote working on the gendered distribution of unpaid domestic and care work. For example, 61.5% of mothers of children under 12 surveyed across 25 OECD member countries report having taken on additional tasks, compared to 22.4% of fathers (OECD, 2021^[73]). A survey in the United Kingdom found that, during confinement, mothers were interrupted in their work 50% more often than fathers (Andrew et al., 2020^[74]). However, and in the absence of sufficiently ambitious policies to reduce women's non-work workload, more women than men want to be able to work remotely, although the number of men wanting to work remotely is increasing (Nguyen and Armoogum, 2021^[75]).

Remote working as an argument to attract the necessary skills

Remote work had already developed in public administrations before the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, initial experiments were conducted in some U.S. agencies as early as the late 1970s. As early as 1996, the U.S. administration implemented the National Telecommuting Initiative (NTI), a strategy that was intended to enable 60 000 federal employees to work at least partially from home by October 1998, and 160 000 by the end of 2002. These goals have not been met but underscore the long-standing nature of the topic of remote work in government (Joice, 2000^[76]).

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned remote work from an anecdotal, often exceptional, work modality to the default work modality at the heart of the crisis. In the 'new normal', remote work is likely to continue for a large number of public employees at all levels. In 2020, only 14% of OECD member countries anticipated a decrease in the use of remote work post-pandemic compared to 2019 (OECD, 2020^[9]). The reason for the low number is that the vast majority of employees are satisfied with remote work, are increasingly expecting it from their employers. Thus, remote work has become a strong attractiveness argument that public employers must take advantage of. In France, in 2022, job offers posted on LinkedIn mentioning the possibility to work remotely represented only 20% of the offers but received more than 50% of the applications (LinkedIn, 2022^[29]). While this data does not predict the quality of applications, it does highlight the rapid transformation of candidate" expectations.

However, these expectations are not uniform and homogeneous for all applicants, as there are many elements that can influence individual choices. One of these is remuneration: a pre-pandemic study linking salary increases or decreases to the ability to remote work showed that, on average, employees were willing to take an 8% pay cut in exchange for the ability to remote work, indicating the importance of remote work in making jobs more attractive. This figure differs widely between individuals, however, and about 20% of the workforce surveyed finds no value in telecommuting without financial compensation (Mas and Pallais, 2017^[77]).

- In **Ireland**, the results of the 2020 Public Employee Engagement Survey highlighted that 75% of employees want to continue working remotely, and 62% in a hybrid model (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2022^[78]).

However, the possibility of using remote work depends largely on the trust between the different actors of this change. The issue of trust is threefold, and it arises for public servants in relation to their managers, their colleagues, and their organisation. First of all, while a large majority of public servants now wish to work in a hybrid manner, this requires managers to adapt strongly to manage such teams: to ensure that all public servants remain informed of ongoing projects, to have infrastructures that allow hybrid meetings to be held, and to build a relationship of trust. This adaptation must be accompanied by training, clear guidelines to reinforce certain managerial skills, and constant exchanges with agents and other managers. Hybrid work, and even remote work in general, can only be successful for agents and organisations if they move from a system of performance control based on presenteeism to one based on trust and analysis of results achieved. Second, trust among colleagues and interpersonal relationships can be altered by the absence of face-to-face interactions. The informal interactions that are possible in the face-to-face setting become more difficult to establish and manage at a distance, where it is impossible to know whether a

colleague is busy or not. However, these interactions are key in building interpersonal relationships that allow one to understand the intentions and motivations of one's colleagues. It is therefore important to agree on a minimum duration during which the teams must be in the office at the same time. Finally, the question of trust also arises between employees and their administration: remote work must be chosen and supported to avoid it becoming a subject of friction within the teams.

The future of remote work for public administrations in OECD countries

This first wave of COVID-19, often resulting in lockdowns across Europe, tested the limits of a system. The challenge now is for administrations in OECD member countries to apply the lessons learned to the 'new normal' by preparing an adaptation strategy and analysing its potential effects. Employers rarely seek to allow employees to work remotely 100% of the time. The consensus emerging after two years of the pandemic is more towards a hybrid work system, allowing agents to work part of the time remotely, and part of the time from the office. The objective is to maximize the benefits of remote work, while minimising its drawbacks. The use of remote work is, however, a matter of debate, including in the private sector. While some public administrations and companies see it as a way to increase their attractiveness as an employer, to reduce the costs of the buildings they rent or own, and to increase employee productivity, others consider its negative effects too great. Some companies, mainly in the digital sector where jobs are more easily worked remotely, are trying to find a balanced strategy.

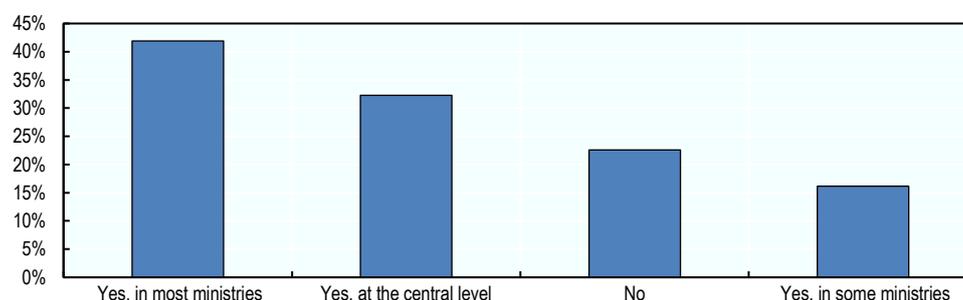
- In **Ireland**, the government has developed a National Remote work Strategy for 2021 (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2021^[79]). The main objective of this strategy is to make remote work a regulated right for all Irish employees. The strategy is based on three main pillars: (1) the creation of an enabling environment for the adoption of remote work, (2) the development and use of infrastructure to enable remote work, and (3) the development of a framework for thinking about remote work to maximize its impact. One of the conditions for the success of the strategy was identified as the promotion of remote work within the public service, to enable 20% of the workforce to work from home or remotely at any given time.
- The private sector is also looking to democratize the use of telecommuting. The **Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation** (NTT), Japan's leading telephone company, wants to allow 30 000 of its 180 000 domestic employees to remote work full-time from anywhere in Japan by July 2022 (Japan Times, 2022^[80]). If they need to come to the office, travel and accommodation will be considered as business travel and reimbursed as such. In addition to enhancing the attractiveness of the company, the aim is also to decentralize the group's activities, maximising the use of the 400 regional offices the firm has.
- Following the first wave of COVID-19, **Google** decided to implement a hybrid office presence policy (Google, 2021^[81]). Depending on the tasks of the job concerned, it will be possible to either work only a few days in the office, or entirely remotely, or to move and work from a new location. In practice, this should affect 60%, 20% and 20% of Google employees respectively.

Once the exceptional crisis situation has been overcome, many governments across the OECD are now seeking to regulate the use of remote work, by establishing charters, in order to protect the rights of employees and to ensure that governments remain able to mobilize the resources necessary to meet the needs of citizens (Figure 2.3). These charters focus in nearly or more than 60% of cases on security protocols, expected login times, and guidelines to support managers of hybrid teams (OECD, 2022^[66]).

- In **Korea**, the Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) has developed three manuals to support organisations in remote work: one for public employees detailing remote work guidelines, one for managers to help them support their employees in the best possible way, and a workbook concentrating on remote work authorisation procedures, various forms, frequently asked questions, and exercises to determine whether the employee has an optimal work environment at home (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021^[82]).

Figure 2.3. Existence of a charter for the use of remote work in public administrations

Percentage of OECD member countries



Note: Preliminary data. N=31. Initial question: "Does a charter or code of conduct articulating expected behaviour regarding remote work exist?" Non-exclusive choices.

Source: OECD (forthcoming), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey, Module 4 on Mobility

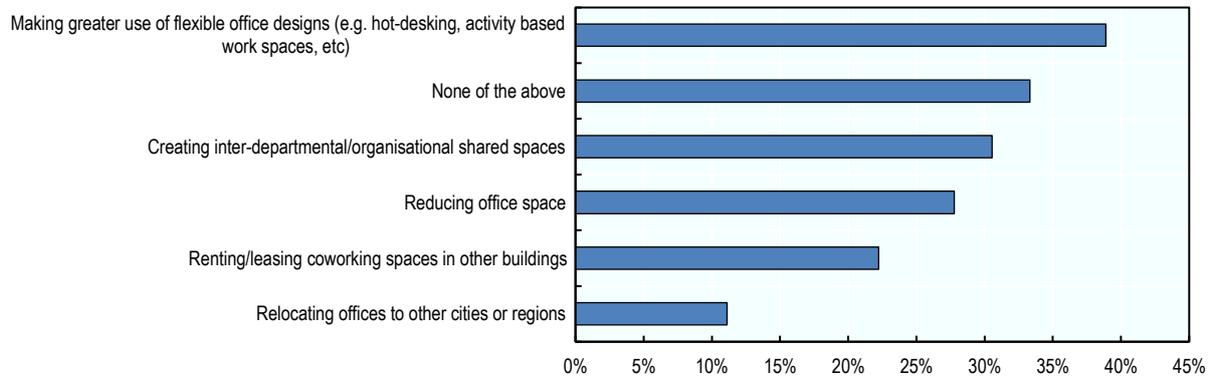
The emphasis on expected hours of connection in remote work charters is indicative of the fact that remote work makes it harder for many employees to distinguish between work and non-work hours, with the work environment difficult to separate from the personal environment. This can create a sense of constant work (Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017^[83]). The concept of the right to disconnect seeks to address this issue and refers to a worker's right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related communications outside of working hours. Nearly one-third of OECD countries have a legal framework in place to ensure this right, either generally or in the public sector (OECD, 2022^[66]). Across OECD member countries, however, the issue of enforcement of this recent right remains to be monitored.

- While France, Italy, and the Netherlands have implemented this right through collective agreements, other countries have written it into law. This is the case, for example, in **Portugal**, where Law No. 83/2021 of 6 December 2021 provides a national framework for remote work and enshrines the right to disconnection. Article 199 of the law states that "the employer has the duty to refrain from contacting the worker during the rest period, except in cases of force majeure" (Diário da República Eletrónico, 2021^[84]).

In a context of tight labour markets across many OECD member countries (OECD, 2021^[85]), remote work has become a key tool for attracting the skills and candidates that public services need, and for rethinking the layout of workplaces for public employees (Figure 2.4). It is therefore essential for public administrations to consider it as a lever for attractiveness and to manage it, rather than seeking to return to an exclusively face-to-face model. Such an effort will require a profound reflection going beyond the subject of remote work to encompass consideration around the type of public service desired, the implications in terms of management and productivity, and ultimately a reinforced exemplarity of public administrations compared to private employers. The use of remote work is also an ecological practice that has its place in the framework of the greening of administrations, as each journey between home and work has an impact on the carbon footprint of the public service as a whole.

Figure 2.4. Expected evolution of government workplaces

Percentage of OECD member countries.



Note: Preliminary data. N=34. Initial question: "Given the experience of the COVID-19 crisis, are there any plans in administrations regarding physical office spaces?" Non-exclusive choices.

