



OECD Public Governance Review

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Human resource capability

The UAE public service has achieved an impressive progress in building the foundation for strong HRM governance and strategies. In a very short period of time first-class HRM systems and programmes have been designed in support of implementing Vision 2021. In 2013, FAHR launched the Human Resources Strategy for the years 2014-2016 with the aim to consolidate national competences and developing federal human capital and effective HR planning. However the implementation of the strategies faces significant challenges and requires continuous attention. As in many countries, challenges in the UAE are related to HRM expertise in line ministries and HRM accountability frameworks that ought to provide consistency in HRM across the central government. Fragmentation in HRM bears the risks of the government's effectiveness to address emerging policy challenges quickly and correctly.

The key organisations having federal responsibilities for HRM are the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) for the public sector and the National Human Resource Development & Employment Authority (TANMIA) for the private sector. Both institutions share responsibilities related to the Emiratisation initiative. The line HR departments in federal ministries and authorities play a vital role in the implementation of the HR policies and initiatives.

The main role of a central HRM body is to provide a whole-of-government approach to human resources management, to develop HRM policies and legislation and to enable the implementation of government priorities in regards to human resources.

The HR departments in Ministries receive policy guidance from FAHR. However they conserve broad discretionary power to customise policies (pending approval from FAHR), implement regulations, policies and initiatives as well in recruitment and promotions processes. In the case of the UAE federal public service, in process of building a government-wide HRM system, the pace of devolution can be debated: while suitable in principle because of the flexibility it allows in implementation, it might comprise some challenges and risks for a whole-of-government HR vision and its sustainability, especially in early stages of development of a HRM system (the case of UAE federal public service). Rapid advanced decentralisation may put the HRM structures under significant stress given their level of maturation and readiness to accept and adopt the change. Successful decentralisation requires a robust accountability regime set in advance. OECD experience shows that in case accountability frameworks are absent or partially completed, early delegation and decentralisation may be risky from final outcomes' point of view.

Framing whole-of-government strategic HRM within a coherent management and accountability system that links HR needs to the implementation of national development strategy is a significant challenge and an important step. The UAE public service could draw upon experiences in OECD countries to develop an integrated management accountability framework in which the human resources management is a core component, completely tied to ministerial planning, performance management and reporting requirements, as it was done by some of the OECD member countries. Regular reviews and assessments by the central HRM body of HRM ministries' capacity are conducted in sixteen OECD countries. The objective of data consolidation is to have a unified picture about the whole government sector.

This unified picture will be crucial to advance the strategic workforce planning as a means to integrate the HR activities of the organisation into its overall strategic direction and to ensure proactive, sufficient and appropriate recruitments and redeployments needed to meet the strategic objectives of the public service. While the Human Resources Law recognises the importance of strategic workforce planning⁵ and FAHR understands the necessity to establish it on a solid basis, there is no firm evidence that consistent strategic workforce planning occurs now in the federal public service. On the contrary, replacement recruitments seem to be done on a one-to-one basis. Workforce planning occurs in individual ministries and authorities and not government-widely. This could impact negatively the efforts to enhance the HR capability of the public service, especially in the complex organisational context of the UAE heavily relying on expatriates' human capital.

Solid strategic workforce planning characterises mature and forward-looking organisations. It enables evidence-based HRM developments and is built on comprehensive and solid data. The availability and the quality of relevant data is essential to evidence-based HR management and to improved policymaking and service delivery. Business and HR strategies and accountability/reporting frameworks determine data requirements to a great extent. The first steps in creating HR data have been made in UAE but the pace needs to be accelerated in order to fully assist the implementation of HRM strategies and the Emiratisation program. There is a clear necessity to collect appropriate HR data around key performance indicators but also to develop rigorous analysis, foresight, forecasting and modelling practices. The UAE is already collecting data through satisfaction surveys. However, this can be reinforced using appropriate business analytics and perceptual data obtained through regular employee engagement surveys which have proven to be a success factor in knowledge-based HRM systems in OECD countries. The UAE's position, actual and aspired, of regional leader in HR development and strategies further justify those investments.

Data and analytics also play important role in setting goals and monitoring progress in HRM implementation, Emiratisation efforts' results, knowledge development and transfer in the UAE public administration. The large presence of non-National employees (43% in 2010) in the federal public service creates a significant challenge for the workforce management and especially for the knowledge retention in the public service. Risks of knowledge discontinuity and potential loss of expertise should be managed carefully along with the Emiratisation efforts. It has to be acknowledged that despite the progress made in the implementation of the Emiratisation policy, the expatriates will continue to be an important player and contributor to the UAE federal public service in the forthcoming years. Knowledge and expertise transfer from expatriates to nationals is a core element in the Emiratisation process (and a key success factor) but it seems that often it does not happen or when it does it is uneven and not at the expected or desired pace. Therefore the knowledge transfer from expatriates to Nationals should continue to be a priority with major focus on preparing the ground for a successful transfer and establishing creative incentives to overcome potential resistance. Innovative approaches are also required to deal with potential productivity and work climate disturbances.

The HRM system design and practices are critical factors in winning the talents. The federal public service competes for human resources with Emirati governments and in particular with those of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. This is because they often offer better employment conditions (salaries and benefits) and prestige. This competition and the difficulties often associated with knowledge and capacity exchange between the two levels of government could have profound and long-term consequences for the

development of the human resources in the federal government. Furthermore, if unaddressed, the competition would continue to reinforce the regional disparities within the federation and to potentially jeopardise the objective of a “balanced development throughout its territory”, as stated in Vision 2021.

One of the main challenges for every federation, and even more in the case of a highly decentralised federation, is to ensure a certain equilibrium between its constituents/regions: in terms of development (economic, social, cultural, human, etc.), of representativeness (of populations and social/economic/cultural models) in political and public service institutions, of service provision, etc. Fair representation of all Emirates and regions’ population in the federal workforce is important to build that balance, to benefit from the cultural richness of all constituencies and to enable high quality public services federation-wide. Representativeness’ efforts could go further and encourage higher-than-proportional representation in the federal public workforce of employees from the less fortunate regions to ensure better integration and inclusiveness but also to allow transfer of knowledge and skills. For example, regional assignments within the federal public service or federal-local interchange assignments could benefit both sides and give a new, collaborative dimension to the existing competing human resources strategies.

Successful HRM strategy’s implementation strongly relies on capable line managers and HR professionals in all federal ministries and authorities. Developing their capacity should be a key priority. The people management should be part of all management training activities. Continuous learning is extremely important to improve knowledge and skills. The existing efforts resulting in commendable initiatives such as the Human Resources Club and the Emirates Award for Human Resources in the Federal Government and the recently created knowledge gate “Maatef” should be multiplied and strengthened by specific training and learning programmes. Particular efforts should be deployed to promote the HR professionals as strategic partner in business decision-making and execution and appropriate training provided to that effect. Accreditation for HR professionals, especially in some more specialised areas of HRM (e.g., staffing or labour relations) may be envisioned. FAHR may also consider developing a road map for HR careers.

The development of national leaders is a vital priority for the UAE federal government and public service and key to the success of the Emiratisation plan. The UAE Government Leaders Programme, launched in February 2008 and initially hosted by the Prime Minister’s office was temporarily transferred to FAHR, is the “first integrated initiative of leadership development in the federal public service.”⁶ Since 2013, the PMO is again responsible for the Programme with the strategic objectives to enable the achievement of the federal government strategy’s goals, to ensure a leadership pipeline at all times at various levels, to develop leadership capability at all leadership levels and to improve retention of highly skilled employees. The critical importance accorded to the leadership development in the UAE public sector drives continuous improvement of the Programme and the add-on of new initiatives. In October 2012 the Chairman of FAHR announces an upcoming policy of job rotation, especially in leadership positions, both within each federal entity and across all other federal entities, as part of the Human Resources Strategy in the federal government. The new policy aims “to end the culture of staying in office for long years.”⁷

Recommendations

The UAE Government could consider the following recommendations:

- *Develop* a clear roadmap, with measurable intermediary targets and final outcomes, for the implementation of the HRM strategy to set realistic goals and define concrete steps. There is a need to further clarify the roles and the responsibilities of FAHR, TANMIA and the line departments in designing and delivering HR policies, programmes and services, especially in regards to the Emiratisation plan. In this regard, in considering whether, and if so, how best to, reassess the pace of decentralisation in HRM, the UAE might consider harnessing the considerable evidence and experience accumulated by OECD countries in setting, implementing and monitoring the performance of functional governance tools – in particular in strategic HRM, e-government and online service delivery and public procurement. This experience, usually shared with commissioning governments through an OECD functional review of these governance tools, could assist the UAE Federal Government in maximising cohesion and coherence in the implementation of its HR strategy.
- *Consider* establishing strategic workforce planning - a key priority to enable the success in all areas of HRM – built on high quality evidence - reliable and comprehensive HR data and information. Strong central HR body and HR capability in line departments are critical to move from policy design to implementation and to do not lose the momentum.
- *Build* strong HR capacity in federal ministries and authorities and position the HRM departments as strategic business partner in the organisations with strong focus on performance and culture (rather than compliance and regulations). The UAE may build on existing ad-hoc initiatives such as the employees satisfaction surveys and consider the use of regular data collection strategies to obtain valuable perception data, increase employee engagement and improve organisational culture and service to citizens. In addition, HR and financial information with reviewed and strengthened Vision 2021-related NKPIs of the National Agenda and operational KPIs can support the development of integrated accountability frameworks. Using strategic foresight in workforce planning allows adopting more proactive approaches towards the future, i.e. enhancing strategic planning, improving the KPIs in people and all areas of management and therefore public services design and delivery.
- *Reinforce* merit-based recruitment and promotion processes as the only accepted practice; the decentralised and mainly position-based recruitment (especially in the areas of policy development and leadership) could be reassessed for its impact on the overall human resources development and performance. Develop career paths for the leadership and policy development areas, supported by learning and mobility patterns. Continue to operate the shift from training to learning and build a culture of constant improvement and experimentation. An important component in the federal system is to push the collaboration in HR development and management with local governments to examine current inequities in the competition for talent and achieve better alignment in human resources development and in service standards across all Emirates. This goes hand in hand with the continuation of developing a culture of stakeholder and public engagement, critical for the successful implementation of the HR strategies.

Recommendations (cont.)

- Place a strong focus on knowledge transfer between Emirati and local governments and the federal government, from non-National to National employees, from external to internal trainers. This would support exploring the means and the benefits of well-designed and managed mobility, within the federal public service, between the federal and Emirati public services and with other sectors to enhance skills and knowledge sharing and creation. In practical terms, the UAE could consider the development of a Knowledge Centre or a HR Lab in people management to study specific people management issues and especially those related to the Emiratization process. This would facilitate developing innovative approaches to marry the world's best advances with the nation's cultural legacy and pioneering approaches that can benefit the entire region. In addition, to support mobility of public employees, the UAE could consider building a competency – or talent – database. This talent pool allows for a more efficient and timely recruitment process through tailored search criteria.

Enhancing the quality of public services in the UAE

The constitution of the UAE designates a number of public service delivery areas as exclusive competency of the federal government. This includes the formulation of national policies and service delivery strategies for fundamental services such as education and healthcare, defense and national security. Moreover, the federal government is per constitution the principal agent for the production of official national statistics that serve as basis for policy making and evaluation.

Local authorities in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai needed to adapt to fast growing economies and populations. Over time these local government authorities acquired competencies and developed capacities that today make them exclusive service providers in some areas of public service delivery. Only more recently did the federal government start expanding its capacities and thereby the reach of the services it offers. The division of public service delivery competencies in the state is therefore a mix of formal and informal arrangements between federal and local-level authorities.

The adaptation capacity of government in the UAE also puts spotlight on their capacity to re-think and innovate. A strive for excellence in the delivery of public services can be perceived in many areas. This certainly owes much to the leadership of outstanding personalities such as the UAE's Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who patronages a highly regarded annual award for government excellence as well as the widely recognised annual UAE Government Summits. And it is also conditioned by the high availability of financial resources, human resources and widespread use of technology to support the delivery of government services.

Innovative partnerships for service delivery can transcend the boundaries of government levels in the UAE. Constructive ad-hoc partnerships exist between the federal government and local authorities of the seven Emirates. The e-Dirham electronic payment system for example is used for many services provided by the federal government and Emirate authorities. In another instance, the Emirate of Umm Al-Quwain cooperated with the federal government to formulate a solid business development strategy.



Chapter 4

Human resource capability

This chapter assesses the role of the human resources (HR) and the human resources management (HRM) in building and sustaining good governance in the UAE public service. The importance of good governance principles, realistic objectives, empowering design and strong and coordinated implementation efforts are discussed as part of the analysis of the impact of the HRM reform in achieving the objectives of Vision 2021. This chapter also highlights some of the major challenges faced by the federal administration in regards to strategic human resources management, discusses some areas requiring attention and offers some considerations and practical options based on OECD countries experiences.

