

Civil Service Reform Implementation Guide



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1.1 Introduction

This guideline was produced to assist in the implementation of civil service reform. Execution of primary civil service legislation and subsequent regulations is one of the most difficult tasks encountered by a government regardless of the country's state of development. This document is a brief overview of the three phases of implementation along with their constituent parts.

1.2 Purpose

This tool can be referred to:

- √ Plan the implementation of a civil service change
- √ Plan for the resource requirements of a legislative or regulatory change in civil service management.
- √ Map out the implementation role of various organizations of government
- √ Establish a common understanding of the processes required to implement a civil service change
- √ Brainstorm strategies for sustainable change within the civil service

1.3 Audience

This tool can be used by:

- √ Government Executives
- √ Policy makers
- √ Human resources practitioners
- √ Central Agency experts
- √ Implementing agency experts

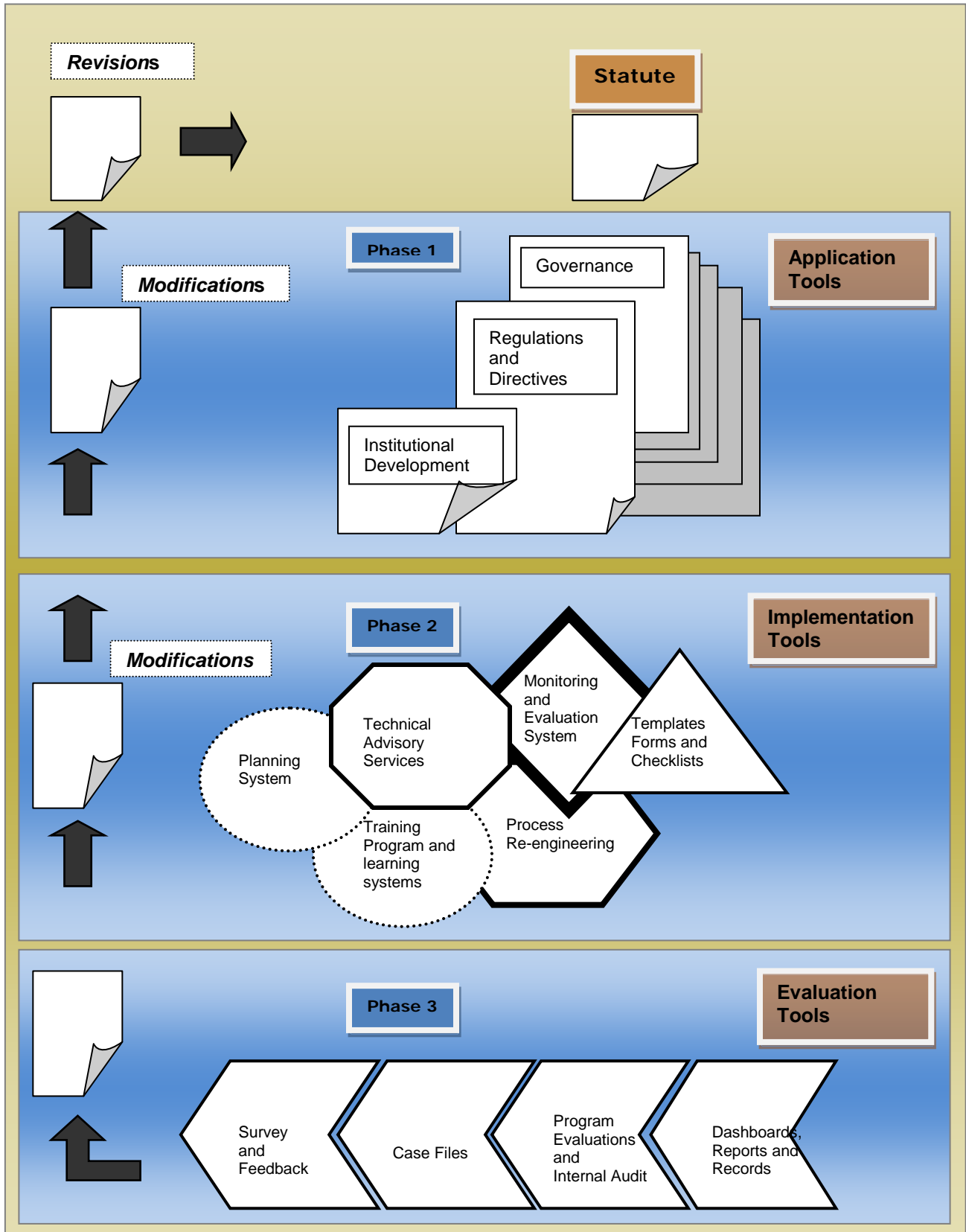


Figure 1: Civil Service Reform Implementation Diagram

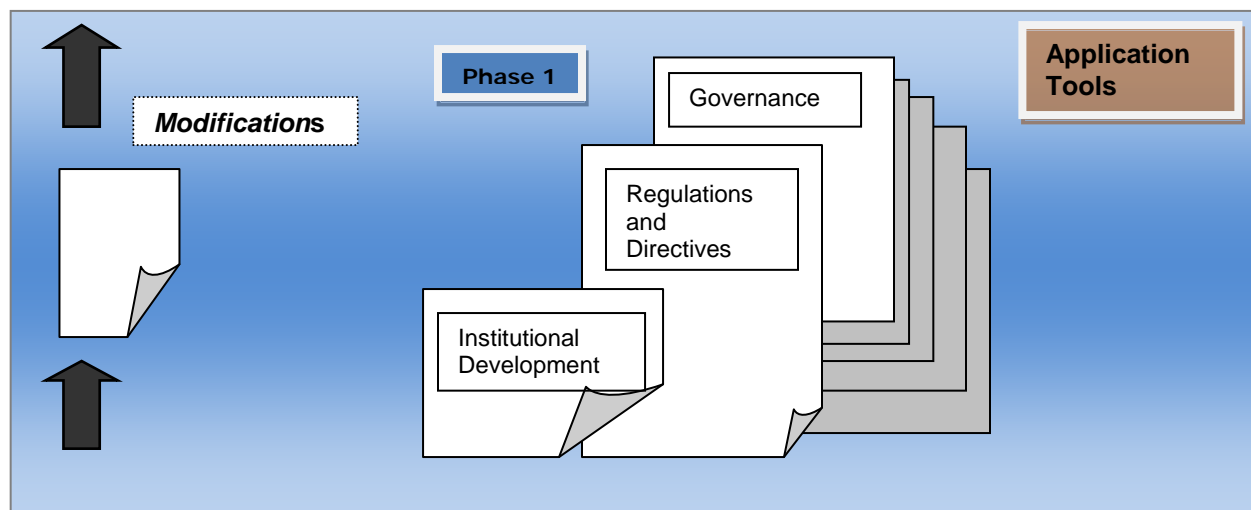


Figure 2: Phase 1- Application Tools

2. Phase 1: Application Tools

2.1 Introduction:

Application tools pertain to the leadership and regulatory environment required to interpret, clarify and expand on the primary legislation. These will help to guide the development of implementation plans as well as identify the infrastructure required to implement the exigencies set out in the legislation.

2.2 Governance:

Governance drives implementation and brings it to its intended destination. A governance structure is normally made up of representatives from one or several institutions of government. At times, it also includes stakeholders and internal technical experts who provide valuable information and ideas on how best to implement legislation, regulations and policies. The governance process provides leaders with the means for making important decisions and to render account on these decisions.

2.3 Regulations and Directives:

Regulations, decrees and directives, to name a few, are documents which interpret, clarify and expand on the primary legislation. They are more prescriptive than the primary legislation but yet flexible enough to facilitate implementation in government organizations with unique particularities because of mandate, location, or client group, to name a few. It is absolutely critical that the intent and principles set out in the primary legislation be carefully weaved in these documents to ensure consistent and successful implementation.

2.4 Institutional Development:

In this context, institutional development refers to the identification and establishment of organizations within and outside the public sector required to implement, monitor and sustain the reform as stipulated in the primary legislation. These can take the form of a Commission, Secretariat, Ministry, Agency, and Board, Tribunals or administrative units within any of these structures. These organizations can also emerge from partnership agreements, outsourcing arrangements, oversight and accountability requirements, etc. outside of the public sector. The institutional requirements required to implement a law is often identified or at least, broadly inferred within the primary legislation.