Source: OECD (forthcoming), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey, Mobility Module 4

2.3.2. Digital skills within administrations

Rising demand for digital skills in the public service as a major evolutionary trend

The OECD recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability mentions the importance of "continuously identifying skills and competencies needed to transform political vision into services which deliver value to society" (OECD, 2019^[59]). At the same time, digital transformation is a phenomenon that is increasingly affecting public administration and requires specific skills. It cannot be carried out by IT departments alone: all public servants must be able to react to the implications of digital transformation in terms of citizens' expectations, accessibility of public services, new working methods, or the management of human relationships (OECD, 2021^[86]). This has immediate consequences for the type of skills required:

- Public administrations are redefining the role left to new technologies in-house. The ubiquity of computers, instant messaging services, and various software programs is forcing public administrations to adapt their work methods (see Remote work) and their public servants to have new skills. This last aspect is all the more important in situations of professional reconversion due to the modification or disappearance of certain jobs.
- The public service is looking to attract candidates with in-demand digital skills. The digital and data analytics industry is one of the most challenging areas of attractiveness across the OECD. In a world of increasingly sensitive digital interactions, it is essential for public administrations to have cutting-edge profiles and skills that are constantly evolving.

A major digital transformation of public administrations in France

Public digital transformation takes many forms in France. In particular, it involves rethinking citizens' access to public services. As a sign of this commitment, the recent Relaunch France (*France relance*) plan earmarks EUR 500 million to support digital transformation projects for the co-construction of digital solutions, large-scale digitalisation projects or improvements to online procedures, and territorial one-stop-shops (Préfecture d'Île-de-France, 2021^[87]). The challenge of any transformation of public services is to ensure that it is inclusive. In France, the digitalisation of certain procedures is accompanied, for example, by "maisons France services", which by the end of August 2022 will represent nearly 2,400 local one-stop-

shop administrative support offices that should be less than 30 minutes away from each resident (Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales, 2022^[88]).

Digital transformation is also changing the way public servants work and the skills sought by administrations. In the face of this megatrend, France's situation is only slightly different from that of other OECD countries. Many of the key skills of public servants, as described in the interministerial dictionary of competences (Dictionnaire interministériel des compétences – DICO) are increasingly linked to new technologies. For example, "archiving", "communicating", "using information", or "writing" are all skills that may require technological support. In addition, the master plan for lifelong professional training for State employees for the period 2021 to 2023 includes a priority action that aims to "develop the digital skills of employees and professionals in the information and communication systems sector (*filière systèmes d'information et de communication*) and deploy the certification of digital skills for all employees.

A recent OECD case study looked at the difficulty that France faces in attracting specialised and in-demand digital profiles (OECD, 2022^[20]). In France, an interministerial working group has been set up to address the needs of administrations for digital and information and communication systems profiles (NSIC). The first step of this project was to identify the digital jobs where current and future hiring difficulties are concentrated. By analysing various indicators, the group was able to distinguish jobs that are hard-to-recruit - i.e., with a high projected vacancy rate - and jobs that are strategically important. Hard-to-recruit jobs are defined by their significant rate of recourse to contractual staff or a high forecast rate of permanent departures. The strategic professions are those that are expected to experience a significant increase in the number of employees over a given period. This work made it possible to draw up an interministerial action plan for 2019 that includes 37 measures, under the leadership of the DGAFP and the interministerial directorate for digital and state information and communication systems (Direction interministérielle du numérique et du système d'information et de communication de l'État - DINSIC), the forerunner of the interministerial directorate for digital (Direction interministérielle du numérique – DINUM). Among other things, this action plan emphasised the role of managers in supporting digital literacy, and the need to develop tailor-made contractual mechanisms for these profiles. This project must continue to be supported and frequently updated to respond to the constant evolution of digital skills and profiles.

The digital transformation also directly concerns the HR function: this implies the use of new HR information systems and the development of new skills within HR departments. The Human Resources Information System (HRIS) 2022 roadmap seeks in particular to dematerialize processes and documents, and to better monitor the match between skills required and skills held (DGAFP, 2018^[89]). The digitalisation of processes is reflected in the increased use of HRIS, allowing the data collected to be used as a reference and making digitalisation the default mode for managing HR processes. Matching skills requirements to those of employees means that talent management plays a greater role in ensuring that the necessary skills are acquired and developed. In connection with the ATE, this roadmap specifies the importance of providing the regions with adequate tools to enable the PFRH to carry out strategic workforce planning. This up-skilling involves both the development of skills and the provision of appropriate software.

Digital transformation of public administrations across the OECD

The development of digital skills for all public servants

The OECD has recently developed a framework for thinking about digital talent and skills in the public sector (OECD, 2021^[86]). This framework is based in part on a clear definition of the skills needed in digital public administrations, including the so-called 21st century skills that must enable public servants to be equipped to meet the challenges and work methods of this century. These 21st century skills include socio-emotional, cognitive, and digital skills. As society as a whole becomes more and more familiar with digital tools, it is important that public servants and public administrations follow the same path. As these skills will evolve over time, as technologies advance, public agents must be supported through continuous training throughout their career.

- In **Slovenia**, the Academy of Administration of the Ministry of Public Administration launched a digital literacy training program for public officials in 2019 (OECD, 2021^[90]). The goal of this program is to enable public officials to use digital tools creatively, safely, and strategically. This type of program is all the more important in Slovenia, where 77% of public employees interviewed in a recent survey said they lacked motivation to improve their digital skills.
- In **Ireland**, and in line with the roll-out of the national remote work strategy mentioned above, many private companies are being supported by public training bodies to develop training related to communication, remote team management skills, IT skills, or confidence building (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2021^[79]).

The development of digital skills depends in part on management being familiar with the issues. Apart from the political issues associated with digital transformation, managers have an important role to play in the development of related skills. However, only 26% of OECD member countries include digital skills in the competency framework applied to senior officials (OECD, 2020^[9]). It is therefore essential that managers have access to quality training on the subject, enabling them to strengthen the digital maturity of public administrations and the promotion of a digital culture.

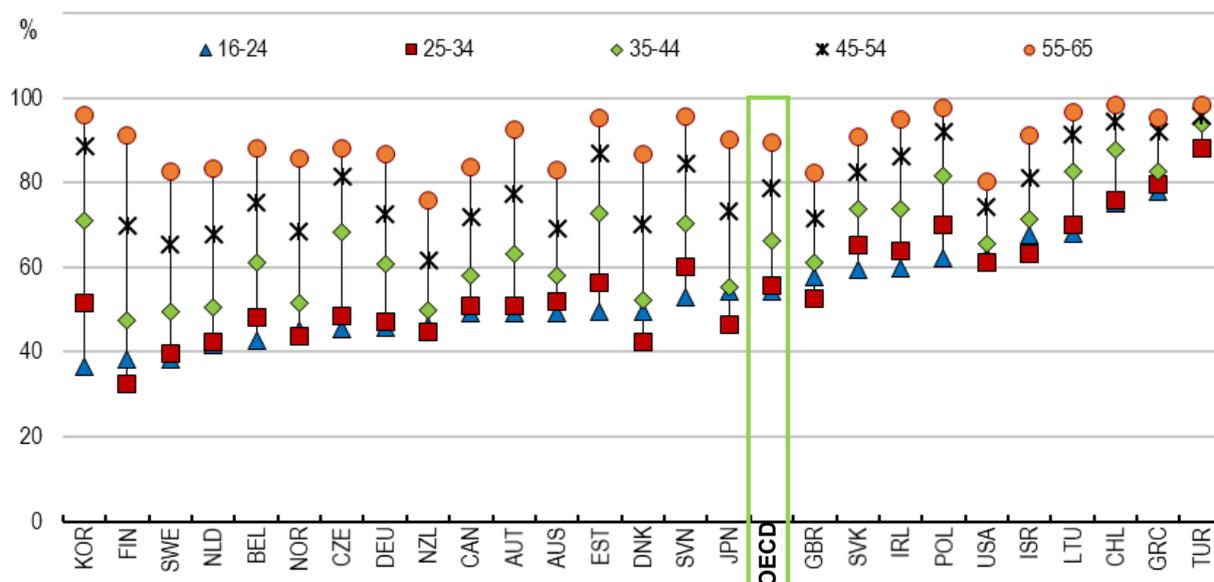
- In **Canada**, the Canada School of Public Service's (CSPS) Digital Academy, which has been in existence since 2018, seeks to train public officials in digital approaches and mindsets and offers a program specifically for managers and senior officials. "Discover Digital Leadership" seeks to detail what it means to be a manager in the digital age. In addition, the Digital Academy recently offered a three-month intensive program for senior public servants that seeks to address practical issues of administration in the digital age in an innovative way. In both of these cases, the main objective is to emphasise the adaptation of leadership that must go hand in hand with digital transformation (Gerson, 2020^[18]).

Finally, the inclusiveness of digital technologies is an important issue for governments to succeed in their digital transition. Across the OECD, younger generations are more comfortable with digital tools than older employees (Figure 2.5). The pandemic has further highlighted this differential, with older employees struggling to adapt their work practices. However, as noted in the section "Recruiting older talent", older workers bring a high degree of specialisation and experiential skills to the table. It is therefore essential that the less tech-savvy generations are supported in developing new digital skills.

- The **European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Culture, Youth, Languages and Sport (DG EAC)** has been running a reverse mentoring program since 2016, allowing trainees from the Commission to be matched with directors based on interests identified by both parties. The objective here was to allow directors, with more experience, to learn more about communication on social networks. The trainees and directors are thus invited to exchange 4 to 6 times during the course for at least one hour in order to achieve deep exchanges. Throughout the process, DG EAC provides guidance to mentors and mentees to define common expectations (OECD, 2021^[61]).

Figure 2.5. Generational Difference in Digital Literacy

Percentage of adults with limited or no digital skills, by age category, 2012 or 2015



Note: "No digital skills" includes adults who have no computer experience, failed the basic ICT test, or chose not to take the test. "Limited digital skills" includes adults scoring at or below Level 1 in problem-solving skills in technology-intensive environments.

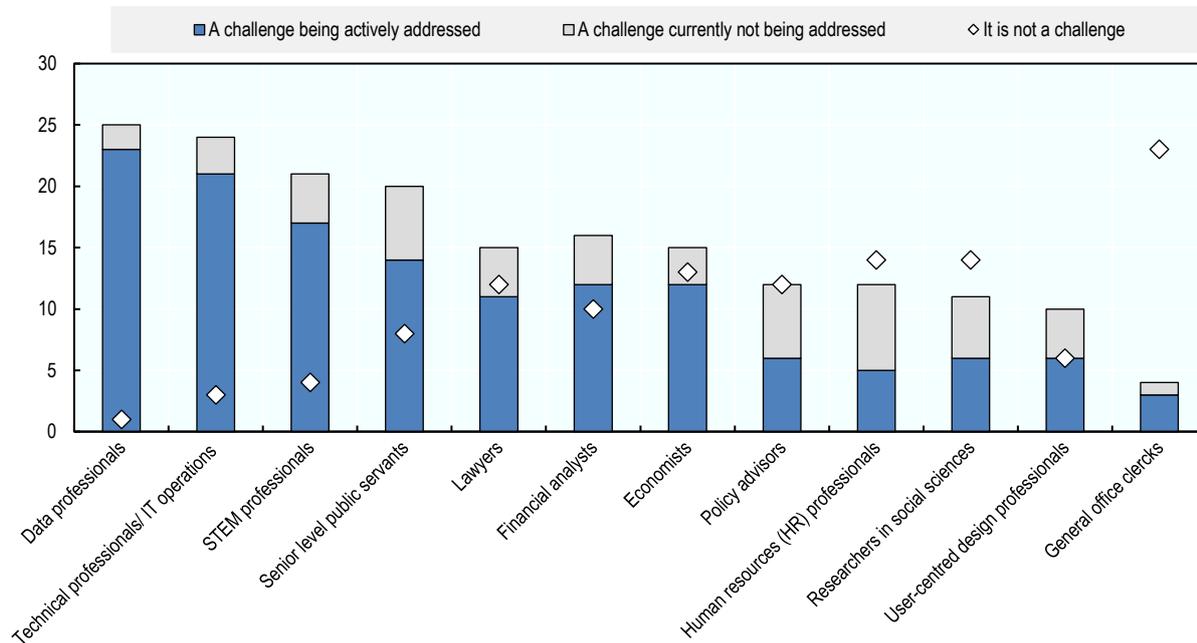
Source: OECD (2020), International Adult Skills Survey (IASS)

The challenge of making the digital sector attractive

Beyond the digital skills that all public servants need to master, government agencies must also rely on digital talent. As the work of public administrations increasingly relies on sophisticated, constantly evolving information systems, the public sector is having difficulty attracting and retaining talent with the necessary skills. These difficulties in attracting talent are partly linked to the general problems of attractiveness in the public sector but are exacerbated by strong competition from the private sector, and within the public sector itself. Thus, the digital sector accounts for a major part of the attractiveness challenges encountered across OECD member countries, whether for data professionals, IT operations, or STEM jobs (Figure 2.6).