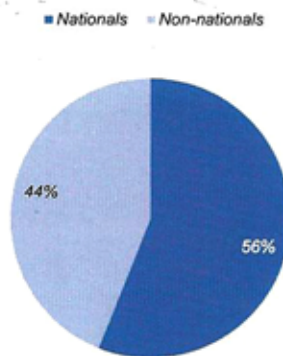
Introduction

Human resources management (HRM) allows governments to ensure that they have the right people with the right skills in the right places at the right time to identify and address existing and emerging policy challenges in a correct, swift, efficient and effective way, to deliver what they promise, to do what people and society expect, want and demand and being accountable and responsible for it. Strategic HRM is a tool to select, to monitor, to train and to support people in order that they can set, steer, implement, monitor and adapt strategy and public service delivery efficiently and effectively. Delivering on the government's promises is therefore tightly linked to the ability of the government's civil service to identify and meet existing and emerging challenges. To strengthen its capacity to implement whole-of-government HRM capacity, the role of the central HRM body and its relationship with line ministries needs to be clear. As in many countries, challenges in the UAE are related to HRM expertise in line ministries and HRM accountability frameworks that ought to provide consistency in HRM across the central government. Fragmentation in HRM bears the risks of the government's effectiveness to address emerging policy challenges quickly and correctly.

This chapter reviews the role of human resources and human resources management in building and sustaining good governance in the UAE public service. The importance of good governance principles, realistic objectives, empowering design and strong and co-ordinated implementation efforts are discussed as part of the analysis of the impact of the HRM reform in achieving the objectives of Vision 2021. The chapter highlights some of the major challenges faced by the federal administration in regards to strategic HRM, discusses some areas requiring attention and offers some considerations and practical options based on OECD countries experiences.

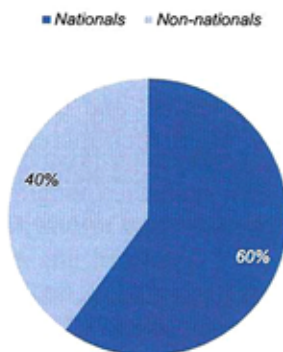
A portrait of the UAE federal workforce

The workforce in the UAE federal public sector counts approximately 83 734 employees (head count), divided over federal ministries (52 066) and federal authorities (31 668) (FAHR, 2013). There are two main streams of employees: nationals and non-nationals. The federal public service, as every other sector of the booming UAE economy, heavily relies on human resources from overseas, for both low-skilled and highly sophisticated type of work. This trend, very pronounced in UAE, is characteristic of all countries members of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). In 2012, Nationals accounted for 56% of the total workforce in the UAE federal government sector (both ministries and authorities; see Figure 4.1). Nationals represented 60% of the employees in the federal ministries and only 26% of those working in the federal authorities (Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3).¹ There are also discrepancies in Nationals' employment by sectors of activity. For example, while the public sector is the biggest employer for nationals, only 33% of the employees in the important health care sector are Nationals.²

Figure 4.1. Federal government employees by nationality (2012)¹

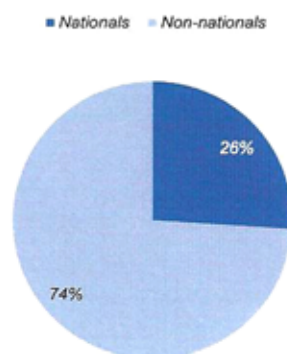
1. Data include employees in the ministries and independent federal authorities operating Bayanati system including general career level in addition to the judicial cadre; data do not include employees in the Ministry of the Interior and diplomatic cadre; covers 37,657 employees.

Source: UAE Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (2012), "Statistical Bulletin for Government Human Resources", www.fahr.gov.ae/portal/assets/d090216c/statistical-bulletin-for-government-human-resources-2012.aspx; www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.

Figure 4.2. Federal ministries' employees by nationality (2012)¹

1. Data include employees in general Career Level in addition to the judicial cadre in the ministries and independent federal authorities operating Bayanati system; Data do not include employees in the Ministry of the Interior or diplomatic cadre; covers 33,444 employees

Source: UAE Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (2012). Statistical Bulletin for Government Human Resources, www.fahr.gov.ae/portal/assets/d090216c/statistical-bulletin-for-government-human-resources-2012.aspx; www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.

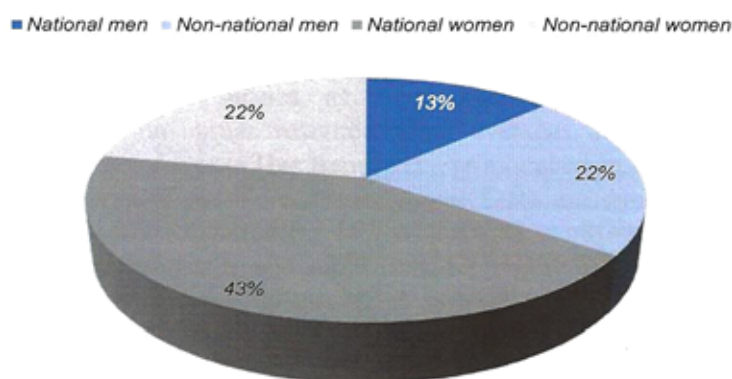
Figure 4.3. Independent Authorities Employees by nationality (2012)¹

1. Data for Independent federal authorities that have special human resources systems and update data on a monthly basis on "Bayanati" system; covers 24,490 employees

Source: UAE Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (2012). Statistical Bulletin for Government Human Resources. www.fahr.gov.ae/portal/assets/d090216c/statistical-bulletin-for-government-human-resources-2012.aspx; www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.

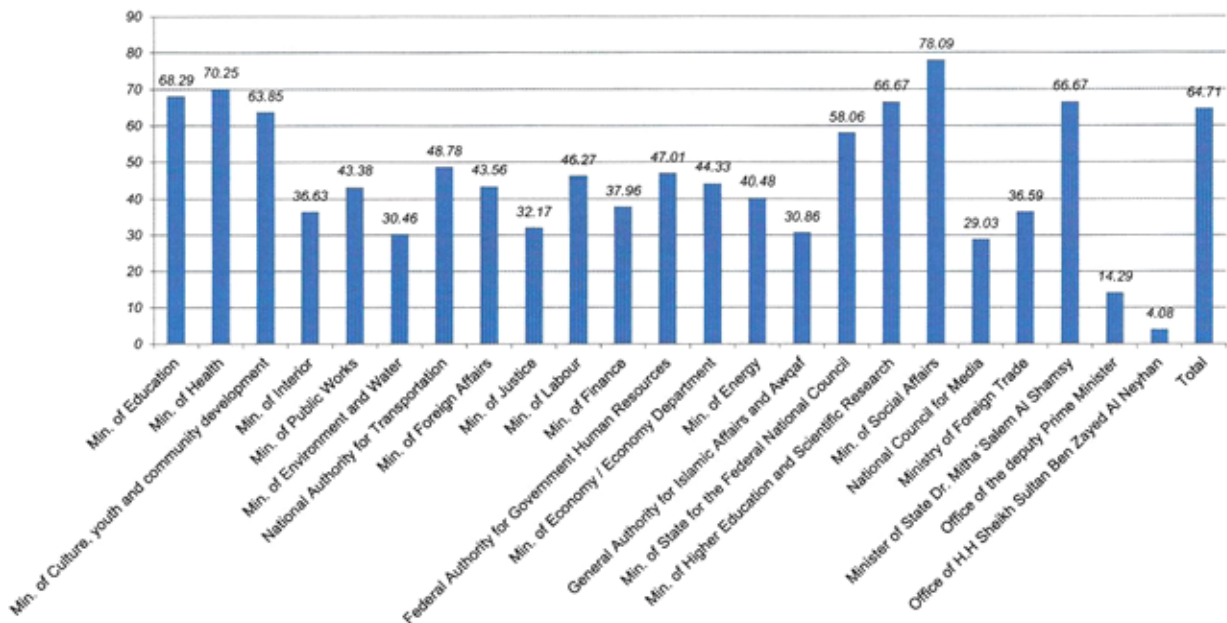
Women represented 65% of the total UAE federal public sector workforce in 2012 (Figure 4.4). National women held the largest share of public sector employment (43%), while national men held the smallest share of public sector employment (13%). The majority of UAE working women tend to work in the public sector (80% in 2010) and they are mainly concentrated in the traditionally feminised areas of social affairs, health, and education (Figure 4.5). Women are overrepresented in primary and secondary education (part of the federal public sector) and underrepresented in the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Islamic Affairs, where their increased presence could have a positive impact on the legislative agenda, women's legal status and rights (OECD, 2012).

Figure 4.4. Representation of national and non-national women and men in the federal government (2012)



Source: Figure created by the OECD on the basis of data provided by the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources.

Figure 4.5. Percentage of total female employees (national and non-national women) by federal ministry in the UAE as of January 2011



Source: OECD UAE Gender Report 2011.

The UAE government has achieved significant progress in integrating Emirati and non-national women into the federal government workforce. In 2012 women occupy 65% of jobs in the government sector, 30% of them are in decision-making positions, and 15% in professional positions, including medicine, teaching, pharmacology and nursing, as well as their involvement in the ranks of armed forces, police and customs.³ The significant women's share of the federal public service workforce is not surprising given the number of women attending higher education institutions. The percentage of women in higher education programs is 71.6% of total students in public universities, and 50.1% of students in private universities and institutes. Postgraduate female students (Masters and PhD) constitute 43% of the total students in the private sector, and 62% in public universities, with an average of 46%.⁴ The academic perseverance of the Emirati women leads to improved readiness for the challenges of a modern workplace.⁵

There has been a very significant progress made by UAE in enhancing women's participation in politics. Four women have made their entrance into Cabinet and nine members of the Federal National Council are women⁶. The number of women in management positions is also gradually increasing. This achievement positions the UAE as one of leaders in the region. However, meeting the ambitious objectives of the Emiratisation Plan requires further action to promote full women's participation in the general workforce and to overcome all existing impediments to full women's integration into the public service workforce. According to the results of the 2011 Survey of the Needs of Women Working in the Federal Government Sector, special attention is needed to the implementation of part-time work provisions, flexible work arrangements, appropriate hours of work to balance work-family responsibilities, equal gender opportunities and provision of day-care facilities in workplace.⁷ Significant progress has been also made in women's appointment in management and leadership positions and is

consistent with Emirati women higher education credentials and enhanced readiness for leadership responsibilities. The efforts should continue in order to reach the public sector Emiratisation objectives. This topic will be further discussed later in this chapter.

The structure of Nationals/non-Nationals is an important factor in the UAE society and economy. The Emiratisation policy seeks to increase the participation of Nationals in both the private and public sector. It therefore imprints all human resources policies and programmes, including all policies developed by the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources. FAHR has developed a specific strategy to cope with that challenge: Emiratisation Plan in federal government sector & mechanism for co-ordination and follow-up (2010-13).⁸ The Plan outlined ambitious goals to increase the participation of Nationals in federal ministries by 7% and federal authorities by 6%.

The repartition of National/non-National employees between ministries and/or authorities shows an asymmetric spread: some Ministries attain nearly 100% Nationals, in others Nationals represent a significant minority. For example, the Ministries of Labour & Foreign Affairs have attained Emiratisation level of 98% while the Ministry of Health counted only 33% of Nationals in 2010.⁹

The picture in the Federal Authorities is less favourable for National representation: only the Sheikh Zayed Housing Program attains 99% of Emiratisation. The National Bank only counts 60% of Nationals. The majority of federal authorities (20 out of 32) counts less than 60% of Nationals with the General Authority of Islamic Affairs & Endowments as most negative example: only 4% or 120 persons out of the 2753 employees are Nationals.¹⁰

This asymmetry could be explained by the prestige of a ministry or an authority and/or the scarcity of needed qualifications/competencies within the National workforce. Either way it shows the difficulties that exist in attracting talent in certain domains, and especially in the health sector, followed by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, meaning that non-Nationals' employment will continue to play an essential role in the years to come and that the Emiratisation plan targets will be difficult to meet in some areas. These facts also point to the need to review and if needed, to adjust the Emiratisation's objectives in some areas, based on current data and potential risks. It may also require re-examining the transition plans and potentially adopting concrete actions to eliminate possible administrative inconsistencies and burden.

