Past, Present and Perspectives in the Public Management

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Abstract: In Romania, administrative reform can't be implemented without major changes in the public management perception, mainly in the public management content, values and basic principles. In the context of the European Integration, the attention of the public managers must be oriented on the content of the fundamental changes needed in public organizations from Romania for becoming part of the European Administrative System.
The administrative system from Romania and the managerial practice can't remain out of the major changes already done in the members states systems. The paper contains few esential elements refered to the public management changes from the last years and a short description of the new perspectives in the science and the practice of public management.

1. Introduction

The development of the public management system over the last two decades could be divided as:

- *pre 1984* - dominated by bureaucracy and process (doing the job correctly and lawfully)
- *since 1984 before 2000* - development of managerialism and outputs (doing the job efficiently)
- *2000 on* - moving towards leadership and outcomes (getting results).

As the researches of the specialist demonstrated after the year 1994, in many European countries has been implemented several major changes in public management, as the following:

- transparency;
- greater focus on delivery and efficiency;
- improved financial management and accountability.

Numerous commentators, from 1992 on, have assessed the reforms. Some have said "we need a fundamental transformation from where we are now", more have said "we need to build more fully on what we have". Both positions have, however, led to similar prescriptions.
If we would like to evaluate the status of the reforms in public management during the last ten years, we can identify several strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

2. Analysis and the needed changes in the public management

The key weaknesses identified are:

- interaction with Government is not easy for citizens;
- there is no systematic approach for setting and achieving outcome goals and priorities;
- the fragmented state sector makes it difficult to pursue complex or cross-cutting objectives;
- the system is weak at developing and managing capability (people, culture, and common systems); and
- (in particular) many agencies are struggling to understand and meet needs of the citizens

Proposed Solutions

- Focusing more on *results* (managing for outcomes)
- Getting more *citizen and community centred* in how we do business (to community-centred; helping build capability for "subsidiarity" [including partnership in problem-solving]; using enabling technology to simplify things for citizens)
- Building public sector capability, from two angles:
  - *Strengthening people, culture and leadership* (developing values and culture, building leadership capability).

Strengthening the integration of structures and processes (breaking down the silos, building a networks culture and processes.

Other major development initiatives could be followed by the public managers in their effort for reforming public sector. Some of the most important changes which must be concluded in all public sectors are:

- **e-government**, which is mostly about *citizen-centred* delivery. To the extent it will affect "back-office" operation, it also contributes to *integrating processes*.
- **managing for outcomes**, which is all about *improving results.*
- planning on outcomes and capability as well as outputs, and thus also contributes to more *citizen-centred service delivery*;
- **the Senior Leadership initiative,** which is all about *strengthening the people, culture and leadership* in the public service, and is acknowledged as the crucial initiative in this area;
- **ethics, values and standards** is also all about strengthening public sector people and culture.

In table 1, we have a short presentation of the main directions and a short description of each of them.

Key changes in public sector

Table 1

Main changes	...is about...	Short description of each change
More focus on results	...what we are trying to achieve.	...about getting better results in complex areas.
More citizen and community-centred processes	...how we need to do it.	...about working with local government, voluntary and crown agencies, and citizens.
More integrated structures and processes	...what is needed to enable us to accomplish the above.	...about learning to work better across agencies and tiers of government.
Stronger people, culture and leadership	...what is needed to enable us to accomplish the above.	...giving team members an opportunity to work in new ways and develop new skills.

Conversely, some of the changes are already happening, or are imminent, and what remains is to spread the good practice they represent across the state sector. Managers in the public service have taken the changes on board, and there is more going on at agency level than we can keep track of at the centre.

Some of the more visible examples of change, grouped under the four drivers, are:

- More focus on results:
  - an integrated development package;
  - greater engagement with some Ministers on the definition and design of outcomes;
  - piloting a change in the way outputs are appropriated to facilitate management on an outcomes basis;

- proposals to remove some barriers to more flexible and effective funding.
- More citizen- and community-centred:
    - establishment and operation of three circuit-breaker teams;
    - the imminent launch of the e-government portal; and
    - development of call centres as "first stop shops" for a range of services, with more enabled front-line staff.
- Stronger integration of structures and processes:
    - initiatives to engage more with local government on regional coordination;
- Stronger people, culture and leadership:
    - people educated in public management;
    - efforts for modeling the cultural values.