- In **Australia**, between 25% and 33% of employers have difficulty recruiting digital and data specialists, which corresponds to 75 000 unfilled jobs, and this when it takes about 8 years for a new public sector recruit to become an expert. In the context of a public service that must offer equal treatment to all candidates, many countries are seeking to give more space to tailor-made HRM policies for jobs and sectors in tension, such as the digital sector, which have their own specificities.

Figure 2.6. Attractiveness challenges in the public sector



Note: N=33. N varies by option, as some options were unknown to some OECD countries. Question asked: "Does the central/federal government face particular difficulties in attracting any of the following groups of applicants/ skills?"

Source: OECD (2020), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey

The digital field is distinguished from other fields by the highly specific nature of its jobs, the high level of skills they require, and the very high demand for them in the labour market. A growing number of academic articles seek to better understand the specificities of this group. Thus, these "digital talents" are distinguished by the fact that they value autonomy and independence, and that the tasks associated with their jobs are generally unstructured (Davenport, 2005^[91]). In addition, these profiles, which are generally more individualistic and difficult to retain, also place greater importance on job-related expectations, such as career opportunities, or the credibility of managers and HR processes (Muratbekova-Touron and Galindo, 2018^[92]). This type of generalisation is of course limited by the very definition of digital talent but may however correspond more or less to the talents of the digital and information and communication systems pipeline. These characteristics, the importance of these jobs, and the scarcity of these profiles, are jointly reasons to adopt a differentiated approach for these candidates. In particular, some administrations are seeking to differentiate their attraction and recruitment strategies.

- In the **United Kingdom**, the *Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) Cross-Government Recruitment Service* seeks to enable the public sector to build a unique pool of digital talent. The service supports applicant teams by implementing recruitment strategies or working on the quality of job offers. More strategically, it also provides access to a so-called "reserve" list of other departments, speeding up the identification of needed talent.

The question of geographical mobility is also central. For jobs where the full range of tasks can generally be performed remotely and where the agency-specific knowledge required is limited, it may be worthwhile to consider the very notion of location, or even to offer the possibility of full-time remote work (Adam Ozimek and Christopher Stanton, 2022^[93]).

- In **Australia**, 90% of digital and data experts live outside of the capital territory, yet the majority of recruitment campaigns target this territory. This situation requires an adaptation of the visibility of job offers, and a higher degree of flexibility in working arrangements.

2.4. Decentralisation and deconcentration reforms

Unlike the other trends mentioned above, deconcentration and decentralisation are trends chosen by the government, not imposed by the external environment. They have important effects on public employment and human resource management that it seems important to mention. A small number of OECD countries are facing similar challenges and are seeking to adapt their public services to these new ways of conceiving public action and the role of the public service as an employer.

2.4.1. State organisation reforms as a trend in public employment

While decentralisation movements are common across OECD member countries, deconcentration remains a topic specific to unitary countries. Deconcentrated and devolved systems coexist in several countries such as Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, and Sweden (OECD, n.d.^[94]).

Although deconcentration and decentralisation are two quite distinct phenomena, they both have similar effects on the management of public human resources. In particular, for the public service, it is a question of:

- Developing local public employment ecosystems, by connecting the various actors and public employers
- Being able to build the capacity of agents and administrations in the regions to ensure a good match between new missions and capacities.

Thus, solutions to problems generated by decentralisation reforms can be useful in responding to those that emerge from the deconcentration movements that France is experiencing.

2.4.2. Decentralisation and deconcentration reforms in France

Deconcentration plays an essential role in the evolution of public employment in France. Over the past two decades, deconcentrated services—which employ 85% of the agents of the ministries—have undergone numerous reforms affecting their scope and organisation (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). Its services have been reorganised and, in particular, have been considerably reduced at the territorial level, notably as a result of mergers and transfers of competencies to local authorities (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). All ministries and all levels combined, the number of ATE staff fell from 82 429 FTEs to 70 666 FTEs between 2012 and 2020, a reduction of 14% (Cour des Comptes, 2022^[53]). At the regional level, the number of structures in charge of the interministerial conduct of public policies fell from 23 to eight in 2010, including six deconcentrated services. At the departmental level, the various directorates were grouped in 2009 into three large interdepartmental directorates (DDI). The resulting organisation combines regional directorates that partly respect ministerial perimeters, and departmental directorates that combine resources and staff from several ministries, and therefore from several budgetary programs (Cour des Comptes, 2022^[53]). In addition to this distribution of roles, there are regional inter-ministerial HRM support platforms (PFRH), under the joint supervision of the DGAFP and the Ministry of the Interior, which provide support, leadership, and expertise to government departments.

The 2015 territorial reform merging the 22 existing regions into 13 new metropolitan regions was also accompanied by a reorganisation of State services (European Committee of the Regions, 2019^[95]). The reorganisation of government services, including the relocation of approximately 500 public servants and the transfer of 1 500 jobs (Government of France, 2021^[96]). The merger of some regions has led to a multi-

site approach, linked to the specialisation of each former regional capital. This has broad consequences in terms of the attractiveness of the public service in these regions, as the quality of life offered is a structuring criterion, as detailed in the first section “Studying the attractiveness of the French territorial administration in four pilot regions”.

Despite these staff reductions, the deconcentrated services of the State are called upon to intervene in several areas in addition to the action of the local authorities, based on the competencies assigned by the legislator. This "dual representation" of deconcentrated services and the services of local authorities whose executive is elected is particularly marked in France, even though there are equivalents of prefectures in other unitary countries with a centralist tradition, such as Sweden (Jamet, 2007^[97]).

At the same time, as a result of decentralisation reforms, local authorities have become major players in local life. Their growing competencies imply an increased need for resources and a specific public service, whose numbers are also increasing. The local public service (FPT) includes all the jobs of local authorities (municipalities, departments, regions) and their public establishments. Its workforce (1 932 000 people at the end of 2020) increased by 44% (+ 549 000) between 1997 and 2020 (Escalle, 2022^[98]). Municipalities and public establishments for inter-municipal cooperation (EPCIs) employ the bulk of territorial public servants (more than 1.5 million), far ahead of the departments (around 350 000) and the regions (which have around 98 000 agents) (Insee, 2022^[99]). Law 2022-217 of 21 February 2022 on differentiation, decentralisation and deconcentration helps to reinforce the need in the FPT for public servants with a detailed knowledge of local issues, enabling local elected officials to better adapt their actions to the particularities of their territory (Légifrance, 2022^[100]) and by strengthening the competencies of local authorities in the fields of transport, housing, integration, and ecological transition.

2.4.3. The effects of decentralisation and deconcentration on human resource management across the OECD

For several decades, decentralisation processes have been implemented in the majority of OECD member countries and have led to an increase in local government spending, both as a share of GDP and as a share of total government spending (OECD, 2019^[101]). Sometimes referred to as the "silent" or "unobtrusive" revolution, decentralisation is one of the most important reforms of the last 50 years. The new missions that it entails create major challenges for the public services of OECD member countries. Indeed, whether it is a question of deconcentration or decentralisation, it is essential for the public service to ensure that it has the necessary skills everywhere on the territory. In France, the rate of administration in the capital is decreasing, which in a context of a declining Parisian population translates into a decrease in FTEs in Paris (DGAFP, 2021^[54]). It is therefore important to look closely at the situation of public employment in the regions, and the impact of the strengthening of the state and/or territorial public service in the regions.

The emergence of a local public employment ecosystem

Deconcentration and decentralisation reforms tend to multiply the number of public employment actors, and therefore potential employers. It is therefore essential for OECD member countries undertaking such reforms to clearly define the missions and responsibilities of each actor, and to allow for the emergence of an open local public employment ecosystem. This is part of a broader trend across OECD member countries to increasingly view their public sector as a single labour market, creating the conditions for public careers across different public employers/stakeholders.

The first step in the emergence of an ecosystem is the clarification of the responsibilities of each party and the establishment of relationships between the various actors. In this sense, territorial impact studies aimed at anticipating the consequences of a reform on the missions or organisation of deconcentrated and territorial services at the regional and departmental levels are important tools in the emergence of a local public employment ecosystem.

- In **Croatia**, the state territorial administration offices in the counties were abolished in 2020 and their competencies transferred to the second-level county units of local self-government. A questionnaire was circulated to the two groups of public servants concerned when this decentralisation reform was announced. Its results illustrate the differences in predictions between the two groups regarding the impacts of this organisational change on the public service (Lopižić and Manojlović Toman, 2021^[102]).

Geographic mobility is an essential tool for the development of such an ecosystem. In a deconcentrated and decentralised environment, public employees must be able to move to other public employers. This means allowing public servants to move back and forth between different departments, branches, or organisations at the local level. However, only one third of OECD countries organize long-term secondments, with the possibility of return, between central administrations and sub-national public services (OECD, 2022^[66]). However, such programs may be easier to organize when the public service is a single employer, rather than in more fragmented public employment systems.

- In **Belgium**, *Talent Exchange* is a mobility program open to all public servants, whether they come from federal, regional, community, municipal or provincial services. It allows participating organisations to exchange public servants to work for six to 12 months on specific projects.

Finally, the creation of a local ecosystem also requires the creation of regional talent pools, which requires both a concentration of young graduates and the identification of networks of professionals. For example, an effective network of universities can help build networks of young professionals and be accompanied by activities to present local public jobs.

- In the **United States**, the Volcker Alliance and its *Government-2-University* initiative seeks to build regional pools by linking universities and governments. This local connection also helps to limit the challenges associated with the geographic mobility of candidates and future agents.

Capacity building in the regions

Capacity building in the regions is an important component of effective decentralisation and deconcentration policies. In a context of increasingly complex governance and institutional arrangements, capacity building of public officials in the regions is of particular importance to implement public policies closer to the citizens. These policies require a significant contribution from citizens and co-ordination within and beyond government. In a European context, where regions are important actors in the delivery of cohesion policy funding, the lack of capacity in regional administrations can have a substantial impact on the ability to direct strategic investment areas in line with regional development priorities.