The four job categories in federal entities are: leadership, supervisory, executive, and technical. The technical job category (includes jobs such as medical, educational, religious, engineering, financial, economic, sports, social, agricultural, media and cultural) makes up to 48% of the federal government jobs. The share of non-Nationals is the highest in the technical category jobs: 19 393 employees or 57.4%.¹¹

Important efforts have been put in place to bridge the gap especially in the technical category jobs and the Masaar programme¹² consolidates a lot of those efforts. The program aims at attracting and sponsoring UAE National high school leavers who wish to acquire higher qualifications and take up civil jobs in the federal government sector.¹³ The success of the Masaar programme and the ambitious objectives of the Emiratisation plan may stimulate considering the extension and the remodelling of the programme to include university students and graduates as well.

The federal public service may also creatively explore how to better inform the general National population about the future labour market needs and the areas with significant gaps. This could, for example, build on the existing awareness raising

programmes for high-demand jobs. Engaging the Nationals in an open dialogue about the Emiratisation objectives and the ways to achieve them could prove to be an innovative and productive approach to close the distance between the current state and the desired future.

Human resources management in the UAE: Laws, institutions, actors and dynamics

The young UAE public service thus faces significant challenges as it works to implement national strategy in a highly complex and uncertain global, regional, economic, political and demographic context. The government's human resources capability and management are critical in pursuing this objective. Implementing the HRM strategic vision and objectives involves putting in place the right governance structures, creating responsive organisations, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, establishing appropriate accountability mechanisms, engaging all key stakeholders, developing and implementing policies, programmes and initiatives to support the achievement of the strategic vision. Those critical challenges inspire the action of the UAE civil service.

The remaining sections in this chapter assess the state of HRM in the UAE federal government using the following core indicators¹⁴ that serve as guiding elements in measuring HR capability:¹⁵

- An overall strategy defining functions, roles and responsibilities;
- A central human resources management body;
- A framework attracting, building and rewarding and retaining the suitable and needed capacities and skills;
- A framework promoting values and their demonstration through behavior;
- A framework measuring effectiveness; and
- A framework engaging stakeholders and making accountability real and visible.

A central HRM body

The Federal Law Decree No.11¹⁶ of 2008, amended by the Federal Law Decree No. 9¹⁷ of September 2011, forms the legal framework for HRM in the government of the UAE. The former, also known as the Human Resources Law, outlines the foundation of HRM and establishes the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR). It also describes the roles and responsibilities of FAHR and those of the human resources departments in ministries.

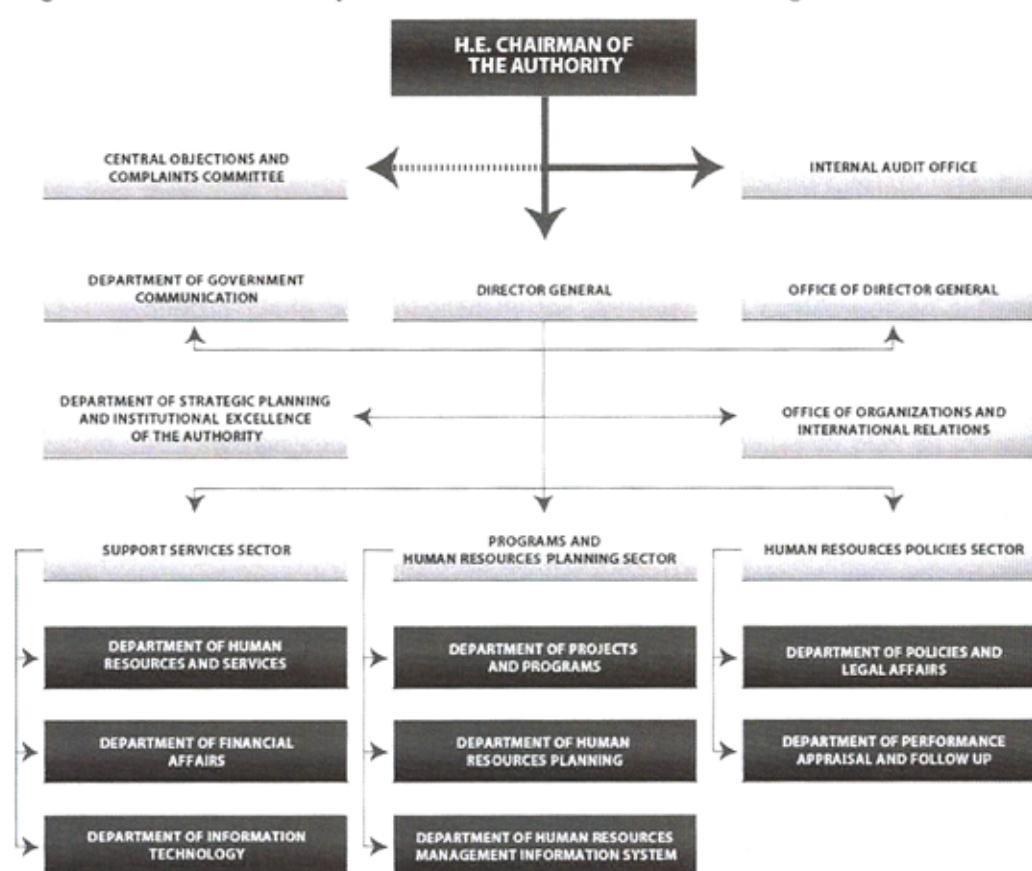
The key organisations having federal responsibilities for HRM are the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) and the National Human Resource Development & Employment Authority (TANMIA). The line HR departments in federal ministries and authorities play a vital role in the implementation of the HR policies and initiatives.

The main role of a central HRM body is to provide a whole-of-government approach to human resources management and to enable the implementation of government priorities in regards to human resources. In the UAE, the FAHR, founded in 2008, is entrusted with powers and responsibilities over the Ministries and Federal Authorities subject to the Federal Law. Its vision is to achieve human resources that possess high capabilities in Federal Government and assume a vital role in achieving the vision of the

Government of United Arab Emirates. The mission of FAHR is to enhance capabilities of all employees of the Federal Government bodies, to enable UAE Nationals to assume specialised technical and leading posts and roles, to create culture based on distinctive performance and high productivity, and to develop the departments of human resources and supporting the same with high technologies.¹⁸

FAHR core functions include studies and development of new policies and legislations related to HR at Government level, strategy setting and upgrading of existing policies. There is a special focus on developing technical and specialised competencies in connection with the functions within the concerned body. Its website is state-of-the-art FAHR's organisational structure (Figure 4.6) and its annual reports are posted on the Authority's website. The Annual Reports feature strategic initiatives and projects that have been launched and achieved by the Authority, in addition to a large number of other activities and accomplishments.¹⁹

Figure 4.6. Federal Authority for Government Human Resources organisational structure



Source: www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/about-fahr/organizational-structure.aspx.

FAHR's organisational structure displays clear commitment to institutional excellence and to high quality in service delivery. The emphasis on strategic developments should be preserved and reinforced, especially when it comes to policy research and development. HRM policy research focusing on specific UAE and regional HRM issues, based on sound data and information and including but not exclusive to

Emiratization goals, will contribute to further develop and refine specific UAE solutions to particular national and regional human resources problems.

FAHR has an impressive record of plans, especially when considering the short time of its existence. The Authority plays a leading role in the development of major programs and mechanisms aiming to enable efficient HR development and management and in adopting standard criteria and models for HR as per the best international practices. Examples include:

- designing integrated systems for governmental human resources (e.g., HRMIS (*Bayanati* system), electronic library web application and helpline);
- employees capacity building and promotion of their skills (e.g., training programmes, leadership programme, HR Club, HR Award);
- developing and maintaining qualified human resources (e.g., MASAAR, consultative committee for working women, special programme for developing capacity and potential of national staff);
- setting special policies for upgrading HR policies in the federal government (e.g., Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct); and
- competence enhancement and transparency in the field of providing best legal services on litigious dossiers related to HR cases, payroll management and general management of working conditions.

The focus on designing HRM integrated systems is of particular importance for the success of the HR strategy. The Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) *Bayanati* is the only HR-unified system deployed by FAHR and the Ministry of Finance. It builds the foundation for development and sharing of HR data across government ministries and authorities.

The Human Resources Club put in place by FAHR can be considered as best practice in HR networking (see Box 4.1).

Providing high quality services to its clients is a definite goal and a measure of success for FAHR. Progress has been made to embed service excellence in FAHR's organisational culture. In 2011 the Authority conducted a customer satisfaction survey to measure the satisfaction levels among different categories of customers and to identify possible areas for improvement of its services. The existence of the survey is already a very positive step and demonstrates FAHR's commitment to excellence in service design and delivery. The results²⁰ reveal high levels of customer satisfaction: in almost all surveyed areas the established targets are exceeded. Despite the very comforting scores, it is important for FAHR to continue to conduct periodically (for example, annually or bi-annually) those customer satisfaction surveys and to account for progress by comparing with previous data. The scope and the quality of the valuations can be improved by introducing electronic surveys that will permit to increase the number and potentially the groups of surveyed customers and to ensure anonymity of responses.

In 2013, FAHR launched the Human Resources Strategy for the years 2014-2016 with the aim to consolidate national competences and developing federal human capital and effective HR planning. Among others, the strategy outlines the creation of a centre for dialogue and knowledge communication in HR and improve smart applications for the *Bayanati* system, issuing a HR procedures manual and survey of wages and salaries in the labour market, a system of job evaluation and the initiative of the government knowledge

gate “Maaref” to reinforce the partnership with training service providers to the federal government.

The National Human Resource Development & Employment Authority (TANMIA) is a specialised federal organisation created by a Presidential Decree in 1999. The Authority is charged, in coordination with concerned local authorities, to achieve the following objectives:

- Achieve full employment of the national human resources;
- Reduce foreign labour component of the total workforce;
- Increase supply of qualified and skilled National workforce to meet the labour market needs; and
- Develop practical competencies and potentials of the National workforce.

Box 4.1. Human Resources Club: A best practice in HR networking

- The Human Resources Club (HRC) is one of FAHR’s initiatives, which aims to enhance the productivity of the federal workforce. The Human Resources Club offers a professional work environment to exchange experiences, best practices and networking between HR professionals across federal government, local government and private sector. HRC aims to:
 - Exchange views and discuss challenges and solutions to common human resources issues.
 - Create a channel of communication between HR experts and HR managers across the United Arab Emirates.
 - Work as one team to support and strengthen the HR departments in different entities and amend desired changes in HR practices
 - Review and evaluates the impact of legislations on the performance and effectiveness of the HR in the United Arab Emirates and suggest the appropriate solutions
- Share best practices locally, regionally and internationally
- Facilitating the process of HR related studies and surveys
- Support and strengthen the role of human resources and offer creative solutions and successful and unique practices.
- Create a suitable environment to transfer the experience and expertise among managers and specialists, experts and researchers, who are interested in human resources development in the United Arab Emirates.

Source: Federal Authority for Government Human Resources. Human Resources Club Overview. Available: www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/hr-club/overview.aspx.

TANMIA’s key role in the implementation of the Emiratisation policy and the recruitment of nationals makes it a critical player in the HRM field.

FAHR, TANMIA and the Ministry of Labour have all an important role in the Emiratisation efforts as all of them promote and facilitate nationals’ employment and full participation in the labour market. Maintaining constant horizontal coordination between those institutions is critical for the effective achievement of the Emiratisation goals and

for Nationals' employment in the public service. The consolidated efforts of the policy and research units of the three institutions can enhance streamlined efforts to that effect by coordinating their policy and research agendas.

The development and the implementation oversight of a whole-of-government human resources strategy are important part of the activities and the achievements of any human resources central body. A government-wide HRM strategy is of particular importance for the UAE public sector, given the specific labour market-related challenges faced by the country. The involvement of all key stakeholders in preparing and executing this strategy is of utmost importance to its attainment.

Successful execution of strategies and plans requires clarity of mandates, roles and responsibilities along with open and on-going dialogue with implementers. Any ambiguity could lead to misalignment and therefore impact the overall accountability regime and, in the longer run, the success of the implementation of the HRM strategies and initiatives. Thus, a review of the HR central body's mandate and roles in the implementation of the HR plans should be considered, with the engagement of all key players.

A decentralised HR management model

The HR departments in Ministries receive policy guidance from FAHR. However they conserve broad discretionary power to customise policies (pending approval from FAHR), implement regulations, policies and initiatives as well in recruitment and promotions processes. This could constitute a significant impediment for the implementation of a government-wide HR strategy, as the central body seems to be limited in its ability to force a maximum coherence in HR and capacity management across the federal public service. The pace of decentralisation in HRM implementation should be carefully considered as its impact risks significantly undermining the success of government-wide HR strategies. This sub-section further explores this issue.

The HRM model in the UAE federal government presents some typical characteristics of a decentralised system. For example, federal ministries and authorities have control over their HR budget, which is one of the key indicators for autonomy from the centre. Article 8 and 9 of the Federal Law Decree No. 11 (2008) states that each ministry shall have an annual budget for Human Resources and the competent Minister may amend the financial allocation for the jobs, entered in the approved HR budget.²¹ Employee selection, recruitment and performance management activities also tend to be largely delegated.