In table 2, we can see how is looking the public sector in the next five years, as the experts think.

Perspectives related with the public sector

Table 2

| What will be different in 5 years time for		
... Ministers	... Citizens	... Staff
Through greater focus on results...		
Will see more innovative solutions dealing with long-standing problems.	Will find complex problems get sorted out better. Will feel well-served by public servants.	Will be better able to see and understand the results of their work - will understand the overall vision and purpose better.
Will be more confident that policy making, and policy changes, are based on sound analysis and evidence.		Will see their views being listened to and put into action. Will find work more satisfying.
Through more citizen- and community-centered processes...		
Will get clearer messages about community issues and community involvement in policy and delivery.	Will find that government in Wellington feels less distant, will feel more involved in problem-solving.	Will notice that their views get reflected in policy, will feel connected to Wellington.
Will hear fewer complaints about coordination and duplication.	Will notice that duplication is less.	Will see senior Wellington people at the frontline, will have more contact with people in other sectors.
Through greater integration of structures and processes...		
Will find that things happen more quickly and smoothly at the frontline.	Will notice that they are not having to handle so many government processes or organizations.	Will be working with other agencies more.
Will see less clutter, less paper, better information. Will have to resolve conflict amongst agencies less often.	Will find relating to the public service simpler and more straightforward.	May be working under different management or in a different organization.
Through strengthening people, culture and leadership		
Will hear public servants proud of their work and positive about their contribution.	Will begin to feel that the public service is in good heart and will have greater confidence in public servants.	Will receive more standardized training and education.

What will be different in 5 years time for		
... Ministers	... Citizens	... Staff
Through strengthening people, culture and leadership		
Will feel more confident that state sector staff working at the front-line understand and support Government's aspirations.		Will talk more proudly about their jobs, and the value of the State sector.

How do all these initiatives fit together?

Governance arrangements for the initiatives include a lot of cross-representation between workstreams. This ensures there is reasonable communication between each of the workstreams, and awareness of where each is going.

However, there is still work to be done on the interconnectedness of the initiatives, the risks and issues associated with their multiplicity, and exactly how they might change the public management system in total.

