Context

"Demographics-based" actions point to the pressure facing public service employers who must react to demographics-related changes in their personnel structures and in the broader workforce. By 2030, Germany is expecting a 27% increase in population over 67 years old, and a decrease of 6.9% of the working age population. Germany’s population is also becoming more ethnically diverse. Within the Federal Administration, the average age of employees is also rising, and a high level of retirement is expected by 2030. This presents challenges and opportunities for Germany’s labour force and its public employment systems.

Good practice

In 2011, the Federal Administration presented a report on demography, and in 2012 it published a comprehensive demographic strategy. On this basis, the Federal Government launched a dialogue with representatives from every level of government, from the private sector, social partners, the research community and civil society. Joint working groups formulated concrete approaches and presented their initial results to the public at the Federal Government’s demography summit in May 2013. On 14 January 2015, the Federal Government decided to follow up on this approach and further develop its demographic strategy under the heading “Greater prosperity and better quality of life for all generations”. In doing so, the Federal Government increased co-operation with its partners in a total of ten working groups, including one focused on “the public service as an attractive and modern employer”. The key objectives of this working group are:

- Ensuring that the strengthening of knowledge in public administration occurs promptly.
- Expanding family-friendly work practices and ensuring that employees’ ability to work is compatible with different stages in life.
- The process has been evidence-informed, drawing on, for example, employee surveys, workforce data and statistics, and surveys of students preparing to enter the workforce. In this context, the following actions, among others, are being advanced with the intention of ensuring the timely transfer of knowledge and promoting the potential of employees, their skills and expertise:
  - Strategic personnel planning aligned to demographic requirements.
  - Establishment of a central job pool of all federal ministries and rotation programmes to promote a diversity of assignments, employee development and more workforce agility.
  - A greater focus on training, opportunities for further education, skills development and information learning through work assignments or e-learning.
  - Increased recruitment of skilled employees (joint web portal for all three levels of government) with an additional emphasis on increasing the number of employees with migrant backgrounds. This also includes a focus on workplace inclusion policies.
For more information

European Union – Workforce development in Managing Authorities of EU funds

Context
Ahead of the 2021-2027 programming period for European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the OECD worked with a pilot group of five Managing Authorities (MAs) of ESIF to diagnose administrative challenges and support targeted capacity-building actions. Supporting skills development in leaders and senior managers was a key part of those actions in two MAs: the Managing Authority of the Competitiveness and Cohesion Operational Programme in Croatia, and the Managing Authority of the Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development Operational Programme in Greece.

Good practice
In both MAs, the OECD has focussed on boosting leadership capacity through a series of workshops and surveys in two areas: employee engagement and analysis of key managerial, professional and operational competencies. The OECD designed and ran a tailored employee engagement survey in order to quantify key issues relating to staff motivation and perceptions of their work environment and bring them to the attention of senior leaders. The results were used to design a series of workshops focussed on developing an action plan to improve employee engagement.

In parallel, the OECD ran a competency gap analysis assessment of both MAs in Croatia and Greece. The gap analysis enabled senior leaders in the MAs to better understand the areas where employees wished to develop their skills and competences. It also provided valuable feedback for senior leaders on perceptions of managerial competence. The results of the gap analysis were used to design a learning and development strategy for the MAs through a series of workshops involving leadership perspectives as well as data from the surveys and employee focus groups.

Both work streams provided valuable feedback for leaders as well as a way to involve them directly in co-creating workable and long-term solutions for their organisations.

Find out more
United Kingdom – Professionalising the Policy Function

Context

The Policy Profession Standards describe the skills and knowledge required by policy professionals at all stages of their career, and provide a framework for professional development.

Good practice

The UK Policy Profession Support Unit aims to create a career path for civil servants involved in policy advising and to assure a level of skill consistency across departments. Through a process of broad consultation they have created a framework of 18 skills, each with three levels:

- Level 1: Identify and attain the working-level knowledge required to operate effectively in a policy environment.
- Level 2: Progress from awareness to active demonstration of policy-making skills.
- Level 3: Demonstrate they are fully competent at a high level

As the depth of expertise develops at levels 2 and 3 it is not expected that these will be in all 18 skill areas – at level 2 we would expect skilled practice in a minimum of three areas from each of the three elements of policy making: evidence, politics and delivery. The requirements set out in the standards provide for a consistency of skill across departments towards a more collective and formalised profession. Departments may tailor these, focusing on those most relevant to them, to provide more detail and specificity. Policy Profession teams within departments can give advice on this, as well as L&D opportunities, which are linked to the Policy Professional Development Framework.

Find out more

Context

The purpose of the White House Fellows program is to provide gifted and highly motivated emerging leaders with some first-hand experience in the process of governing the Nation and a sense of personal involvement in the leadership of society. Declaring that “a genuinely free society cannot be a spectator society,” President Lyndon B. Johnson announced the establishment of the White House Fellows Program in the East Room of the White House in October 1964. Prompted by the suggestion of John W. Gardner, then President of the Carnegie Corporation, President Johnson’s intent was to draw individuals of exceptionally high promise to Washington for one year of personal involvement in the process of government.

Good practice

The White House Fellowship continues to be a non-partisan program. It has strictly maintained this tradition during both Republican and Democratic administrations and, through the cross-fertilization of ideas and experience, has enriched the practice of public policy for more than five decades.

The mission of the non-partisan White House Fellows Program, as envisioned by President Johnson, was, in his words, “to give the Fellows first hand, high-level experience with the workings of the Federal government and to increase their sense of participation in national affairs.” In return for the Fellowship year, President Johnson expected the Fellows to “repay that privilege” when they left by “continuing to work as private citizens on their public agendas.” He hoped that the Fellows would contribute to the nation as future leaders.

Find out more

- https://www.whitehouse.gov/get-involved/fellows/ [last accessed 22 March 2021]