While there is no common standard of HRM delegation in OECD countries and the variation in the extent of delegation among OECD members is considerable, there is an observable trend of increasing delegation from the central HRM body to line ministries/departments in the last years. The context of fiscal restraint and the imperative of cost control and the institutional structure of collective bargaining may at least partly explain that trend in OECD countries (OECD, 2011b).

Table 4.1. Delegation of key HRM responsibilities

	General management of pay systems (salary levels, progressions)	Flexibility of working conditions (number of hours, etc.)	Allocation of budget envelope between payroll & other expenses	Performance appraisal systems	Management of the variable portion of pay benefits; performance related pay	Number & types of posts within organisations	Recruitment into the civil service
Australia	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Austria	●	●	⊙	●	⊙	●	⊙
Belgium	●	●	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
Canada	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Chile	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊙
Czech Republic	●	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Denmark	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Estonia	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Finland	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
France	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Germany	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙
Greece	●	●	⊙	●	●	⊙	⊙
Hungary	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Iceland	●	⊙	⊙	n.a.	⊙	⊙	⊙
Ireland	●	●	●	●	⊙	●	●
Israel	●	●	⊙	●	⊙	●	●
Italy	●	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
Japan	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Korea	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Mexico	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
Netherlands	●	⊙	●	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
New Zealand	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Norway	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Poland	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Portugal	⊙	⊙	⊙	n.a.	⊙	⊙	⊙
Slovak Republic	●	⊙	⊙	●	n.a.	⊙	⊙
Slovenia	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
Spain	●	●	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Sweden	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Switzerland	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙
Turkey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United Kingdom	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
United States	●	n.a.	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Brazil	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Russian Federation	n.a.	⊙	n.a.	⊙	⊙	n.a.	⊙
Ukraine	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙
Total OECD33							
●	20	12	11	8	7	6	2
⊙	6	11	7	7	11	7	8
⊙	9	19	19	16	21	23	26
○	1	3	0	5	8	0	8

- Central HRM body (which sets the rules and is closely involved in applying them) and/or Ministries of Finance.
- ⊙ Central HRM body but with some latitude for ministries/departments/agencies in applying the general principles.
- ⊙ Ministries/departments/agencies within established legal and budgetary limits.
- Unit/team level
- n.a. Not available

Source: OECD, Government at a Glance 2011, p.127.

However, in the case of the UAE, in full process of building a government-wide HR system, the pace of devolution could be subject to debate: a delegation, - in principle being suitable as it potentially allows flexibility -, might present some challenges for a whole-of-government HR vision and its sustainability, especially in early stages of development of a HRM system (the case of UAE federal public service). The UAE federal administration is in process of developing and implementing strategic and operational HRM policies and procedures and in instituting a federal organisational culture, while building HRM capacity in line departments. Early and extensive decentralisation may compromise those efforts and put the HRM structures under significant stress given their level of maturation and readiness to accept and adopt the change. Successful decentralisation requires a robust accountability regime set and agreed upon in advance, as will be discussed later in this chapter. As a whole-of-government accountability framework is not yet in place and the HRM structures are still maturing, a for the time being more centralised policy approach, with well-dosed departmental flexibility in implementation is probably a good base for allowing the consolidation of policy acquisitions and to centralise and to communicate the learning from its lessons, positive or negative ones. OECD experience shows that when accountability frameworks are absent or only partially completed, precipitated delegation and decentralization could constitute a risk from a final outcomes' point of view. The historical, social and cultural context of the UAE requires a specific and flexible approach in finding the right balance between centralisation and decentralisation in the exercise of the federal authority. Setting well-defined and agreed upon parameters of roles and responsibilities in policy development and implementation between mandated central authorities, and between them and the line departments would clarify and promote the accountability needed to achieve the desired objectives.

Balancing a position-based and a career-based public service

The UAE Federal Government HRM system could be described as a mixed system with a position-based public service for Nationals, especially since the enactment of the Emiratisation policy. Redeployments are rare i.e. public service is a lifelong employment, especially for Nationals.

No OECD country exhibits a pure system, either position-based or career-based. Every public service uses, to a different extent, features from both systems in search of employment flexibility that would allow meeting the business objectives of the organisations. A historical overview shows that the choices are often related to the stage of the public service development and the specific context. For example, amongst the OECD countries, Czech Republic, France, Japan, Korea and Spain have the strongest characteristics of a career-based system, while Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom exhibit position-based tendencies. The move towards position-based public service is most evident in countries, which have been more active in reforming their public sector over the past decades as they were facing value-for-money imperatives. However, some of those countries judged necessary to undertake action to protect against any loss of critical cultural attributes – mainly by refocusing their efforts on building a collective culture among the senior government management group.²²

At the current stage of the HRM development, the UAE public service may benefit from a larger presence of some elements of a career-based system given the priority of fundamentals of governance over matters of management.²³ This may include a competitive selection early on with high level post open to public servants only which can

help improve the outcomes of a lifelong Nationals' employment. Strengthening some of the career-based public service characteristics, especially in the area of policy development and among the public service leadership and management group, can help reinforce the chances for successful implementation of the Vision 2021 and the Emiratisation policy. Well-conceived career-based public service, based on proven ability to serve the public interest, would be an important natural ally in the Emiratisation process. When carefully designed, it would reinforce talent's commitment to the public service, justify longer-term human capital investments and help mitigate some issues, such as National employees' attrition, as discussed later in this chapter. A considerate mix between the two systems based on needs and strategic considerations and as practiced in many OECD countries, could provide desirable flexibility and indispensable sustainability in the public service.

Serving the public interest: a values-based public service

A strong national public service reflects the spirit and the culture of the nation and is built on its values. Similarly, public service values help defining the core values of a society. Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behavior (The Independent Commission for Good Governance in Public Services, 2004). Well-defined values reflect organisation's *raison-d'être* and its objectives and maintain the collective culture. Codes of conduct are an essential part of values-based management in the public service (OECD, 2010).

The UAE Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct²⁴ is the pivotal point of reference in UAE public service values. Its' origins are rooted in Article 35 of the UAE Constitution²⁵, which stipulates that:

- Public office shall be open to all citizens on a basis of equality of opportunity in accordance with the provisions of law.
- Public office shall be a national service entrusted to those who hold it. The public servant shall aim, in the execution of his duties, at the public interest only.

The Code embraces the following core values: excellence, objectivity, leadership, diligence, neutrality, transparency, integrity, alertness, fairness and equality, honesty, efficiency.

It imposes a number of rules of professional conduct:

- Put public interest first and serve the citizens;
- Uphold highest principles of ethical conduct; and
- Full compliance with professional ethics.

There is a number of public servants obligations (to serve, to continue performing public duties, to act with courtesy and respect towards superiors, colleagues and the public, to respect confidentiality and secrecy, to obey superiors, to neutrality, to maintain the professional dignity of civil service, not to exploit civil service, to use resources appropriately, to refrain from activities that affect duties and performance and to avoid conflict of interest, to loyalty to the State and compliance with laws and professionalism). These obligations are translated into a number of do-s²⁶ and especially don't-s, most of them referring to an attitude of self-containment and appeal to exemplary citizenship.²⁷

It is quite remarkable that the Code also comprises obligations from the government towards its employees.²⁸ For example, the Code quotes on page 18 to:

- “Treat all employees fairly and equitably, without unjustified discrimination;
- Create safe, fair and healthy working environments;
- Encourage employee entrepreneurship and innovation, and to provide opportunities for them to participate in making suggestions for improving and developing the services; and
- Encourage communicating openly in order to resolve issues of concern in the performance of duties, to find appropriate solutions” (FAHR, 2010).

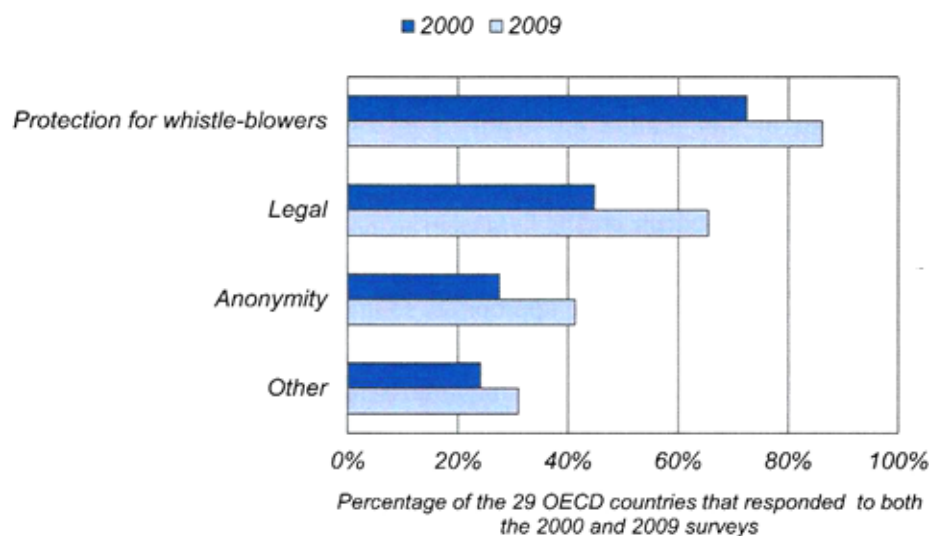
One of the main challenges values statements and codes of conduct share is to bring them to life. It is critically important that the system needs strong checks and balances to make sure that the Code of Conduct is applied. The promotion of the code (including ethics training) and the oversight of its observance are key to that effect. Almost all OECD countries provide training on ethics issues. Some of them, like Canada and Luxemburg, provide a compulsory values and ethics training to all public servants; others, like Australia, a voluntary training.

The Code provides a policy direction to all federal entities, which are required to develop detailed standards for their organisations. The HR departments in ministries and authorities are in charge of overseeing the activation of the Code. A ministerial complaints committee has been formed within FAHR, chaired by the Director General of FAHR and comprising high-level representatives of several government institutions (Cabinet, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, Ministry of Justice and FAHR).

Improved awareness of organisational values and expected behaviours can lead to an increased number of actions of disclosure of wrongdoing. Organisation’s openness and readiness to receive and to act on those disclosures are of key importance for the enthrallment of the code and for the achievement of the desired public service culture.

Disclosing wrongdoing in the public service is a key concern in OECD member countries. Measures obliging public servants to report misconduct and/or provide procedures to facilitate reporting have been introduced in most OECD member countries. Special attention is given to measures to prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector and a large majority of OECD countries has enacted measures that target officials in positions particularly susceptible to corruption in order to help prevent conflicts of interest and combat illicit enrichment. These include professions that are exposed to sectors in which economic interests are at stake and at the intersection of the public and private sectors, such as budget execution (Australia and Japan) or health personnel (Norway) (OECD, 2000). In Australia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea and the Netherlands, certain categories of public officials are required to disclose their personal assets and financial interests (OECD, 2010, p. 228-229). Many OECD countries have introduced legal frameworks or procedures allowing and protecting whistle-blowing (see Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. OECD countries offering protection for whistleblowers



Source: OECD (2009), *Government at a Glance 2009*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264075061-en>.

Strong public services are dynamic institutions, reflecting and serving vibrant societies, and their values can evolve and are in fact changing. The possibility to occasionally reflect on and potentially review the public service values witnesses a healthy attention to the public service and its sustained relevance in the life of the country. This is even more important in a highly energetic and fast-moving society such as the UAE and its institutions.

OECD member countries offer examples of discussions of public service values as part of public administrations reforms. For example, in France a public opinion survey on public service values was organised in 2008 and debates and roundtables, involving both public servants and others, were held (OECD, 2010, p. 127). In Australia, a review of core values was a key part of revising public service legislation, and the Public Service Act of 1999 explicitly sets out these core values. In Canada, the new Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector (Government of Canada, 2011) came into force in April 2012, replacing the previous Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service.

Towards a whole-of-government human resources strategy to implement *Vision 2021*

The UAE Government Strategy 2011-2013 highlights the development of the skilled human capital as a strategic enabler in the achievement of the UAE National Agenda and Vision 2021.²⁹ The development of the human resources and the related systems and processes in the Federal Government contributes to the achievement of all government strategic priorities and especially to building a competitive knowledge economy. The UAE Government sets the following strategic directions towards developing skilled human capital:

- Develop a comprehensive human capital strategy for the Federal Government and improve HR processes and systems;

- Attract people with relevant skills and characteristics to the Federal Government by establishing strategic workforce planning capabilities, including development of a comprehensive database of Federal talent, increasing Emiratisation rates within the Federal Government, and elevating the profile of the Federal Government as a great place to work;
- Retain and motivate human capital in the Federal Government by establishing a motivating and innovative employee workplace, enhancing a performance culture and merit-linked rewards, and developing career planning mechanisms; and
- Improve the capabilities and skills of Federal Government employees by developing a comprehensive training framework, providing general managerial skills training, developing and providing specialised training in select areas, and enhancing the leadership capabilities of federal employees.³⁰

FAHR's strategic plans translate those ambitious goals for the human resources in support of the achievement of Vision 2021. The objectives and the supporting initiatives and programmes are far-reaching and cover panoply of HR functions. The first strategic plan, covering the period 2008–2010, focused on setting the ground for strategic actions to build strong HR function and programmes. The second strategic plan, covering the period 2011–13 with the third of 2014–16 currently underway, materialises further the strategic orientations and advances the capacity building in people and organisational structures.