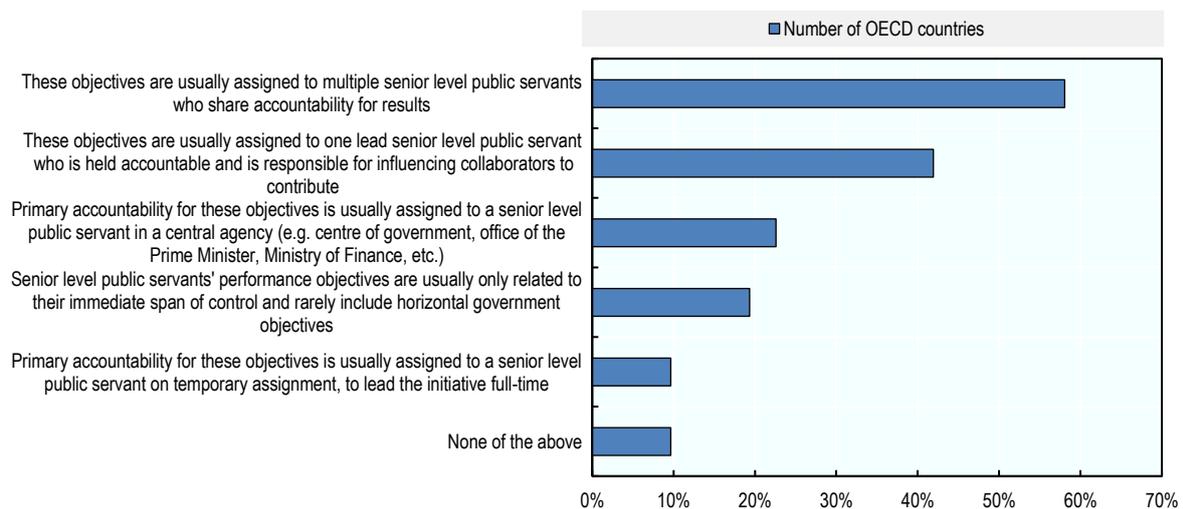
- In preparation for the 2021-27 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programming period, the **OECD** worked with a pilot group of five ESIF Managing Authorities (MAs), including two regional ones, to diagnose administrative challenges and support targeted capacity building actions in line with regional objectives and skills gaps. The OECD focused on building leadership capacity through a series of workshops and surveys in two areas: employee engagement and analysis of key managerial, professional, and operational competencies.

The deconcentration and decentralisation reforms require a clear definition of the role of each actor. Thus, central governments must be able to establish the conditions for good co-ordination and alignment of public action objectives, for monitoring the performance of regions and cities, and for the balanced development of all components of the national territory. Given that most responsibilities are shared, decentralisation policies involve managing mutual dependence to achieve common goals (OECD, 2019^[101]). This requires, among other things, working capacities between public and sometimes private organisations and actors. Being able to lead co-ordination projects between different stakeholders requires specific skills, especially in the public sector where the responsibilities of each actor must be clearly defined. Senior officials are often held accountable for this type of collaboration at the central level (Figure 2.7). In nearly 60% of OECD

countries, such projects are assigned to several senior officials, further reinforcing the collaborative dimension of the project and the need for associated skills. In a context of increased accountability at the local level, it is important that such clarification of responsibilities take place.

Figure 2.7. Responsibility of senior officials in collaborative projects

Percentage of OECD member countries



Note: N=31. Initial question, "How are senior officials held accountable for goals that require collaboration across ministries and agencies?"

Source: OECD (2020), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey

In addition to co-ordination capacities, this new distribution of roles implies the development of new skills related to the reality of territories, structures, and missions. Some policies, which in the past were developed and implemented from the capital cities, now require new skills from local public agents and the establishment of new dedicated institutions.

- In **Poland**, the School for Leaders Foundation (*Szkoła Liderów*) has established the *City Leaders* program to develop the leadership capacities of leaders of local governments, non-governmental organisations, and local businesses. The essence of the project is the exchange of experiences and solutions to systemic problems related to city management. The program targets people in key positions in the functioning of local government (mayors, presidents, deputy mayors, treasurers, secretaries, heads of key departments and city council leadership) from ten participating cities. The program structure includes online modules and face-to-face training (OECD, 2021^[103]).
- In **Switzerland**, the regional development platform *Regiosuisse*, launched in 2008 by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to support the implementation of the New Regional Policy (NRP), now helps SECO to implement national public policies in the cantons. This is done by providing systematic knowledge management, networking opportunities and continuing education. The main task of *Regiosuisse* is to develop knowledge management for NRP and regional development in general. *Regiosuisse* maintains and continuously develops a set of interrelated tools for knowledge management (OECD, n.d.^[94]).

2.5. Adapting the HR function to the major trends in public employment

The first part of this section presented three major trends that have an impact on the public service and its attractiveness. The question now is how to adapt the HR function to these changes, particularly at the regional level. Indeed, these major trends in public employment are forcing public services to rethink the HR function. The future of public service work is already here, and requires a forward-looking, flexible, and fulfilling public service (OECD, 2022^[20]). The same is true for the HR function, which must evolve to meet changing priorities and anticipate future crises and trends.

In a context of rapid change in the public service environment, marked by a rapidly aging workforce, a digital and ecological transformation of work methods and the skills expected of employees, and a strengthened role for agents in the regions, the HR function must be more strategic and capable of identifying the needs to be met and the resources to be made available and developed. This means strengthening talent management and integrating it into every stage of the employee "life cycle" (Figure 2.8). Talent management can be understood here as the proactive use of strategies to tailor HRM to the needs of specific groups in order to achieve organisational goals. It translates into proactive policies that promote the systematic attraction, identification, development, retention, and deployment of talent within the organisation.

Figure 2.8. Talent Management Integrated with the Employee Life Cycle



2.6. An HR function focused on talent management

Digital tools in HR departments can save a lot of time on transactional tasks, such as recruiting, promotion, payroll, and benefits management. Due to their bureaucratic nature, especially in the public sector, which must meet specific standards, these tasks often represent a significant portion of HR managers' time. However, digital tools can reduce the time spent on these tasks. Payroll software, for example, is now widely used throughout the public sector, automating a time-consuming, complex, and low-value-added process.

- In **Australia**, the *Australian Public Service* is already thinking internally about strengthening the skills of certain HR professionals whose jobs are being automated. The implementation of a new enterprise resource planning system, GovERP, will automate many of the tasks currently performed by HR staff, such as payroll officers and recruitment officers. The aim is to invest in programs to develop technical skills, data analysis and numerical dexterity in order to meet new needs, particularly in the areas of workforce analysts and planners. These jobs, with a strong focus

on data analysis, should enable public administrations to strengthen their capacity to implement evidence-based public policies. By supporting officers in this way, Australia is ensuring that it meets the needs of its public administrations while leveraging the experience of existing HR officers.

This means that HR departments can now refocus their activities around talent management. Talent management, as the proactive use of strategies to tailor personnel management to the needs of specific groups in order to achieve organisational goals, is becoming an essential dimension of HR professionals' work. The objective of such strategies is to attract candidates of different ages with the necessary skills to the public sector, and to retain public servants by offering them varied and dynamic career paths. Used in a more surgical manner, they can help to meet the challenges of attracting and retaining staff in sectors that are under pressure, such as the digital sector. They can also provide local government agencies with a clearer map of the workforce and skills available at any given time. However, they require support for HR professionals to strengthen their existing skills and develop new ones, in order to optimize their new responsibilities. The development of proactive tools, the coaching of agents, the reinforcement of employees' career guidance capacities are all areas that require new skills in order to limit the "managerial" role of HR professionals.

- The **United Kingdom** is currently reflecting on the future role of HR professionals. Today, HR professionals are generally focused on transactional HR tasks and day-to-day emergencies, with little free time to devote to high-value strategic activities, such as analysing HR challenges and interpreting them for the public sector or discussing managers' needs. The goal would be to perform transactional tasks through self-service platforms and automated processes, while HR departments focus on talent management and data usage.

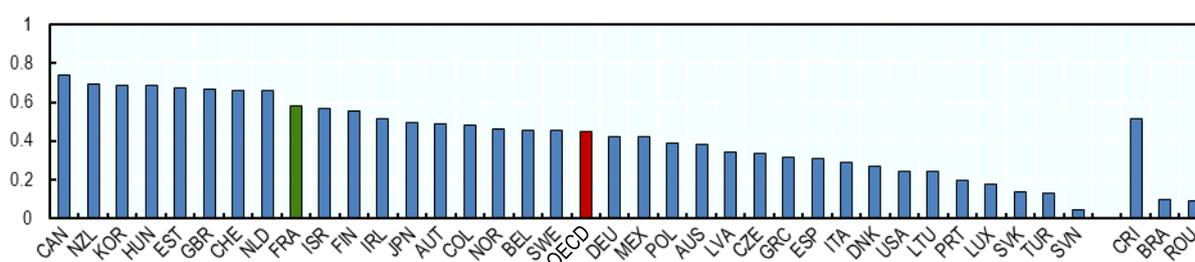
Such strategies can only be effective if the HR function is able to maximize the use of HR data. In addition to enabling the automation of certain tasks, HRIS allow for the collection of a wealth of information: from centralised payroll systems to workforce composition analysis modules and performance management, the systems developed are becoming increasingly comprehensive. The collection of this sensitive data must be followed by its analysis by human resources management departments. The CIPD points out that across the public and private sectors, only 16% of organisations already collecting this data are using advanced analytics (CIPD, 2020_[104]). Public administrations still face many barriers to workforce analytics, including human resources, software, and management (Vicenc Fernandez and Eva Gallardo-Gallardo, 2020_[105]). Another challenge is to ensure that the HR actors collecting the data and workforce planning actors are well-coordinated.

- **Korea** has a state-of-the-art electronic HRM system, e-Saram, which supports personnel management by collecting all personnel data in a unified way, from the moment employees enter the public service to the moment they leave. It allows to centralize HR data (salary, performance evaluation, training) and to collect in real time the profession, grade, organisation, gender, and age of nearly 300 000 public agents in 72 government agencies. E-Saram also enables the automation of HR reports, through a statistical information analysis functionality, and to perform mid-term salary simulations.
- In 2017, **Slovenia** developed a pilot project to use big data to analyze HR data. The objective here was to highlight the importance of this data in strategic and HR decisions, despite limited capabilities within the administration. The exercise combined the data analysis skills of the private sector with the collection and interpretation skills of the public sector. The Ministry of Public Administration was thus able to analyze different factors to see if they could potentially impact the performance of its employees, or not. The project mobilised 23 public agents—from HR, finance, purchasing, and IT departments—and 5 private sector experts, and was accompanied by data anonymisation and confidentiality procedures in data processing.

2.7. Develop a proactive role for the HR function in attractiveness policies

As detailed in the first section, “Studying the attractiveness of the French territorial administration in four pilot regions”, the public service faces an attractiveness challenge across OECD member countries. However, this challenge is not homogeneous across countries and professions. The challenge is for the HR function to have the means to identify and directly communicate the assets of the public service to specific targets, and then to have the opportunity to attract and retain candidates with the necessary skills within the public service. In concrete terms, this means being able to use different communication channels, clear and comprehensive job offers, or compensation systems that are sufficiently flexible while remaining fair. The OECD has recently developed an indicator on the capacity of public administrations to use proactive recruitment practices, seeking to help employers understand the motivations of candidates to apply for a position in the public service and thus position themselves as an employer of choice by using various communication channels.

Figure 2.9. Use of proactive recruitment practices, 2020



Note: The composite indicator of employer attractiveness is composed of the following aspects: (1) elements emphasised in recruitment materials; (2) measures implemented to attract more and better candidates with the desired skills; (3) use of methods to determine attractiveness criteria for qualified candidates; (4) adequate compensation systems to attract good candidates; and (5) measures in place to improve representation of underrepresented groups. The index ranges from 0 (no use of proactive recruitment practices) to 1 (high use of proactive recruitment practices).