Chart 1 contains a clear vision about the main improvements of the Public Sector Performance.
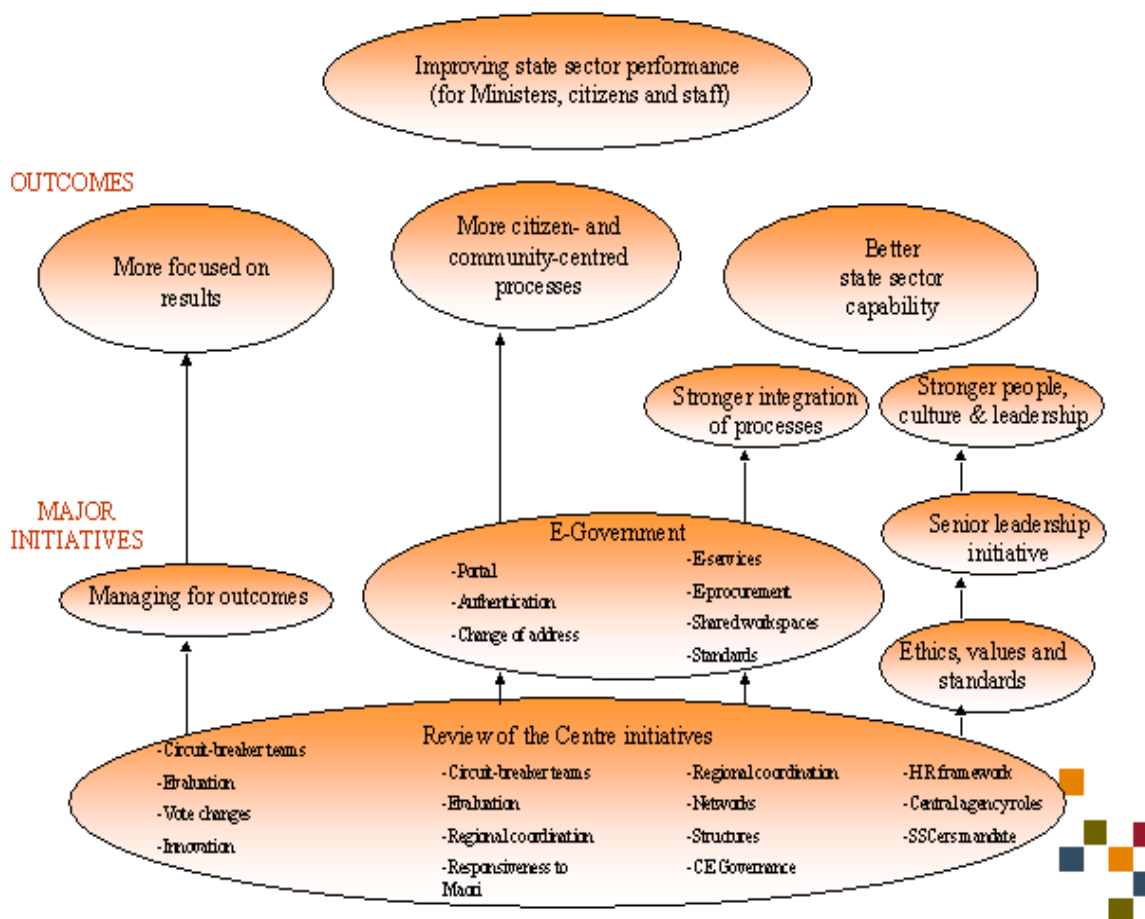
Key actions are explained below.
- Focusing more on results:
    o *Establishing circuit-breaker teams* - to resolve long running problems which seem incapable of resolution by normal departmental approaches.
    o *Improving evaluation* - an advisory team is working on factors influencing supply and demand of evaluation, and the circuit-breaking, regional coordination will include evaluation processes. The aim is to get better at finding out what works, for citizens, for Ministers, and for communities.
    o *Vote and accountability changes* - to provide a more flexible framework for pursuing results.
    o *Innovation* - to help build a public service environment more conducive to new ideas and solutions. It is proposed to identify good practice, assess the current state of innovation on the Public Service, and establish what the right conditions are for innovation.
- Getting more citizen and community centered:
    o Establishing circuit-breaker teams, improving evaluation, and
    o Improving responsiveness.
- Strengthening the integration of structures and processes:
    o Establishing circuit-breaker teams, Vote and accountability changes, regional coordination, and
    o Sectoral reviews - Ministers will soon be asked to support reviews focused on improving the performance of agencies, through the possible use of a variety of structure and alignment mechanisms, including networks, in a small number of sectors.
- Strengthening people, culture and leadership:
    o Innovation, and
    o Human Resources Framework- Work is being done (in conjunction with the PSA) to develop a framework for coordinating and sharing good practice and policies.
    o Central agency roles - The central agencies and a small group of Chief Executives are working on practical ways in which the central agencies can take more opportunities for effective leadership. They are also trying to identify principles which would help decide where central or devolved responsibility is likely to be more effective.

In the content of table 3 are presented the main correlations between the analyzed parameters.

The relations between the four drivers identified

Table 3

	Greater focus on results	**More citizen- and community centered**	**More integrated structures and processes**	**Stronger people, culture and leadership**
Integrated Service Delivery				
• Circuit-breaker teams	Yes	Yes	Yes	
• Regional coordination		Yes	Yes	
• Evaluation	Yes	Yes		
Departmental Accountability and Reporting	Yes		Yes	
HR Framework and Innovation				
• Human Resources Framework				Yes
• Innovation	Yes			Yes

3. Conclusion

There are several changes which must be implemented during the next years in the Romanian public administration in a very coherent and systematic way. The Romanian public administration must become an effective part of the European Public Administration System. That means a lot of efforts from public managers for increasing the public administration capacity to become more efficient and much more oriented to the citizens and business environment. We consider that it will le a long and complex process which must be developed and coordinated by the professional public managers.

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