Table 4.2. FAHR Strategic Objectives in its initial Strategic Plans¹

FAHR strategic objectives	
2008-2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Install strategic planning and build an integrated performance management system 2. Upgrading the civil service system, concentrating on training mid-level managers and emphasise the principles of competency as the main criteria for recruiting, promoting and retaining employees. 3. Developing government services based on international best practices and promoting a culture of excellence in service delivery. 4. Activating the e-government programs, and adopting a new approach to and encourage private sector participation in delivering central services.
2011-13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the capabilities of the employees and develop their skills at the Federal Government 2. To attract qualified Human Resources cadres encourage and maintain them in the targeted post at the Federal Government Sector 3. Lay down policies, programmes and systems related to Human Resources at Federal Government 4. Guarantee rendering of all Central services as per the principles of quality, efficiency and transparency.

Note: 1. FAHR, Strategic Objectives of the Authority 2011-2013, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/content/documents/englishStrategy.pdf.

FAHR's objectives, while very ambitious, indicate a good design for a proficient HRM system. However their implementation faces important challenges as shown before and as it will be demonstrated furthermore in this chapter.

Management accountability frameworks

The first challenge is framing whole-of-government strategic HRM within a coherent management and accountability system that links HR needs to the implementation of national development strategy. The UAE public service could draw upon experiences in OECD countries to develop an integrated accountability framework. Some of the OECD member countries have developed and fully implemented accountability frameworks in which the strategic human resources management is a core component and is completely tied to ministerial planning and reporting requirements. Regular reviews and assessments

by the central HRM body of HRM ministries' capacity are conducted in sixteen OECD countries. The objective of data consolidation is to have a unified picture about the whole government sector (OECD, 2011a). Australia, Canada and United Kingdom are leaders in this area. The UK Civil Service Capability Review Programme is described in Box 4.3. The Canadian Management Accountability Framework (MAF) is described in Box 4.4.

Box 4.3. The UK Civil Service Capability Reviews

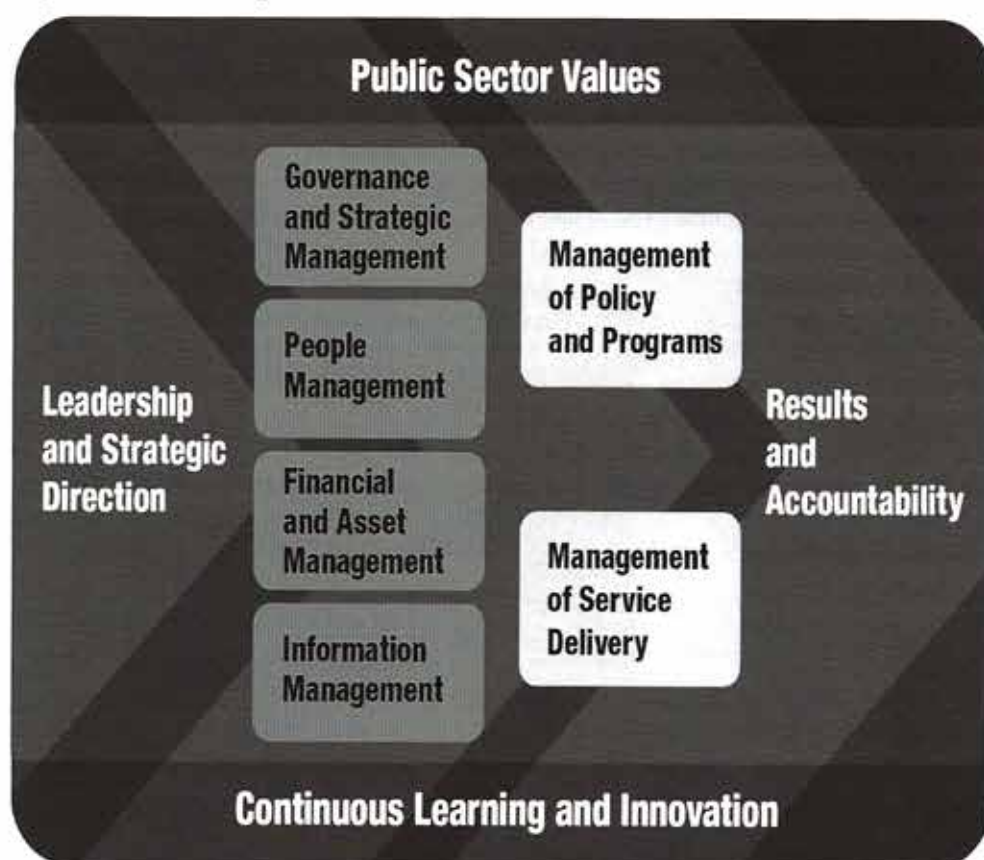
- The UK Civil Service Capability Review Programme was launched in 2005 as a part of the wider civil service reform agenda. The objectives of the reviews are:
- improve the capability of the Civil Service to meet today's delivery objectives and be ready for the challenges of tomorrow;
- assure the public and ministers that the Civil Service leadership is equipped to develop and deliver departmental strategies, and
- help departments act on long-term key development areas and therefore provide assurance on future delivery.
- The reviews assess the capability of central government departments against a common framework of leadership, strategy and delivery (model of capability); identify key areas for improvement and next steps.



Source: UK Civil Service, *Capability Review of Programme, capability,* www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/improving/capability/; *Model* www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/improving/capability/model, assessed in August 2014.

Box 4.4. The Canadian Management Accountability Framework (MAF) and People Management Drivers for a High-Performing Public Service

The Management Accountability Framework (MAF) is a tool used across the federal government to help departments and agencies improve management capability and performance. The MAF is structured around ten key elements that establish the expectations for sound management in federal organisations.



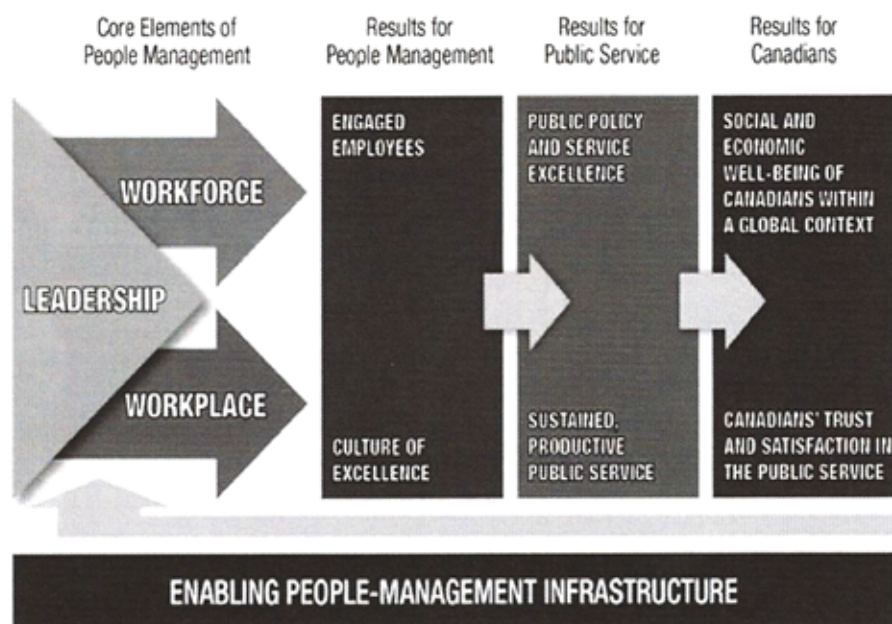
- The main purpose of MAF is to identify, through periodical assessments (annual or, in some areas, every three years), management strengths and areas of concern in individual departments and ultimately government-wide. The people component, one of MAF's ten key elements, sets the vision, expectations, key performance indicators and associated measures for sound human resources management. It focuses on the key people management drivers for high performing public service (leadership, workplace, workforce and HR infrastructure) outcomes and associated indicators and measures.
- The assessment process is conducted for each key MAF element, which is further subdivided into areas of management (AoM). Lines of evidence with associated rating criteria exist for each AoM. Representatives of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) conduct the assessments in communication with line departments. The assessment results are made public and are accessible on the Treasury Board of Canada website. They also factor in deputy heads performance appraisals.

Box 4.4. The Canadian Management Accountability Framework (MAF) and People Management Drivers for a High-Performing Public Service (cont.)

- Launched in 2003, MAF has evolved to meet the changing needs of the leadership community. In order to ensure that MAF remains relevant, in 2008, TBS conducted an independent Five-Year Evaluation of the MAF. A number of improvements have been implemented since 2008, such as the implementation of a risk-based approach to MAF assessments with critical AoMs being assessed on an annual basis and other AoMs on a three-year cycle.

People Management Drivers

and a High-Performing Public Service



Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Management Accountability Framework*, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/maf-crg/index-eng.asp, *People Management Drivers*, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pses-saff/driver-moteur-eng.asp, assessed in August 2014.

Strategic workforce planning

Strategic workforce planning is a means to integrate the HR activities of the organisation into its overall strategic direction and to ensure proactive, sufficient and appropriate recruitments and redeployments needed to meet the strategic objectives of the public service. While the Human Resources Law recognises the importance of strategic workforce planning³¹ and FAHR understands the necessity to establish it on a solid basis, there is no firm evidence that consistent strategic workforce planning occurs now in the federal public service. The Emiratisation Plan in the Federal Government Sector 2010-

2013 offers a potential basis to develop a whole-of-government strategic workforce plan. Projection scenarios based on solid data and on trends and risk analysis can enrich the research perspectives and prompt the delivery of a valuable planning outcome.

The diverse recruitment practices could have a severe impact on the execution of the HR Strategy, especially in the complex organisational context of the UAE federal public service heavily relying on expatriates' human capital. They could also present a potential risk for partiality and favouritism in selection processes and therefore require close monitoring and further policy considerations. The strategic workforce planning will be further examined later in this chapter.

While the public service recruitment processes vary among OECD countries, most of those with tenured public services have centralised or relatively centralised recruitment systems. Shared competitions among multiple organisations and administered by a central body, responsible for applying government-wide standards and values, result in the creation of pools of qualified candidates available to all participating organisations. For example, in Belgium, all organisations use a federal recruitment agency (SELOR) that organises all competitions for the central civil service. In Ireland, a more decentralised recruitment system is in place: recruitment for tenured public service positions is managed by the Public Appointment Service (PAS) and includes competitions for senior levels positions in the local governments, the health sector or the police and other agencies of the state (OECD, 2010, p. 162). In Canada, the Public Service Commission often initiates and conducts competition processes on behalf of federal government departments. In addition to ensure standardised values-based selection of qualified candidates, this approach also has the merit to be more cost-efficient. On the other side, it is sometimes associated with increased length of the recruitment process, which may lead to losing talented employees to other sectors and therefore requires corrective actions.

In summary, the key opportunity and strength provided by whole-of-government management accountability frameworks is the integration of all areas of management, including people management. That alignment of all critical areas of management paves the road to the success of the organisations in meeting their strategic objectives while increasing efficiency, responsiveness and quality in service delivery. It allows them to be cognizant of their current capabilities and to plan confidently for the future.

One of the key objectives of the workforce planning is to ensure that the organisation has the right skills in the right place now and in the future. The workforce planning is sometimes associated with having the right numbers of employees needed in the next few months or years. However successful strategic workforce planning goes beyond the numbers. It connects the organisation's human resources strategy with its business strategy, identifies capacity and other risks and proposes a solid and continuous HR strategy to mitigate risks and enhance opportunities, in consultation with all key stakeholders. In order to develop plausible scenarios the organisation requires robust data, extensive knowledge of the context, internal and external to the organisation, and forecasting and modelling capacity.

The UAE HR Strategy recognises the importance of workforce planning and there are some efforts made to that regard; yet, the first significant steps are still to arise. The workforce planning occurs (if it happens) in individual ministries and authorities and not government-widely. The fragmentation in HRM roles and responsibilities and lack of robust data represent impediments for creating the optimum conditions for strategic government-wide workforce planning, which is critical for the success of the HR strategy.