Source: OECD (2021^[7]), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.

While in the past, public administrations have had to make only a limited effort to attract candidates, particularly for competitive examinations, the context has changed significantly. Strengthening the attractiveness of the public service is becoming even more necessary at a time when public services are aging, and it is becoming crucial to replace retiring employees. In this context, the question of the meaning of jobs becomes a prominent argument of attractiveness. Thus, the greening of administrations and associated jobs could eventually become a factor of attractiveness in the long term, even if the academic literature on the subject remains limited. The ‘greening’ of public administrations will be closely followed in the years to come (Box 2.1). It is also essential that public administrations seek to attract sought-after digital talent to meet the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s citizens. Finally, this proactivity is necessary to build local public employment ecosystems.

Box 2.1. The greening of public administrations as an emerging trend in public employment

The greening of the public service is attracting the attention of a growing number of OECD member countries. However, there are still few concrete achievements on the subject. Nevertheless, there are different ways to green public administrations and the associated jobs:

- Reducing the carbon footprint of workplaces, whether through the actions of public employees or the energy optimisation of buildings. For example, telecommuting limits the potentially polluting travel of public employees, thus reducing the collective carbon footprint of public service. On the other hand, the energy renovation of administrative buildings and efforts to reduce energy consumption should reduce the carbon footprint of public administrations.
- Integrating sustainability into every step of the decision-making process by strengthening public officials' capacities on the subject. Some OECD countries have been able to integrate a gender or diversity dimension at every stage of public policy making. Such a phenomenon could well be envisaged for the environmental dimension, for example by integrating environmental assessments of each policy developed.
- Identifying and developing the green skills needed to fill the current and future gaps in public administrations on the subject. The European Commission has published a report detailing the nature of green skills in relation to sustainability values, complexity, anticipation, and (European Commission, Joint Research Centre, 2022^[106]).
- Viewing leadership through a sustainability lens. It is important that managers and decision-making entities are fully involved in the sustainability processes of public administrations. This is not limited to the development of green public policies, but also includes the development of an environmental vision for the administration, or the establishment of training and development systems that reward the kind of innovative thinking needed to solve complex climate problems.

Employer branding is a concrete example of a proactive policy. Instead of waiting for candidates who are already aware of public service opportunities to apply on their own, employers with an employer brand are able to clearly communicate the values and missions of the public service to target audiences. A public service that represents the society it serves also helps administrations better respond to unpredictable future crises and can help increase and maintain trust and communication between the public service and citizens.

- **Switzerland** has recently carried out work related to the attractiveness of the public service. First of all, the federal government has had to better understand its position in the eyes of candidates and the nature of the job market in relation to its needs and competitors. The administration saw the importance of positioning the State as an employer and developed an employer brand around rational (what is the public service value proposition) and emotional (how to represent the public service in the market) aspects. The various agencies develop these elements in co-operation with the Federal Personnel Office (OFPER).

2.8. Focus recruitment processes on competencies

The OECD Recommendation on public service leadership and talent emphasizes the importance of "recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates through transparent, open and merit-based processes to guarantee fair and equal treatment" (OECD, 2019^[59]). In more than half of the OECD countries, this is reflected in, among other things, the establishment of competitive examinations for access to a certain group of the public service (OECD, 2020^[9]). However, many OECD countries that use competitive examinations as a tool for selecting candidates for the public service are seeking to answer questions

around the context, scale and targeted skills of such competitive examinations. For example, digital professions may require separate tests, distinct from the types of examinations developed for other public servants.

The changes made to the competitive entrance exams for the public service are mainly motivated by the difficulties of attractiveness of the public service: young candidates may find the exam and the associated preparation time-consuming, unattractive, and measuring only the ability to meet the requirements of the exam rather than demonstrating the skills that the exam seeks to measure. This observation is supported by the fact that the number of candidates for competitive examinations is decreasing, which leads to less selectivity and more recourse to contractual workers, a sign of the interest in public service. Thus, some OECD countries are seeking to rethink the selection process and what it measures, without questioning the nature of the competition.

- In **Italy**, the recent Brunetta reform seeks to thoroughly simplify the selection process for the public service. From now on, this process should contain only one written test and one oral test for non-managerial functions, allowing the use of digital tools for the oral exam, the recognition of diplomas obtained attesting to the candidate's mastery of certain skills, and the possibility of taking the competitive exams in decentralised locations on Italian territory. The pandemic has played an important role in the piloting of exceptional measures that have become commonplace.
- Faced with a process based on theoretical knowledge more than reflection and other professional skills, **Spain** recently began to renovate its approach to the competitive examination. Spain launched a program in November 2020 to rethink the candidate selection model, structured around thematic workshops, debates, and discussions on social networks. This program has allowed for a diagnosis of the future of competitive examinations ("*oposición*") within the public service, underlining the consensus in Spain on the need to complement theoretical tests with assessments of professional skills (including MCQs and practical cases). The new tests themselves will have to be evaluated by analysing their selectivity and the performance of the public servants recruited with them.

The question of organising decentralised examinations is also central to the role of HR departments in the territories. For example, decentralised examinations can provide an interesting response to the lack of attractiveness of certain local B and C category jobs in France. However, they require organisational skills and co-ordination with the national level.

In addition, the rollout of the use of contractual workers, who themselves depend on differentiated recruitment processes, should make it possible to respond to different problems by giving administrations the flexibility to acquire the skills they need when and where they are needed. This flexibility can only be achieved if the tasks and contexts in which contract staff can be used are defined in advance. In 57% of OECD member countries, contract recruitment is less rigorous than that of career public servants (OECD, 2019^[25]). However, the career prospects of these workers as well as the conditions under which the recruitment of a contractual worker should be prioritised over that of a public servant remain unclear across the OECD, complicating the role of HR for these agents.

2.9. Supporting and co-ordinating continuing education

As working lives become longer, it is crucial to foster continuous skill development throughout the career. Maintaining skills throughout one's career through continuous learning improves organisational performance—providing a skilled workforce, supporting productivity and efficiency, fostering innovation, and increasing employee motivation. However, important differences in the impact of training across the workforce remain entrenched. Younger, higher-skilled individuals on full-time contracts are more likely to receive training than older, lower-skilled and/or part-time individuals. In a context of rapidly changing skills

and work environments, this implies that HR must ensure that the accommodation made is as inclusive as possible.

- **Finland** has set up a central retraining program for public servants whose jobs are destined to disappear. The employer is obliged to find a new job for the public servant and to accompany them in a training program financed by the agency if the new job requires it.

An aging population means that the pool of young candidates from which to recruit is shrinking. While public employment is still often characterised by lifetime employment within a specific career, public administrations have a vested interest in relying on the current workforce to develop new skills. As digital transformation accelerates, 86% of OECD member countries identify digital skills as one of the five priority skills in public administration training (OECD, 2022^[66]).

Finally, the processes of deconcentration and decentralisation require a reflection on the nature of the actors in charge of training. In general, it is important for those involved in continuing education to ensure that the training catalogue keeps pace with changing job requirements. This also requires co-ordination with the entities responsible for workforce planning. The identification of current or future difficulties in terms of skills cannot be accompanied only by a recruitment strategy but must also go hand in hand with a training strategy. It could therefore be interesting to consider the intensive use of data to establish a precise workforce planning strategy, complemented by an associated training strategy, frequently renewed and monitored with the help of data analysis.

Across the OECD, 62% of countries have a central training and development strategy for government (OECD, 2022^[66]). Such a strategy does not prevent 51% of OECD countries from having a majority of their ministries and agencies with their own strategy. This approach therefore ensures that the entire public service is able to have the necessary skills, while developing specific departmental skills. The question arises, however, as to which actor is responsible for leading strategy-related training. 57% of OECD countries see a mix of ministerial and more central training provided by a central agency and/or a school of government. At the regional level, it may be worthwhile to have such training programs delivered jointly. Such pooling is more likely to align a central grand strategy with local skills needs.

This development of skills can also be ensured by so-called “informal training”, carried out, for example, during return or intergenerational transmission programs. These programs are organised by HR departments, which must have the capacity to identify candidates for these programs, monitor them, and support them, for example, in their return to the workforce.

2.10. Conclusion

Public administrations are at the heart of major economic, political, and societal changes. The rising average age of public employees poses challenges for many public administrations, including attracting younger candidates to replace retiring employees and managing an aging workforce more strategically. Digital transformation calls for new skills and enables new ways of working. In France, major reforms in the organisation of the State are leading to a new distribution of staff across the country.

These trends have similar consequences: human resources management in the public service must be more strategic, based on enhanced talent management. The complexity of such management lies in its degree of individualisation. Fortunately, digital transformation represents a unique opportunity to analyse large amounts of information about the skills and career paths of public servants. Ultimately, this should make the public service more attractive in all territories, capable of better measuring skills, and developing them throughout a career.

The broad trends in public employment affect public services in OECD member countries differently. The question is not so much whether governments can afford to resist these trends any longer, but what they

are already doing to respond to them. Across the OECD, governments are already putting in place many programs and tools to adapt to the broader trends in public employment and to build public service capacity. While the COVID-19 crisis underscored the importance of the concept of resilience, it is essential that it not only address sudden crises but also longer-term trends.

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Annex A. Profile of the quality factors offered in the four pilot regions

This appendix seeks to provide keys to understanding territorial attractiveness, through predefined indicators. This document is an approach that might seem relevant to the DGAFFP, for the further identification and development of indicators related to jobs and career opportunities within the ATE, or the regional public service more generally.

Improving the attractiveness of public jobs through a better understanding of territorial attractiveness

A set of factors involved in the quality of life play a significant role in the transformation of the residential strategies of the actors, of which the public agents are part (OECD, 2022^[2]). For example, being able to go to a museum, maintain social ties or live in a spacious home are all factors that contribute to one's well-being. Conversely, having little access to green spaces or living far from the services of daily life can negatively affect the quality of life in a territory, which will consequently find it more difficult to attract and retain its inhabitants.

The context of the COVID-19 crisis reshuffles the cards of attractiveness and seems to amplify the weight of certain factors in people's choices to move or stay (OECD, 2022^[107]). For example, while the rise of concern about climate issues among the French population has already been documented (Commissariat général au développement durable, 2018^[108]). The crisis seems to have given natural capital an even more decisive role in French people's decisions about where to live in the country, by accelerating awareness of the importance of environmental and health issues.

The unequal capacity of territories to attract and retain employees - both in terms of recruitment and mobility—is therefore partly the result of aspects that are rooted in geography and its physical, economic, social, and environmental components. These territorial attractiveness factors shape the quality of life offered by a territory, which the OECD understands empirically, by looking for the territorial components that constitute it. **Five domains grouping fourteen dimensions have been selected, without hierarchy, to characterise the attractiveness of regions to State employees** (OECD, 2021^[109]; OECD, 2022^[2])⁶:

Connectivity

1. **Transport:** this dimension measures the region's offerings in terms of transport networks of varying quality and modalities. This indicator is central to the attractiveness of a region because it can compensate for or exacerbate shortcomings in other dimensions. A functional public transport network provides better access to public services and facilitates socialisation and integration into the labour market.

⁶ The methodology developed by the OECD to measure regional attractiveness to talent, visitors, and investors has been adapted to retain only those dimensions relevant to the attractiveness of public agents.

Selected indicator: share of individuals satisfied with the quality of public transport (source: Gallup World Poll; average 2016-2020).