Recruitment: Attracting and retaining the right capacities and skills

The implementation of the Emiratisation programme is more successful in the public sector than in the private industry settings (Jasim, 2008). There are several factors contributing to that success. The employment and working conditions (salaries, working hours: length and flexibility, vacation time, paid sick leave) offered by the public sector (federal and local governments) are generally superior to those offered by the private sector (Table 4.3). The public employment is also usually associated with better career and training opportunities. The primary use of Arabic in the public sector also constitute an important motivational factor in Emiratis' traditional inclination for public sector employment. On the less positive side, the perceived lower knowledge and experience requirements for new recruits and softened performance expectations in the public sector are another major cause in the Nationals' preferences for the public sector along with the often experienced difficulties to find a job within the private sector (Jasim, 2008). In fact, the share of Nationals in the private sector amounts to 5% only. The National Agenda therefore sets an ambitious goal to increase Emiratisation by ten times.³² The advantageous employment and working conditions in the public sector play favourably in its efforts to attract and retain the best national talent. Nevertheless, while cost containment may not be of immediate concern for the UAE public sector, its longer-term sustainability objectives cannot ignore the existing discrepancies between the conditions offered by the public sector and those in the broad-spectrum labour market. As the Emiratisation policy's scope exceeds the borders of the public sector, the striking differences between the public and private sectors' working conditions could impact negatively the success of the policy in the private sector.

Table 4.3. Working conditions public-private sectors

	Public sector	Private sector
Salaries (months)	Federal government: 21 500 AED Local government: 26 900 AED	8 500 – 17 500 AED
Daily working hours	7	8
Annual leaves	22 – 30	30
Official holidays	10 (+5/6 for Eid Ul-Fitr)	10
Paid sick leaves	15	15
Weekend days	2	1
Performance	Performance Management System (financial rewards)	Performance-based culture
Social environment	Working with Emiratis	Working with multi-nationals

Source: Federal Authority for Government Human Resources. Executive Rule for the Law of Federal Government Human Resources. The Cabinet resolution 13, year 2012, regarding executive rule of the Decree by Federal Law 11, year 2008 for Federal Government HR, and amendments. Ministry of Labour, *Assessing Unemployment Issue and Participation of National Human Resources in Labour Market*, May 2011, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/b970631d.pdf.

The federal public service competes for human resources talent with local governments (in particular those of Abu Dhabi and Dubai), which often offer better employment conditions (salaries and benefits) and prestige sometimes associated more with some Emirati governments' functions or ministries. This competition and the difficulties often associated with knowledge and capacity exchange between the two levels of government could have profound and long-term consequences for the development of the human resources in the federal government. For example, the difference in salaries between the federal and Emirate-level affects the recruitment of talents and has consequences for the quality of public service delivery in key policy areas.

such as education and health across the federation. Furthermore, if unaddressed, the competition would continue to reinforce the regional disparities within the federation and to potentially jeopardise the objective of a “balanced development throughout its territory”, as stated in Vision 2021.³³

Finding the right candidates for the public service jobs and matching the skills with the jobs’ profiles is critical for the overall public service performance. The number of staffing procedures (e.g. application procedures) in the UAE federal government (ministries and authorities) added up to around 84 000 in 2013: of them 56% involve Nationals and 44% – non-Nationals. Ministries and authorities conserve a large discretionary power in recruitment, all public sector bodies undertaking their own recruitment and using their methods to assess the competencies and aptitude. The probation period is 3 months, renewable. The appointment can be terminated during this probation period. TANMIA, the National Human Resources Development and Employment Agency, specialises in recruiting nationals. The policy guidelines developed by FAHR are being mainly customised, pending approval from FAHR. As previously indicated, increased autonomy of line ministries and managers in HR matters is important, however, it needs to be done at a careful pace. Fragmentation of the rules and procedures can undermine the effectiveness of the comprehensive HR strategy. Strengthening the institutional framework of FAHR to define and carry out the government-wide strategy will be crucial for the future progress of the federal HR policy.

The merit principle

A professional and competent public service constitutes a significant competitive advantage for the countries, which have been successful in building strong public service institutions. Professional public service makes a unique contribution in building nation’s strong economic, social and cultural foundations. One of the common denominators, consistently applied in human resources activities in those national public institutions is the merit principle.

The Canadian human resources management model is often seen as a best practice (Holdsworth, 2006). Its main characteristics are:

- The principles of merit, professionalism and non-partisanship as a foundation;
- An autonomous Public Service Commission having for mandate the safeguard of those principles; and
- A concern for managerial efficiency applied in a way consistent with those principles (Holdsworth, 2006).

The merit is a core principle in many OECD countries public service recruitment and promotion practices. Merit-based selection and appointments permit to achieve a competent workforce respecting the primacy of the public interest and serving the public with integrity. While there is no formal or commonly accepted definition of merit in OECD countries, merit is essentially referring to fair and objective selection of public service employees, based on qualifications and competencies, and free from any patronage, personal or political.³⁴ The use of refined assessment tools permits to test skills and aptitudes. The focus is shifting from formal education qualifications (diplomas) to actual competencies and aptitudes. The assessment of merit is based on core public service values and key competencies. Many OECD member countries use extensively a government-wide competency profiles for public service-wide selection and hiring purposes. Often there are also government-wide recruiting structures or organisations

conducting merit-based selection processes and assessments, especially for entry-level positions. This approach ensures hiring professional public servants that could serve in a broad range of ministries and areas of activities. Public service values and competency profiles should be regularly reviewed and eventually updated to respond to the new requirements imposed by changing contexts and labour demand and supply.

The Behavioural Competency Framework,³⁵ developed by FAHR, is a valuable piece serving as a guideline to determine desired behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities for the federal government employees. Every federal body develops its own competency architecture, based on the Framework and its specific needs. The Behavioural Competency Framework mentions the recruitment as one of the HR areas to benefit from using the identified behavioural competencies but currently the main areas of application are the performance management and the leadership development and training.³⁶ Further developments and extension of the areas of application, along with more centralised recruitment approaches in areas of key importance, could improve the recruitment of talent in the UAE federal public service and enhance retention of highly demanded expertise.

Retention and competition for talent

The large presence of non-National employees (44% in 2012, see Figure 4.1) in the federal public service, in temporary employment conditions, creates a significant challenge for the workforce management and especially for the knowledge retention in the public service. The significant number of staffing actions related to expatriates (46% of all staffing in 2012) not only engenders a huge amount of work for HR departments; it also represents an important challenge for managing the workflow and has the potential to impact teams' productivity.

Most importantly, those disruptions can translate into knowledge discontinuity and loss of expertise, which is a significant obstruction for a knowledge organisation. Despite the progress made in the implementation of the Emiratisation policy, the expatriates will continue to be an important player and contributor to the UAE federal public service in the forthcoming years. The knowledge and expertise transfer from expatriates to nationals is a core element in the Emiratisation process (and a key success factor) but it seems that often it does not happen or when it does it is uneven and not at the expected or desired pace (Jasim, 2008). Therefore the knowledge transfer from expatriates to Nationals should continue to be a priority with major focus on preparing the ground for a successful transfer and establishing creative incentives to overcome potential resistance. Innovative approaches are also required to deal with productivity and work climate disturbances. This is particularly important to fill the gaps in technical positions, mainly in the education and healthcare sector. Initiatives should go beyond programmes such as shadowing (for every job category), "training the trainer" programmes, active learning groups, individual and team coaching, mentoring or a mix of those.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the competition for talent also takes place between the federal public service and some Emirati governments, and especially those of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The impact on the quality of the public services is real and so is the risk of reinforcing two-speed developments and public services in the UAE. Same for the knowledge development and transfer between the more and less advanced Emirates. The efforts of creating incentives to enable knowledge transfer should comprise inter-regional transmission as well. Avenues such as intergovernmental research or working

groups, joint learning events and programmes, working visits (real and virtual), could provide some paths to explore.

Attrition analyses, performed by FAHR in 2010 and 2011,³⁷ found an average employee attrition level of 5.9% in the surveyed 15 ministries and 4 authorities. There is a significant variance among federal entities: from 4.5% to 21.2%. While attrition is not necessarily a bad news, the attrition levels of Nationals, especially of young national men in the age group 18-30, could be of concern.³⁸ The same studies report that 29% of the leaving employees are Nationals going away after short service. The findings may have a localised flavour as the studies focus mainly on two ministries – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health – that account for more than 70% of the attrition in the surveyed 19 federal entities.³⁹ Yet, given the impact the attrition has on workforce productivity and, in this case, on the Emiratization outcomes, it is important to understand the causes and to assess the level of concern and potentially corrective measures.

The attrition rates amongst National employees may be caused, at least in part, by the existing competition for national talent between the federal and local governments. Often the employment and working conditions seem to advantage the local governments as employer. Those questions highlight the importance of reliable data and especially of employees' input in human resources management. Employees' input could be obtained through exit interviews, employee surveys, workplace climate surveys, etc. The employee engagement surveys represent a particularly interesting source of information for the employer and for decision-making. They are discussed later in this chapter.

While the HR Law allows deployments⁴⁰, they happen rarely in the UAE federal public service, mostly in cases of organisational restructuring following a Cabinet decision. In many public services the employee mobility, when well-planned and co-ordinated, is seen as an important knowledge transfer tool. Mobility within and between ministries and authorities can support enhancing awareness of government-wide priorities, spread best practices and enable the development of new knowledge. External mobility (between the public service and other sectors of activity, e.g., other governments or the private sector) is another mean to acquire new knowledge for the public sector and to share the knowledge it has developed with other organisations. This type of mobility should be governed by sound policies to regulate potential conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Once again, sound strategic workforce planning, supported by appropriate initiatives and programmes, can make a significant and sustained contribution in the organisational effort to retain the needed expertise and talent.

HR development: Training and learning

The success of attracting and retaining the best talent is strongly related to the development opportunities offered by the employer to employees. The best workplaces are dynamic and offer perpetual learning possibilities. They reach beyond the traditional training, see the learning as lifelong endeavour deeply engraved in organisation's vision and strategic plans for the future. The learning and development in the best workplaces speak to every employee's talent and ambitions and enables employee's creativity and innovation.

In the UAE public service the training is recognised for its importance in the development of the knowledge and the skills of the employees and in particular of the National employees. The number of training activities organised and/or delivered by FAHR is impressive. The effort to bring in the best available international expertise is commendable.

The Learning and development policy provides a framework for “comprehensive development opportunities for all employees within the UAE Federal Government.”⁴¹ The framework builds on the principles of establishing clear links between strategic planning at the government and entity level and between the performance management system and learning and development, proactive identification of learning requirements based on identified future capability needs, etc.⁴²

This impressive framework requires sustained, at all levels, efforts to produce the expected results. Moving from training to learning, from one-time activity to continuous lifelong learning and development, embedding on-the-job-learning into the organisational culture - those trends characterise leading organisations’ efforts in employee development in recent years. Measuring and understanding the short- and long-term impact of the training and learning activities on employee and organisational performance by using established learning effectiveness and evaluation criteria (KPIs) is key in assessing progress. The little transfer of experience and training from expatriates to nationals is a shared concern and the increased transfer of knowledge from external to internal (including international to national) training providers should be one of the success measures, without repudiating the importance of accessing the best international expertise.

Table 4.4. HR Professional standards in the UK Cabinet Office

Key areas	Professional standards	Outcome of effective performance
Knowing the business	Understand the organisation and how HR can best contribute to its success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Understand and communicate the organisation’s priorities and support line managers in working towards them. – Align HR policy and services to the organisation’s business. – Use people information to assist decision making in the line. – Demonstrate how HR practices and effective people management help line managers achieve their goals.
Demonstrating HR expertise	Understand and deliver HR practices suitable for the organisation which lead to organisational success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver HR services in a professional, responsible, accessible and cost-effective way. – Use information to inform HR decisions and make improvements within HR. – Engage, enable and challenge line managers to manage their people effectively. – Continuously update and develop professional knowledge. – Ensure confidentiality, and practice HR to the highest ethical standards.
Act as a change agent	Make organisational change happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communicate effectively to help make change happen. – Demonstrate a positive attitude to change. – Use change and project management techniques to develop and deliver HR plans.
Personal credibility	Personally demonstrate the organisation’s values, build trust with partners in the organisation and proactively contribute to organisational success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Listen, question and communicate in an influential and engaging way. – Present clear and concise information in response to queries. Deliver outputs on time and to the agreed standard. – Reinforce the organisation’s values and desired behaviours through example. – Demonstrate a proven track record for customer service, delivery and capability.

Source: UK Cabinet Office (2009), *HR Professional Standards Handbook*, Cabinet Office, United Kingdom.