2. **Digitalisation:** this dimension measures whether public employees have fast and stable Internet connections. Beyond daily life, good Internet access is a decisive factor in the attractiveness of a company's employees being able to perform their tasks from home, in a context where most regional offices allow their employees to partially remote work. A good network connection gives smaller communities the opportunity to showcase the advantages they often have in terms of housing and social cohesion. On the other hand, difficult access to communication networks can be a hindrance to socialisation, job search or access to culture and education.

Selected indicator: average download speed from a fixed device (source: OECD calculation based on Ookla data; quarterly; 2021Q1; non-public data).

Economic and demographic attractiveness

3. **Economy:** This dimension provides an overview of the level of wealth and economic dynamism of the region, which is an attractive factor in terms of the ease of finding a job for the agents' spouses and children, and the level of well-being of the inhabitants.

Selected indicator: GDP per capita (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2019).

4. **Demographics:** demographic indicators give an idea of the composition of the local population and its dynamism.

Selected indicator: population density (per km²) (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2019).

5. **Labour market:** labour market indicators help public officials assess the dynamism of the labour market.

Selected indicator: employment rate of 15-64 year-olds (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2020).

Cultural and natural amenities

6. **Tourism:** This dimension covers both the region's tourism infrastructure and its popularity with foreigners. It assesses the attractiveness of local cultural and natural amenities.

Selected indicator: number of tourist accommodation beds per 1 000 inhabitants (source: Eurostat data; annual; 2020).

7. **Cultural capital:** This dimension highlights the role of cultural heritage in attracting talent to the region. All of these elements are essential for the promotion of quality of life.

Selected indicator: number of sport, leisure, and cultural venues per 1 000 inhabitants (source: Ministry of Culture, list of cultural venues and facilities; 2021).

The natural environment

8. **Environment:** Environmental indicators help visitors and talent understand the importance of local environmental preservation efforts.

Selected indicator: share of municipal waste recycled (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2020)

9. **Natural capital:** this dimension measures attractiveness insofar as people wishing to settle in a region appreciate the quality of the local environment. The environment, in the broadest sense of the term, has become an essential element in the attractiveness of a region.

Selected indicator: tree coverage rate (source: OECD environment data; annual; 2019).

10. **Land:** The land dimension assesses the pressure on natural, agricultural, and industrial land in the region.

Selected indicator: share of land converted to artificial surfaces (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2004 - 2019).

Resident well-being

11. **Social cohesion:** social cohesion is an important measure of a region's vitality and reflects co-operation among individuals, within and across their group boundaries, without coercion or purely self-serving motivation (OECD, 2018^[110]). Social ties counterbalance the social and family fabric that attracts many officers to the territories from which they originate and are therefore a major factor in retaining public officers in the territories.

Selected indicator: share of population satisfied with opportunities to meet people and make friends in the city or region where they live (source: Gallup World Poll; average 2016-2020).

12. **Housing:** The housing dimension highlights the availability of housing in relation to the quality of life for residents, visitors, and investors.

Selected indicator: share of population satisfied with housing affordability (source: Gallup World Poll; average 2016-2020).

13. **Health:** the health dimension considers issues of access to health services, potential health risks, and satisfaction with these services, which are of great importance to those seeking to settle. In a context marked by the health crisis, the lack of health facilities in a region can be a particular deterrent to the installation of public agents.

Selected indicator: number of physicians per 1 000 population (source: OECD regional data; annual; 2019).

14. **Education:** this dimension measures the accessibility of institutions for younger people, which along with the quality of education are particularly important in attracting public sector employees, who are more likely to have children than private sector employees. In 2010, 70.3% of public servants under the age of 50 had at least one child at the time of the survey, compared to 65% of private sector employees (DGAFP, 2010^[111]).

Selected indicator: access to primary education facilities (km) (source: "Access and Cost of Education and Health Services" database, European Commission/OECD report; 2011).

While these factors remain broadly common to all individuals, it is important to note that their prevalence depends on the socio-economic characteristics of each agent. For example, the quality of the living environment seems to play a more important role for the most qualified individuals (Tuccio, 2019^[5]) who may accept a lower salary in exchange for a more comfortable living environment. Similarly, younger workers prefer places with connected infrastructure, while middle-aged workers are more attracted to culturally endowed regions (ESPON, 2013^[6]). Thus, in order to prioritise attracting agents from particular categories, it will be necessary to develop policies that emphasise certain aspects of attractiveness more than others.

Attractiveness profiles of the four pilot regions

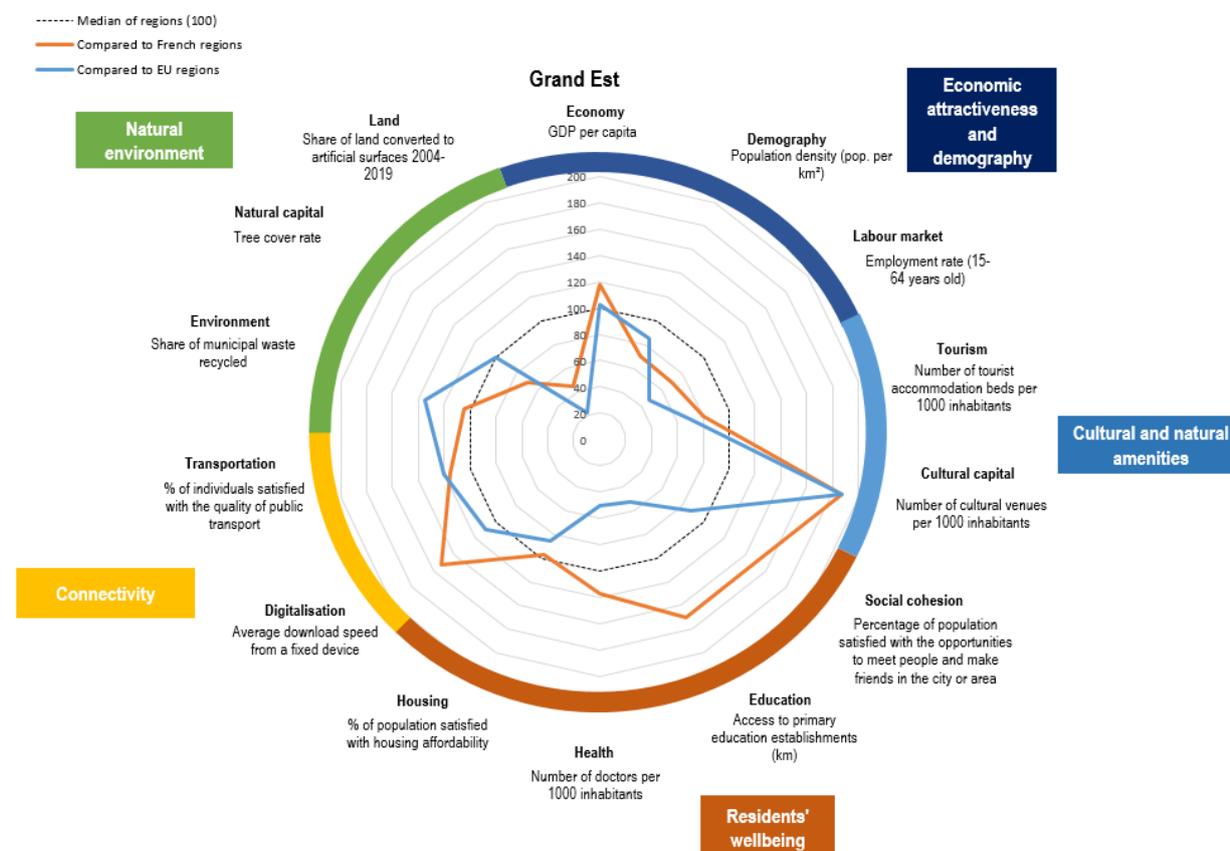
Attractiveness profiles are knowledge and action tools that aim to provide public decision-makers with a variety of useful information on the different levers they can use to attract and retain public employees where they are needed, and thus promote sustainable, inclusive, and resilient regional development (OECD, forthcoming^[41]).

The attractiveness factors of French regions are represented by two curves: one compares their performance to the median of French regions and the other to the median of European regions, in order to put certain results into perspective. If these curves are above 100, it means that the region's performance is better than the median, compared to the 12 other French regions and the other European regions.

Grand Est

The profile of the attractiveness of the Grand Est provides a picture of a region with a rather homogeneous performance in the various areas that determine the attractiveness of a territory to public agents.

Figure A A.1. Attractiveness profile of the Grand Est region



Assets

The region has many assets. First of all, it has many **cultural sites**, relative to the size of its population. The Region has recently integrated the notion of well-being into its cultural policy, which shows that cultural facilities are taken into account as a vector for attracting and maintaining economic agents, including public agents (Région Grand Est, 2020^[33]).

The **primary education** institutions are rather accessible for its inhabitants who also benefit from a relatively good access to the Internet network on the territory, although the lack of connection to the optical fiber of many dwellings underlines the margin of progress: in 2021, in 3 of the 10 departments more than half of the premises were not connectable to the optical Fiber to the home (FTTH) (which allows to reach the best Internet speeds) (Arcep, 2022^[112]).

The Grand Est also offers its inhabitants very good opportunities to develop **social connections**, which, once solidified, are a major factor in keeping public agents in the territories. The existence of these ties

helps to counterbalance the social and family fabric that attracts many public servants to the territories from which they come. The share of the social and solidarity economy in the overall economy, which is relatively high in the region, and the low homicide rate also attest to the "good community life" that the inhabitants enjoy. The capacity of the region's territories in demographic decline to nevertheless attract new inhabitants (Insee, 2022^[56]) can be interpreted as an illustration of the different assets of the region that can help attract public agents.

Challenges

Despite the rural nature of this region, where 91% of municipalities have fewer than 2 000 inhabitants (Région Grand Est, 2019^[113]). Despite the rural nature of this region, where 91% of the communes have less than 2 000 inhabitants, little of its surface is covered by **natural forests**, compared to other French regions. However, the environment in the broadest sense has become an essential element in the attractiveness of the territories. In this respect, the **artificialisation of land** in the Grand Est region continues to increase more rapidly than the population, reflecting a non-sparing use of urbanised space. In addition to the reduction of biodiversity, artificial soils are often impermeable, which amplifies the phenomena of runoff and therefore the risk of flooding (Béchet, Le Bissonnais and Ruas, 2017^[114]). In the longer term, they can jeopardise the attractiveness of the territories with respect to public agents. That being said, the creation of the National Forest Park at the end of 2019 seems to attest to a consideration of this issue. *Spaces under strong protection for biodiversity*⁷ now represent a little more than 1% of the regional territory against 1.4% in metropolitan France (Insee, 2022^[56]).

Despite a low population density compared to the French average, it is not particularly easy to find **housing** in the Grand Est (the region is at the median of other French regions.) This is partly because housing construction has not kept pace with the extremely rapid densification of several municipalities in the territory, such as those in the urban hub of the city of Metz, which hosts several of the regional headquarters. The city itself moved up two places in the list of most populated cities between 1962 and 2014 (Insee Analyses Grand Est, 2017^[115]).