Leadership development

Develop the leadership of the future and create a resilient talent pool are crucial to any nation's success. The development of national leaders is a vital priority for the UAE federal government and public service and key to the success of the Emiratisation plan. The UAE Government Leaders Programme, launched in February 2008 and initially hosted by the Prime Minister's office before transferred to FAHR and then back to the PMO in 2013, is the "first integrated initiative of leadership development in the federal public service. The Programme aims at developing government leaders in all ministries and federal entities in collaboration with specialised organisations and as per world-class standards. Participants are enrolled into this Programme after being nominated by the institutions they work for, and following an evaluation procedure at specialised assessment centres."⁴³ The Programme's strategic objectives are to enable the achievement of the federal government strategy's goals, to ensure a leadership pipeline at all times at various levels, to develop leadership capability at all leadership levels⁴⁴ and to improve retention of highly skilled employees.

The critical importance accorded to the leadership development in the UAE public sector drives continuous improvement of the Programme and the add-on of new initiatives. In October 2012 the Chairman of FAHR announced an upcoming policy of job rotation, especially in leadership positions, both within each federal entity and across all other federal entities, as part of the Human Resources Strategy in the federal government.⁴⁵ The new policy aims "to end the culture of staying in office for long years."⁴⁶ This initiative will support the establishment of a new culture of public service career paths development and of knowledge sharing within and between public sector organisations.

Closing the gender gap

The ambitious Emiratisation program cannot be achieved without tapping into the totality of country's human resources talent and the leadership shortages cannot be resolved without better integration of women into leadership positions. Achieving gender equality contributes to increased diversity in workplace, which has been proven to constitute a significant competitive advantage for an organisation and for the public service. Despite the significant progress achieved by the UAE government in gender equality, women are still under-represented in upper level positions in governmental institutions and in the cabinet. For example, 4 of the current 24 ministers are women and around 62% of federal government employees are male (FAHR, 2013).

The existing gap in women's representation in leading roles can be addressed by a comprehensive strategy where policies and regulations combined with culture-changing efforts are part of strong workforce planning and targeted talent management initiatives. Understanding the barriers for women's career progression is a prerequisite in developing and promoting appropriate initiatives and the Survey of the Needs of Women Working in the Federal Governmental Sector is an important step to that effect. More specific and targeted to the federal women workforce surveys and studies will permit to further deepen the appreciation of the challenges faced by the women in workplace and to establish concrete actions to lessen the burden of their integration into leadership positions. Adopting gender performance indicators⁴⁷ can constitute another significant stage in ensuring women's further integration in public service leadership.

Box 4.5. Promoting gender equality and women in leadership and management positions in OECD member countries

- Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been an objective for most OECD countries during the past decade. They have taken concrete measures in order to support the increasing tendency for women in the government workforce and to increase the proportion of women in management positions. The percentages of positions in central government occupied by women vary greatly across countries between 16.8% in Japan and 69.2% in Poland.
- Some OECD countries have established a set of policies to achieve equal opportunities for promotion and career advancement of women in leadership roles in central government. Nine countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Sweden and the United States) have introduced coaching and/or information sessions for women. In five countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel and Korea) preference is given to women in a selection process. In two of these countries (Czech Republic and Germany) women have even a preferential right for being promoted. Six countries (Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Japan and Switzerland) have established promotion targets for the share of female employees who are aimed to be promoted in relation to all employees promoted.

Source: OECD (2011), "Trends in Strategic Human Resources Management in Government", OECD, Paris.

Measuring HR efficiency and effectiveness

In many OECD countries the performance management is seen as addressing efficiency and effectiveness of operations, but also accountability of actions. As described in OECD's *The State of the Public Service* (OECD, 2008), performance management is made up of four levels:

- At the **highest** level, performance management is rooted in the organisation's long-term vision and business strategy and focused on impact, resource utilisation and public service improvement.
- At the **strategic** level, performance management is focused on outcomes, such as volume and value of service take-up, upward trends for inclusion, and staff and user satisfaction.
- At the **programme** level, performance management is focused on the desired output of programmes, and on what has been accomplished.
- At the **operational service** level, performance management is concerned with process quality, service delivery and outputs, but also with the individuals or teams of individuals who are expected to deliver these results.

The Employee Performance Management System (EPMS), developed by FAHR and applied to all federal ministries and authorities regardless of the type of employee's contract and grade, is designed to set the performance standards and evaluation criteria for the federal employee's annual evaluation process, to determine the performance level that entitles the UAE federal employees for the annual increments, to define the required performance level that entitles the UAE federal employees for promotions and to set the grievance and appeal process and procedures for unsatisfactory annual performance results.⁴⁸ This is another "state-of-the-art" development, which distinguishes itself by the excellence of its design. The EPMS is based on the following principles:

- **Strategic alignment:** Fostering a performance-oriented culture where individual employee's work is cascaded and aligned with the strategic direction of the UAE Federal Government in general and their Federal Government entity in particular.
- **Management by Objectives:** Engaging the employee in planning and setting the objectives, which increases his job satisfaction, productivity and commitment, and promotes his feeling that his work is recognised and valued.
- **Continuous feedback:** Encouraging fair, accurate and proactive feedback from line managers in order to develop and enhance the performance of their employees.
- **Integration:** Establishing a clear connection between on-the-job performance and incentives such as annual increase, promotions and training and development opportunities, as the UAE federal entities' Performance effectiveness measurement is based on achieving its objectives.
- **Fairness and credibility:** Provide a consistent, fair and credible employee performance management system, through setting clear standards, policies and procedures that are in line with UAE Federal Government laws and legislation.⁴⁹

The EPMS framework is a 3-phase cycle:

1. Performance Planning;
2. Interim review; and
3. Annual Performance Review.

A Behavioral Competency Map, composed of core competencies and leadership competencies (only for Leadership & Senior Management positions), is set for each category of employees. Only a set % can obtain the highest weight:

- Substantially Exceeds Expectations: 0 – 5%
- Exceeds Expectations: 0 – 10%
- Meets Expectations: 80 – 100%
- Needs Improvement: 0 – 5%

Employees who are rated in the category of "Needs Improvement" are considered as low performers and low potentials. They can appeal the rating through a Grievance and Complaints Form.⁵⁰ The final decision rests with the Minister or his representative.

The "needs improvement" employees are invited to improve their performance. They are subject to a clear performance improvement (Performance Improvement Plan⁵¹ is developed), coaching and a monitoring phase of 6 months. In case performance has not been improved, a formal written warning is issued and an additional 6 months of coaching and monitoring is granted. If the employee's performance does not improve within these 6 months, the line manager might consider more serious actions like reassignment to another position that better suits his capabilities. Ultimately if the issue cannot be resolved, termination of employment might be considered due to the employee's performance inadequacy and incompetency.⁵² The emphasis placed on poor performance in the UAE federal public service is noteworthy and commendable. Although vast majority of the public services across the world have developed formal

Box 4.6. Using data for better HRM decision-making: The Canadian Federal Public Service Management Dashboard

- The Public Service Management Dashboard is an online management tool for central agency and departmental decision makers, including deputy heads, heads of human resources (HR), HR professionals and departmental officers responsible for Management Accountability Framework assessments. It provides a snapshot of the state of people management across the public service and at the departmental level. It provides valuable information and tools to support users in monitoring performance and in developing action plans to address system-wide and departmental issues related to people management.
- The regularly updated information about people management trends and issues support more responsive business decision-making. The Dashboard contains more than 250 performance measures organised around key performance indicators. It also includes annual departmental scorecards, using a subset of outcome-based key performance indicators and measures. The Dashboard enables departments to attain excellence in people management by providing toolkits based on innovative and exemplary practices adopted by federal organisations and other jurisdictions.

CANADIANS' TRUST AND SATISFACTION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE						
Canadians' satisfaction with government service delivery			Canadians' confidence in the government		Canadians' confidence in the Public Service	
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF CANADIANS						
Economic Affairs			Social Affairs		International Affairs	
Income security and employment for Canadians	Strong economic growth	Innovative and knowledge-based economy	Healthy Canadians	Safe and secure communities	Safe and secure world through international cooperation	Global poverty reduction through sustainable development
Clean and healthy environment	Fair and secure market place	Diverse society	Worship Canadian culture and heritage	Strong and mutually beneficial North American partnership	Prosperous Canada through global commerce	
PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE EXCELLENCE				SUSTAINED, PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC SERVICE		
Quality of public policy advice		Quality of service and program delivery		Attractiveness of public service employment	Retention of employees	Health of employees
Productivity						
ENGAGED EMPLOYEES				CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE		
Job satisfaction	Commitment to the organization	Satisfaction with the organization	Innovative	Results-oriented	Public interest-oriented	People-oriented
WORKFORCE				WORKPLACE		
Talented people attracted and recruited		Well-managed employee potential		Well-managed work		Fair, supportive and ethical environment
Right talent in the right place at the right time		Employee development		Meaningful work		Physical conditions and resources
Diversity of characteristics		Performance management		Appropriate workload and stress		Appropriate compensation
Values-based staffing		Career opportunities		Empowerment		Positive working relationships and communications
						Ethical environment
						Trusted, effective recourse
LEADERSHIP (EXECUTIVE AND SUPERVISORY)						
Planning and direction setting			Competence		Values	
ENABLING PEOPLE-MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE						
People management capacity			High-quality people management advice and support services		Knowledge of the state of the Public Service	
Right talent in the right places			Access to people management services		Research	
Stability			High-quality people management services		Information systems	

Source: www.fahr.gov.gc.ca/Portal/en/about-fahr/organizational-structure.aspx.

Other than determining the needs and the relevance of data, one of the main challenges organisations striving to establish strategic workforce planning face is to transform the available data and information into corporate knowledge and intelligence.

The HR intelligence, deriving from people research and analytics, adds real value to strategic organisations as it permits to move from reactive “data fetching” support towards developing and delivering proactive HR results (Falletta, 2008).

Information technologies advancements provide new opportunities for data sharing and knowledge development. In the era of networked governance, collective use of “open data” can unlock the door for the creation of new knowledge and thus enhance the public value of government data. Some OECD countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA, publish online public service human resources aggregated data under the auspices of the “Open government” initiative:

- Australia: Australian Public Service Commission: www.apsc.gov.au/stateoftheservice;
- New Zealand: Human Resources Capability Survey of Public Service Departments: www.ssc.govt.nz/sites/all/files/hrc-survey-2011.pdf; and
- UK Office for National Statistics (24 October 2012). Civil Service Statistics, 2012 Release. Available: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-279335.
- United States: US Office of Personnel Management: www.opm.gov/feddata.

The workforce data is often organised around specific categories: e.g., employment status, number of employees by ministry/department, number of employees in different types of functions, location, demographics (age, gender, ethnicity), disability status, earnings, etc. The UK civil service publishes a Data Summary Tool in the form of a spreadsheet that allows users to see how a specific department differs from the civil service average or from another government department. For example, the proportions of the headcounts of different government departments split between men and women, full-time and part-time employees, permanent and temporary appointments, regions where staff work and a number of others.⁵⁷ The US Office of Personnel Management workforce data presentation allows the creation of customised tables for further analysis and therefore for new knowledge development. The open data practices vary considerably among OECD countries and do not yet permit sound international comparisons. However the sources presented above offer some good practices the UAE federal public service can draw upon in the creation of workforce and HRM data.

The development and sharing of relevant data and knowledge are an essential foundation for strategic workforce planning and therefore an important task for FAHR and the UAE public service. The first steps in creating HR data have been made but the pace needs to be accelerated in order to fully assist the implementation of the HR strategy and the Emiratization program. Understanding the current workforce characteristics and trends and being able to predict future trends and needs is essential for all sound HR plans and their implementation. FAHR must be applauded for its achievements in systematically collecting and publishing data which needs to be complemented by the development of rigorous definitions, analysis, forecasts and modelling practices. This will be achieved not only by acquiring specific expertise but also by ensuring the involvement of all key stakeholders and their commitment. The UAE’s position, actual and aspired, of regional leader in HR development and strategies further justify those investments.

*HRM and PS modernisation***Box 4.7. Public Service Employee Surveys**

- Many public services in OECD countries (e.g., Australia,¹ Canada,² United Kingdom,³ United States⁴) conduct employee surveys to gather information about employees' satisfaction with their job and organisation and employees' commitment to their organisation. Employee engagement could be defined in many different ways; often it is described as being comprised by two distinct yet related factors: employee satisfaction and employee commitment. Some of the main drivers of engagement are: leadership, vision and direction, work environment, organisational culture, career advancement opportunities, empowerment, trust and integrity. Employees' perception data contribute to understand important workforce trends, to identify areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement and to guide the development of specific actions to improve employee engagement and motivation and therefore organisational planning, performance, learning and leadership. For example, in Canada the Public Service Employee Survey's results feed deputy heads performance assessments.
- The main cause for the growing popularity and longevity of employee surveys is the well-established relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. Many leading private and public sector organisations have been conducting regular employee engagement surveys for more than 20 years. Engaged workforce is a common characteristic of successful organisations. Achieving high levels of employee engagement is particularly important in the public sector, where organisations' performance and productivity are predominantly based on labour force performance.
- Employee engagement surveys provide valuable information not only at employee level but also at organisational level. They permit organisations to assess their leadership and management, to measure and compare their attractiveness and competitiveness for the best talent and to develop appealing Employee Value Proposition in competitive labour markets. Employee engagement has an impact on organisational performance and is considered as a leading factor of financial performance. Engaged employees are organisation's best source of new ideas and a key driver for innovation. Furthermore, research findings⁵ suggest a two-way relationship between employee engagement and service satisfaction in the public sector. This correlation demonstrates the impact of employee engagement on citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery, which makes the employee engagement a concept of key interest to governments for which citizen satisfaction is an ultimate measure of success.