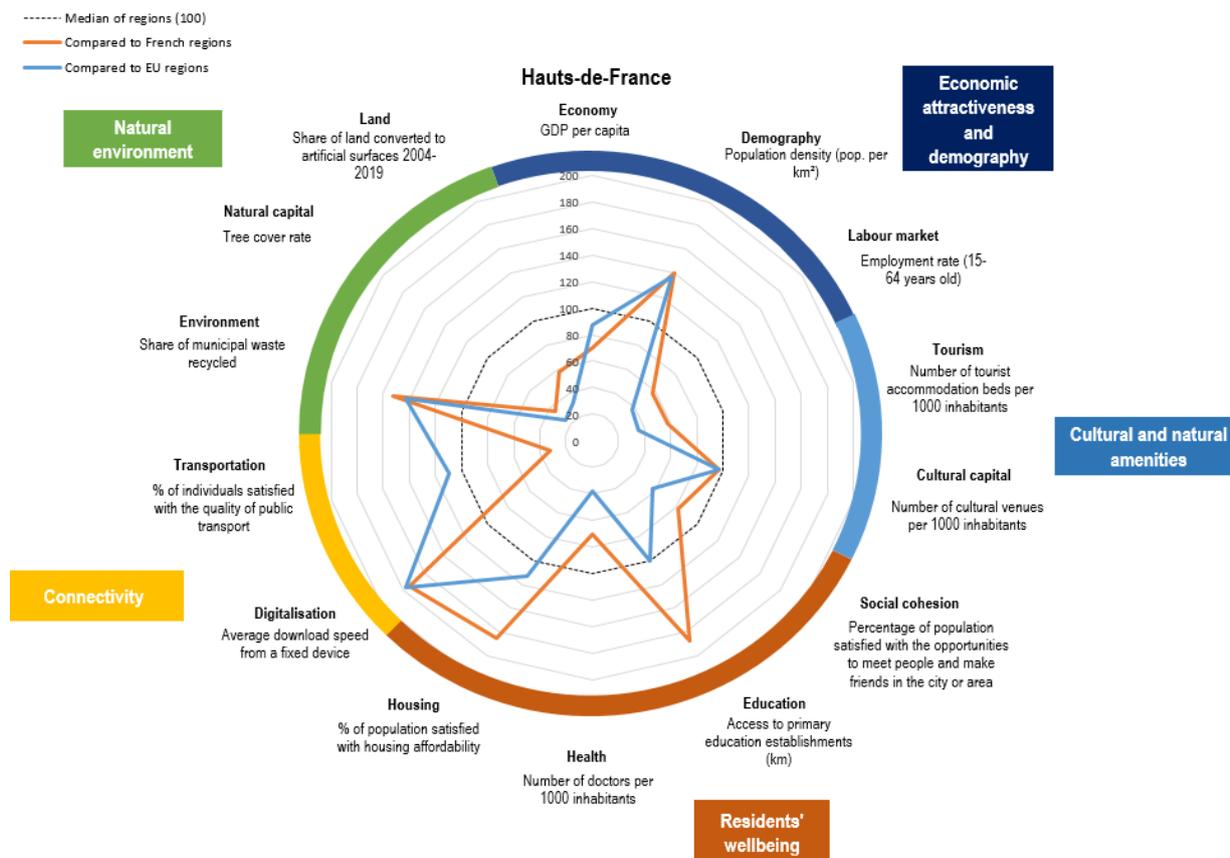
Finally, despite a more dynamic economy than in other French regions, the **unemployment rate** remains high. This can be detrimental to the attractiveness of the region for agents who are accompanied by relatives looking for work. In particular, the children of agents of working age may find it more difficult than elsewhere to complete internships or to be hired in a region that is experiencing a decline in the employment rate of young people, especially those aged 15 to 24. While this decrease is partly explained by the lengthening of the duration of studies, it is also the result of real difficulties in accessing employment.

Hauts-de-France

The Hauts-de-France region has a very heterogeneous attractiveness profile, which reveals very pronounced strengths and challenges.

⁷ In these areas, human activities are prohibited or limited by regulation: national and regional nature reserves, national park cores, biotope orders, biological reserves.

Figure A A.2. Attractiveness profile of the Hauts-de-France region



Assets

Compared to other French regions, the Hauts-de-France region performs very well in key areas to attract and retain newly recruited and mobile public employees.

In addition to being an attractive factor for daily life, the **very good access to the Internet** in the territory is a decisive element of attractiveness for the agents who can carry out their tasks from home, in a context where most of the regional offices allow their employees to partially remote work. A good connection to the network avoids urban concentration in the largest cities of the territory. It also gives smaller communities the opportunity to showcase the advantages they often have in terms of housing and social cohesion.

The accessibility of educational institutions and the quality of education are particularly important in attracting public sector employees, who are more likely to have children than private sector employees. In 2010, 70.3% of public sector employees under 50 years of age had at least one child at the time of the survey, compared to 65% of private sector employees (DGAFP, 2010_[111]). In Hauts-de-France, **primary education** institutions are well distributed across the region, and the number of students per class at the elementary level is relatively low compared to other French regions: in 4 of the 5 departments there are fewer than 21 students per class (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2019_[116]). More generally, the region has the third highest average access to everyday facilities in France (Hauts-de-France/Insee analyses,

2016_[117])⁸. The urban nature of the region largely explains this position. Despite the high population density of the 3rd most populous region in France, residents are satisfied with the accessibility of **housing**.

Challenges

A first challenge concerns the quality of **public transport**, which does not seem to be adapted to the needs of the inhabitants. This indicator is central to the attractiveness of a territory because it can compensate for shortcomings in other dimensions or make them worse. A functional public transportation network provides better access to public services and facilitates socialisation and integration into the labour market. In the Île-de-France region, for example, employment has grown faster in municipalities connected to Paris by an RER line than in those with only a suburban train service, given the same characteristics. (Insee Analyses, 2016_[118]). Conversely, a poor-quality network may exacerbate the low **presence of doctors** in the territory, keep the spouses and children of agents in a high-unemployment labour pool out of **employment**, or complicate access to the few **green spaces** the region offers. The fact that the region has one of the densest road networks in France (Insee, 2022_[56]) The fact that the region has one of the densest road networks in France (Insee, 2022) may compensate for some of the poor quality of the transportation network and may alleviate some of the access difficulties mentioned. Nevertheless, for agents with lower incomes and for those who are sensitive to the quality of the environment, having to resort to a car presents a cost that may be a disincentive when choosing a place to live.

Extremely little of the surface of Hauts-de-France is covered by **natural forests** relative to other French regions. For the reasons already mentioned, this may be detrimental to the attractiveness of the region, although the presence and development of the coastline, in particular around the two sites labeled "Grands sites de France"—the Bay of the Somme and the Deux-Caps—can partly fill this gap. These sites offer the inhabitants environmental amenities comparable to those offered by green spaces: relaxation, meeting other inhabitants, practicing sports or recreational activities, etc. The low capacity of tourist accommodation in the territory indicates that there is room for improvement in the development of the territory's tourist attractions.

The level of **social cohesion**—which reflects co-operation among individuals, within and across their group boundaries, without coercion or purely self-interested motivation (OECD, 2018_[110])—is quite low in the Hauts de France, which can be difficult for newcomers who have no pre-existing ties to the territory.

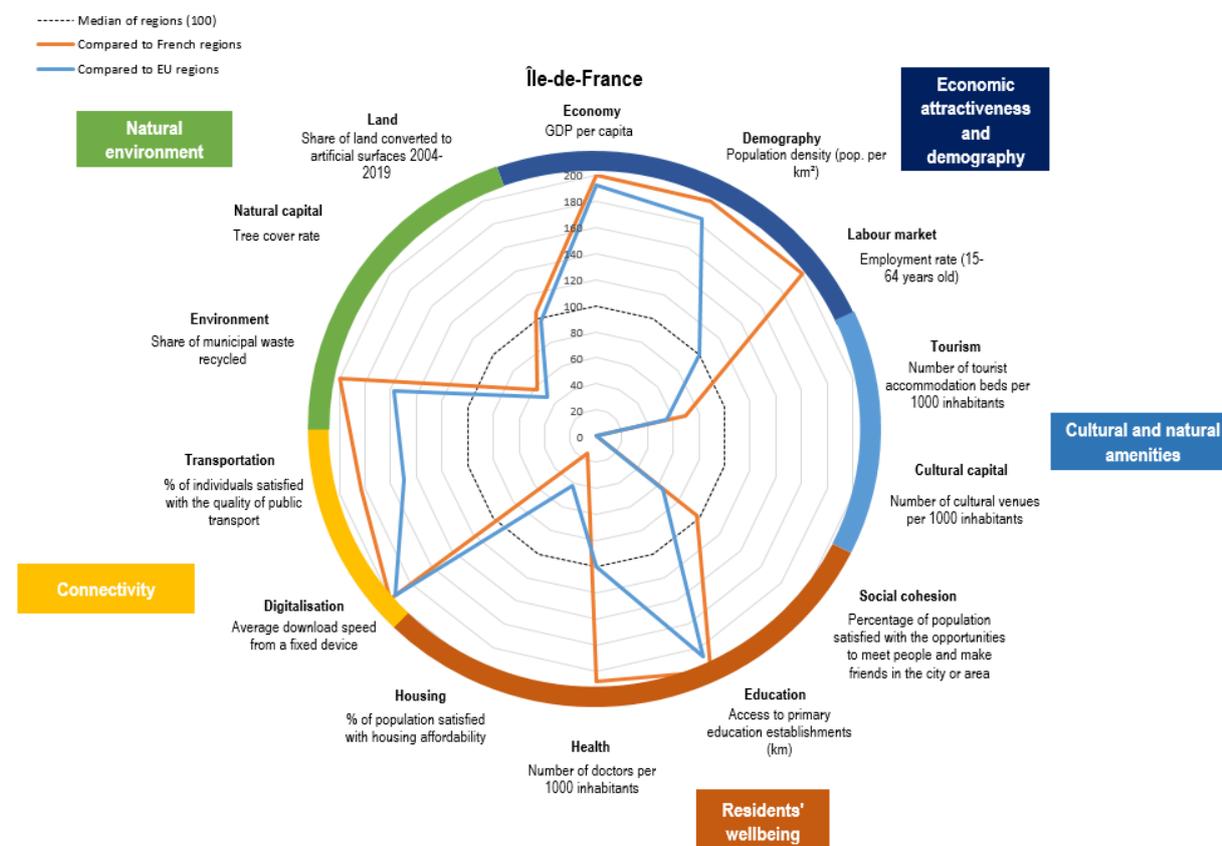
In addition, the region suffers from a very low **employment rate compared to** other French regions, which can be an obstacle to the relocation of public servants accompanied by relatives looking for work. During the interviews, employees whose spouses were unable to find a job were mentioned as leaving. Moreover, the evolution of the local unemployment rate also impacts the morale and behavior of the inhabitants even when they are not personally affected by this phenomenon (Algan, Malgouyres and Senik, 2019_[36]) and can lead agents to want to leave.

Île-de-France

Compared to the twelve other French regions, the Ile-de-France region scores the highest in some dimensions of attractiveness, and very low in others. Significant sub-regional differences must also be considered.

⁸ Choice of facilities in the package: the facilities and services that make up the basket of common facilities were selected on the basis of their proximity, the mobility they entail, the importance they are given on a daily basis and their frequency of use. This package was designed jointly by Institute for Urban Planning and Development of Île de France (IAU IDF) (INSEE, the Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme d'Île de France) and the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET) (Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires). It includes, among other things, police, gendarmerie, a post office, supermarkets, a bakery, pre-school, middle school, doctor, pharmacy, and sports arena or field.

Figure A A.3. Attractiveness profile of the region Île-de-France



Assets

First and foremost, the Ile-de-France region is extremely well **connected**. The region benefits from a wide deployment of **digital infrastructures** and is the most covered by optical fiber. **Public transport** is of good quality, which means that the region is characterised by widespread use of public transport, particularly for commuting, and by a decline in the use of vehicles. In 2017, 46% of the working population used public transport to get to their place of work, compared with 16% in mainland France (Insee, 2022^[58]).

The number of **doctors** in relation to the number of inhabitants is relatively high, and **primary education** institutions are very easily accessible.

Île-de-France has the lowest **unemployment rate** in France and the highest GDP per capita. This economic dynamism is an attractive factor in terms of the ease with which spouses and children of employees can find employment and the level of well-being of other residents.

Challenges

The region's high population density leads to strong land and real estate pressure, resulting in relatively high real estate prices that affect residents' access to **housing**. In metropolitan France, it is in the Île de France region that over-occupation of housing is the highest in (Insee Références, 2021^[119]) with a rate of over-occupied housing of 13% (with 21% in Seine-Saint-Denis and 15% in Paris) compared to only 3% in the rest of the country. However, the characteristics of the place where people live, including the surface area, have a major influence on their well-being and therefore on the attractiveness of the region.

In very densely populated areas, the supply of facilities and services is often complete, but their density is not always sufficient for services to be accessible or of good quality. This is the case in Île-de-France,

where the number of **cultural and sports facilities** is high, but relatively very low per capita (Insee Références, 2021^[119]).

The very little **natural green space** that the region offers to its inhabitants and the local depletion of biodiversity may dissuade some public agents from coming or staying. Since the 2000s, the creation of green spaces has slowed down while the region's population has been steadily increasing (Conseil Régional d'Île-de-France, 2017^[120]). Half of Île-de-France residents live in areas with less than 10 m² of green and wooded areas per capita, the minimum threshold recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). However, the denser the urban context in which the inhabitants live, the more they need easily accessible green spaces. However, certain developments are encouraging signs: the development of organic farming, renewable energy and waste recycling, and the recognition by the Region of the importance of a green heritage for the well-being and attractiveness of the territory (Conseil Régional d'Île-de-France, 2017^[120]).

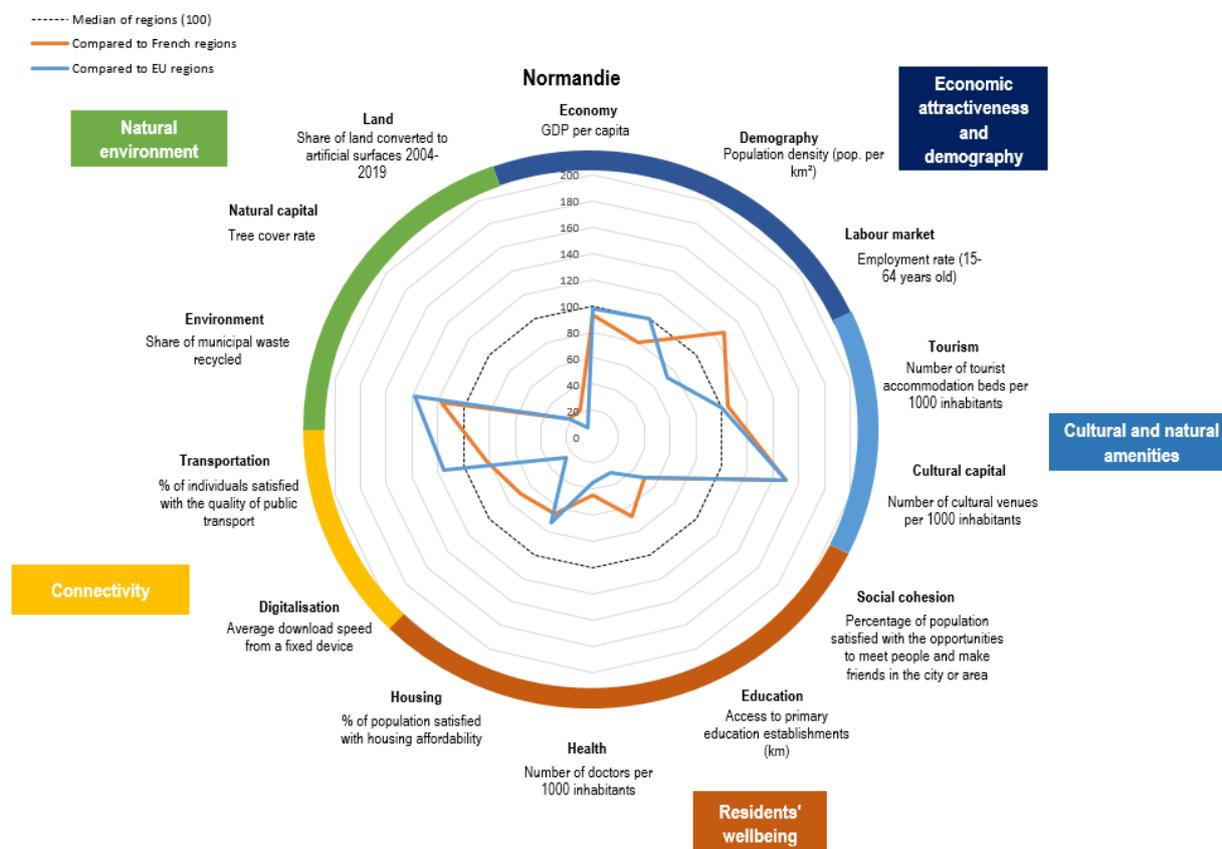
Regional data on the quality and coverage of **public transport** in Île-de-France do not reflect certain local realities. While at the regional level, half of the population is less than one kilometer from a train station, this is the case for only two-thirds of the inhabitants of the inner suburbs and 13% of the inhabitants of the outer suburbs. Also, the further away from the center of the region, the less people use public transport to get to work: 68% in Paris, 50% in the inner suburbs, and 31% in the outer suburbs, where the car remains the main mode of travel (Insee, 2022^[58]). As a result, the Île-de-France region is very prone to road congestion. The difficulty and time spent getting from home to work, regardless of the mode of transportation, is a challenge that came up in many interviews conducted in Île-de-France.

Access to quality public services is also more difficult in some departments, notably because of significant territorial disparities in terms of population growth: it is declining in Paris (-0.5% per year between 2013 and 2018) and increasing sharply in Seine-Saint-Denis (+1%), but also in Seine-et-Marne, Essonne, and Val d'Oise (+0.7%). As a result, the fullest **pre-school classes** in metropolitan France are in Essonne and Yvelines (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2019^[116]), while the department of Seine-et-Marne is very poorly endowed with daycare centers (Insee Analyses Île-de-France, 2021^[121]) and **elementary school classes** in Seine-et-Marne and Hauts-de-Seine contain on average more students per class than the rest of the departments. Furthermore, within the region, the **availability of medical care** is unevenly distributed: the areas with a high population in precarious situations are those where the density of doctors, both general practitioners and specialists, is the lowest. In a context marked by the health crisis, the lack of healthcare facilities can be a particular obstacle to the installation of public agents.

Normandy

The study of the territorial characteristics of the Normandy region reveals numerous avenues for improving its attractiveness to public agents.

Figure A A.4. Attractiveness profile of the Normandy region



Assets

Compared to other French regions, Normandy offers its inhabitants a satisfactory number of **cultural sites** in relation to its population. Its large tourist accommodation capacity (number of tourist accommodation beds per inhabitant) illustrates the many environmental and cultural amenities of the region: a wide seafront with renowned seaside resorts, sites of national and international renown (Mont Saint-Michel, D-Day beaches, the legacy of the Impressionists, etc.). Calvados is the department with the largest number of listed historical monuments after Paris. The good number of cultural sites in the region in relation to its number of inhabitants could serve as a lever to reinforce social cohesion and counterbalance the attraction of the agents' home territories. Several studies show that culture can represent, along with sports and community life, one of the main elements of local city vitality (Avenel, 2015^[122]).

The **labour market** is rather dynamic despite a low GDP per capita. The rural areas of Normandy are also relatively free of poverty compared to the same types of areas on a national level (Insee Analyses Grand Est, 2022^[123]).

Challenges

The region faces challenges that feed into each other.

Its **limited connection** to the rest of the national territory, due to a still largely incomplete access to the Internet network and public transportation that does not meet the needs of the inhabitants, aggravates the low density of primary **education establishments** and the difficulties of **access to healthcare**, characterised by a low medical density — 40% of the Orne population does not have a referral doctor, for example. In this "all-car" region, accessibility has been designed through a road and highway network that irrigates the entire region. However, as mentioned above, the lack of organised mobility can be an aggravating factor for low-income public servants, by generating significant fuel expenses when they own

a vehicle. Difficulty in accessing communication networks can be an obstacle to socialisation, job hunting and access to culture and education. The France Très Haut Débit plan provides for the upcoming coverage of the French territory by the 4G mobile network but is not yet complete.

In addition, the Normandy region offers **housing** that is sometimes unsuitable for the households that occupy it. This is particularly true of the Rouen, Caen, and Le Havre areas, where the regional offices are located, which suffer from significant housing-related difficulties illustrated by over-occupancy rates of 6.5% or more (Insee, 2022^[57]).

The region offers almost no **natural green spaces**. While Normandy is a region with little woodland compared to the rest of France, the proportion of production forests is nevertheless very high (94%). However, several studies have highlighted the specific place of the forest in the system of practices and representations of their daily landscape by the inhabitants (Bigando, 2020^[124]).

Conclusion

While attractiveness is often measured at the country level, the above attractiveness profiles give a glimpse of the variety of territorial dynamics of attractiveness of public agents at work at the regional level and underline the importance of moving away from a standardised approach to attractiveness policy. Moreover, as some of the analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot regions show, the attractiveness situation is different within the regions analysed, which have divergent dynamics at the departmental level or at the sub-departmental level in terms of living areas.

Thus, we must distinguish different types of dynamics according to the following typologies:

- **Departments that are mostly rural, in demographic and economic decline** (for example: Aisne, Vosges, Orne, Meuse, Ardennes, Haute-Marne). Image deficits aggravate perceptions. These rural departments do not have sufficient university or higher education centers to train the young people of the territory who have to leave the territories without always returning after acquiring qualifications. There, it can be both difficult to recruit locally for low-skilled positions and even more difficult to recruit qualified profiles due to the absence of candidates from outside the territory and the great weakness of the local pool. This situation can be found in part on a sub-departmental scale in the catchment areas that lack attractiveness and are located in rather attractive departments (for example, Avesnois in the east of the Nord department, or Pays de Bray in the east of the Seine-Maritime department). The problems are similar to those of rural departments and raise the question of the viability of the territorial network of State services.
- **Departments in the Paris region or located in the economic basin of the Île-de-France** (Eure, Marne, Oise). The cost of living and transportation constraints are dominant factors in the lack of attractiveness, as well as image issues for certain departments such as Seine-Saint-Denis.
- **Departments that are home to metropolitan areas and especially regional capitals** have much less difficulty attracting candidates. This is the case, for example, in the Nord, Bas-Rhin, and Calvados departments. These are populated departments with university and higher education programs and where there is a relatively large qualified endogenous pool of candidates who wish to work and thus remain in the area where they come from. Candidates therefore desire to maintain family ties, which can however be a hindrance to career development in the medium term. There may also be candidates from these territories who have completed their studies outside and wish to return to start or continue a career close to their family. These territories do not seem to have any difficulties in recruiting low-qualified profiles, except when the salary-cost-of-living differential is too great, as in the capital cities of the regions. The difficulty for these areas lies rather in their ability to attract profiles that do not originate from the region and that have been trained outside the department because of the sometimes degraded national image of these areas, as in the North. This situation can be problematic for the most qualified positions or for senior management positions.