1. www.apsc.gov.au/about-the-apsc/parliamentary/state-of-the-service/survey (password protected).

2. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. Public Service Employee Survey, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pse-saff/index-eng.asp.

3. UK National Statistics. Public Sector Personnel. Available: www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/government/central-and-local-government/public-sector-personnel/index.html.

4. OPM.GOV. Data, Analysis and Documentation. Employee Surveys. Available: www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/employee-surveys/#url=Governmentwide-Results.

5. Matheson and Watters (2008). Public Sector Service Value Chain - Linking Employee Engagement and Customer Satisfaction, <http://faculty.mu.edu.sa/public/uploads/1362057486.371customer%20satisfaction53.pdf>.

The strategic HRM has a major responsibility and contribution to the future of the public service. Keeping in pace with the constant change, although challenging, is not enough for a public service, which has the mandate to support and lead the country's ascension to the rank of the best in the world. That public service should be in the driving

seat for a continuous change and improvement. The traditional expectations of employees, often based on the concept of compliance, are not creating the conditions for a world-class organisation. Leading organisations enjoy innovative culture and can rely on the driven force of their engaged employees. The concepts of organisational culture and employee engagement have become vital to understand employees' and organisation's performance and to drive productivity and performance improvements, in both, private and public sectors.

While the organisational culture and employee engagement concepts are now unconditionally present in the life of the high-performing organisations worldwide, especially in the private sector, they are not yet widely considered in GCC workplaces (Jasim, 2008). As the UAE federal public service strives for HRM excellence, further commitment and efforts should be deployed to move from work culture based on monetary rewards and organisational directives to one founded on innovation and employee engagement (Jasim, 2008).

Measuring employee engagement will ensure further support to the significant HRM initiatives undertaken by the UAE public service. It will also support the shift to a high performance organisational culture. Regular public service employee engagement surveys would permit to obtain valuable perceptual data, to improve public sector performance and to enable its innovation. Periodic employee surveys would also permit to assess progress and benchmark against own and others' performance. Box 4.7 describes the experiences of some OECD countries' public administrations with employee engagement surveys.

One of the key strengths of the UAE federal public service is its service and customer orientation. The vision of the public sector as a corporation delivering services to the population drives public service innovation. There are some interesting initiatives, such as the Customer Charter⁵⁸ or MyGov, setting a good practice in citizen-oriented services (see Chapter 5). The organisational focus on service to citizens as an important driver for employee satisfaction should be sustained and further promoted. The already established practice of engaging the public servants delivering those services in generating improvement ideas is commendable and should continue to be stimulated.

Conclusion

The UAE Government could consider the following recommendations:

- **Develop a clear roadmap, with measurable intermediary targets and final outcomes, for the implementation of the HRM strategy to set realistic goals and define concrete steps.** There is a need to further clarify the roles and the responsibilities of FAHR, TANMIA, PMO and the line departments in designing and delivering HR policies, programmes and services, especially in regards to the Emiratisation plan. In this regard, in considering whether, and if so, how best to, reassess the pace of decentralisation in HRM, the UAE might consider harnessing the considerable evidence and experience accumulated by OECD countries in setting, implementing and monitoring the performance of functional governance tools – in particular in strategic HRM, e-government and online service delivery and public procurement. This experience, usually shared with commissioning governments through an OECD functional review of these governance tools, could assist the UAE Federal Government in maximising cohesion and coherence in the implementation of its HR strategy.

- **Consider establishing strategic workforce planning** - a key priority to enable the success in all areas of HRM – built on high quality evidence - reliable and comprehensive HR data and information. Strong central HR body and HR capability in line departments are critical to move from policy design to implementation and to do not lose the momentum.
- **Build strong HR capacity in federal ministries and authorities and position the HRM departments** as strategic business partner in the organisations with strong focus on performance and culture (rather than compliance and regulations). The UAE may consider the use of employee surveys to obtain valuable perception data, increase employee engagement and improve organisational culture and service to citizens. In addition, HR and financial information with reviewed and strengthened Vision 2021-related NKPIs of the National Agenda and operational KPIs can support the development of integrated accountability frameworks. Using strategic foresight in workforce planning allows adopting more proactive approaches towards the future, i.e. enhancing strategic planning, improving the KPIs in people and all areas of management and therefore public services design and delivery.
- **Reinforce merit-based recruitment and promotion processes as the only accepted practice**; the decentralised and mainly position-based recruitment (especially in the areas of policy development and leadership) could be reassessed for its impact on the overall human resources development and performance. Develop career paths for the leadership and policy development areas, supported by learning and mobility patterns. Continue to operate the shift from training to learning and build a culture of constant improvement and experimentation. An important component in the federal system is to push the collaboration in HR development and management with local governments to examine current inequities in the competition for talent and achieve better alignment in human resources development and in service standards across all Emirates. This goes hand in hand with the continuation of developing a culture of stakeholder and public engagement, critical for the successful implementation of the HR strategies.
- Place a strong focus on knowledge transfer between Federal and local governments and the federal government, from non-National to National employees, from external to internal trainers. This would support exploring the means and the benefits of well-designed and managed mobility, within the federal public service, between the federal and Emirati public services and with other sectors to enhance skills and knowledge sharing and creation. In practical terms, the UAE could consider the development of a Knowledge Centre or a HR Lab in people management to study specific people management issues and especially those related to the Emiratisation process. This would facilitate developing innovative approaches to marry the world's best advances with the nation's cultural legacy and pioneering approaches that can benefit the entire region. In addition, to support mobility of public employees, the UAE could consider building a competency – or talent - database. This talent pool allows for a more efficient and timely recruitment process through tailored search criteria.

Notes

1. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.
2. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.
3. HH Dr. Maitha Al Shamsi at HR Club Forum: “With Leadership Support, UAE Women are an Important Figure in the Development Process”, 6 May 2012, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/news/6/5/2012/ميثاء-الشامسي-يملتقى-نادي-الموارد-البشرية-بجد-عم-القيادة-المرأة-الإماراتية-رقم-مهم-في-مسير-ة-التنمية.aspx.
4. HH Dr. Maitha Al Shamsi at HR Club Forum: “With Leadership Support, UAE Women are an Important Figure in the Development Process”, 6 May 2012, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/news/6/5/2012/ميثاء-الشامسي-يملتقى-نادي-الموارد-البشرية-بجد-عم-القيادة-المرأة-الإماراتية-رقم-مهم-في-مسير-ة-التنمية.aspx.
5. A recent study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) argues that young Emirati women are better educated than their male peers and often demonstrate stronger work ethic. UAE Interact (2012), “UAE shows the way to workplace gender balance,” 17 September, www.uaeinteract.com/docs/UAE_shows_the_way_to_workplace_gender_balance/51179.htm.
6. www.mfnca.gov.ae/en/Publications/MonDec1123122GST2008attachments.pdf.
7. Brief of Survey of the Needs of Women Working in the Federal Governmental Sector (2011), www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/47dc1617.pdf.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/2ccd4cfe.pdf.
11. Ibid.
12. www.fahr.gov.ae/portal/en/masaar.aspx.
13. Ibid.
14. Inspired by OECD (2005) and The Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services (2004).
15. The presentation does not necessarily follows the order in which they appear.
16. Human Resources Law, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/laws-and-legislations/human-resources-law.aspx.
17. Decree of amending the law of human resources, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/laws-and-legislations/decreed-of-amending-the-law-of-human-resources.aspx.
18. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/about-fahr/fahr-strategy/vision-mission-and-values.aspx.

19. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/UserFiles/Assets/Files/Annual%20report%20-%20Flash/FAHR%20%202011/english/index.html and www.fahr.gov.ae/portal/assets/f87735b/لعمام-للهمنة-السنة-القرير.aspx.
20. The report on survey's results is posted on FAHR website: www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/634a02c4.pdf.
21. Federal Law Decree No.11, 2008, articles 8&9, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/laws-and-legislations/human-resources-law.aspx.
22. The OECD Policy Brief (2004), *Public Sector Modernisation: Modernising Public Employment* presents a good picture and reflection on the issue, Paris, OECD.
23. Ibid.
24. Thereafter referred to as the Code.
25. UAE Cabinet. UAE Constitution, <http://uacabinet.ae/en/UAEGovernment/Pages/UAE-Constitution.aspx>.
26. E.g., politeness in contact with the public, creation of a positive ambience, enhancement of performance, improvement of work environment & consolidation of the right institutional culture in the workplace.
27. E.g., refrain from abusing political opinions or religious beliefs of others, in or outside the workplace & abstain from inciting, refraining from any acts or practices that violate moral and ethical conduct and the traditions of the UAE society, refrain from discrediting superiors & colleagues, refrain from discrimination, harassment, violence and the use of obscene and indecent words, refrain from preferential treatment through flatter, deception, favouritism or nepotism.
28. Ibid.
29. UAE Cabinet, UAE Strategy 2011-2013, <http://uacabinet.ae/en/Strategies/Pages/20112013-Strategy.aspx>; UAE National Agenda, www.vision2021.ae/en/national-priority-areas.
30. Idem.
31. Article 7 of the Human Resources Law.
32. UAE (2014), "National Agenda" and <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/employment/increase-the-number-of-emiratis-in-the-private-sector-is-a-main-priority-of-adtc-1.1238490>.
33. UAE Vision 2021, www.vision2021.ae/en/our-vision/united-destiny; it says: "ensure balanced development throughout the Emirates".
34. For example, the Canadian *Public Service Modernisation Act* (2003) new merit definition requires that a person selected not only meets the essential qualifications for a job but also is the right *fit* for a job.
35. www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/112868c7.pdf.
36. In October 2012 FAHR launched a General Competence Management Framework (CMF) in the Federal Government "in order to provide the best training opportunities for the national talents, in accordance with the best international practices". FAHR (1 October 2012), "The Authority Launches Competence Management Framework in Federal Government", www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/news/1/10/2012/-الهمنة-تطلق-الإطار-العام-لإدارة-الكفاءات-المتميزة-في-الحكومة-الاتحادية.aspx.

37. FAHR/Ajit Ranada (29 March 2011), “Appointments and Termination Analysis”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/adb23bd6.pdf.
38. Nationals leavers are far higher than Expat in Age 18-30 group – Nationals: 18% vis-à-vis Expatriates: 3%.
39. Ibid.
40. HR Law, articles 23-25.
41. FAHR, “Training & Development System for Federal Government”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/laws-and-legislations/training-and-development-system.aspx
42. Ibid.
43. www.uaegovleaders.ae/default.aspx.
44. Ibid.
45. FAHR (1 October 2012), “The Authority Launches Competence Management Framework in Federal Government”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/news/1/10/2012/-الهيئة-تطلق-الإطار-العام-لإدارة-الكفاءات-المتميزة-في-الحكومة-الاتحادية.aspx.
46. Ibid.
47. For example, Abu Dhabi already monitors gender performance indicators. In the Canadian federal public service a gender equality initiative (as part of a broader diversity program) has permitted to substantially increase the number of women in management and leadership roles.
48. FAHR, “Employee Performance Management System”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/50c11796.pdf.
49. Ibid.
50. FAHR, “Employee Performance Management System”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/50c11796.pdf.
51. FAHR, “Performance Improvement Plan: PIP”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/e5d36f99.pdf.
52. Ibid, p. 28.
53. For example, the web-based tool for performance management, developed by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Canada: www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/tou/pmc-dgr/intro-eng.asp.
54. Subject to each federal government entities’ annual budget and to existing regulations under the UAE Federal Government HR Law.
55. A certificate of recognition from the Minister during an event of the federal entity, nominating the employee for “Emirate Government Excellence Award”, public appreciation of the employee’s effort in public events, declaring him/ her the “employee of the month or year”, offering gifts or any other appreciation ways that the entity deems appropriate (p. 27).
56. Box 4.7. (Public Service Employee Surveys) describes the importance of capturing and acting on employees’ perceptions.

57. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-279335.
58. FAHR, “Customer Charter”, www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/customer-charter.aspx.

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