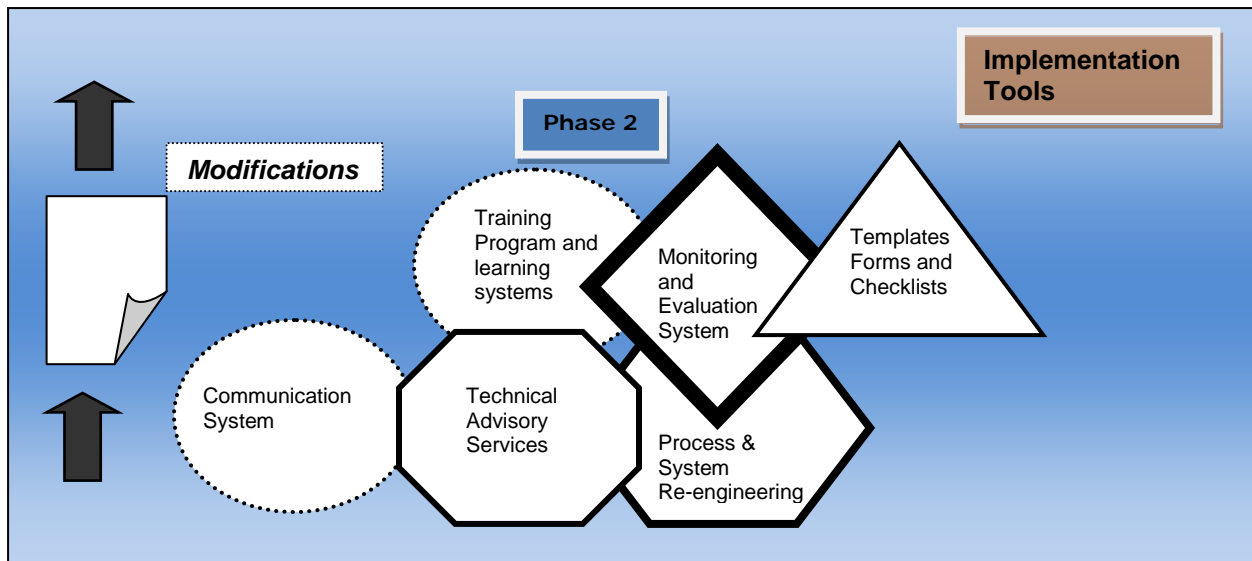


Figure 3: Phase 2- Implementation Tools

3. Phase 2: Implementation Tools

Implementation tools refer to operational and administrative systems, processes and services required to implement civil service reform within targeted organizations of government. Implementation tools come in all shapes and sizes pending the culture and operational readiness level of the civil service. Nevertheless, effort was made here to list some of the more critical implementation tools.

3.1 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System

The purpose of a planning, monitoring and evaluation system is to support functions and activities within government organizations to ensure civil service reform is mission-driven, outcome-focused, effective, and efficient. The systems vary greatly depending on the government’s financial management cycle, the availability of information technology systems, the organizational and leadership culture and the reform’s complexity. Reform implementation should be led by planning activities which provide a clear statement of goals and objectives, expected activities, and identified performance measures that track the reform’s intended outcomes for the government.

3.2 Process and System Re-engineering

Of equal importance is the ability to institute processes and systems that will make and sustain the change brought on by a reform. Processes refer to a systematic series of actions which serve to institute and sustain the desired changes as stipulated by the reform. For example, the recruitment process consists of a series of activities which together serve to reinforce a legislated merit principle, equal opportunity or individual rights. Systems on the other hand refer to an ordered and comprehensive collection of processes which together build operational and administrative consistency, effectiveness and efficiency. A human resources information system and an institutional performance management system are good examples.

3.3 Technical Advisory Services

Every reform brings uncertainty, hesitation, resistance and experimentation. To address this effectively, it is important to establish a “center of expertise”, a designated pool of technical experts to provide guidance, advice,

assistance, build consistency across organizations and keep track of solutions and best practices. Hence, it is imperative that plans be made early in the implementation planning to build and nurture this expertise so that organizations can be supported by individuals who knowledgeable of reform requirements.

3.4 Templates, Forms and Checklists

To facilitate implementation, baseline tools are frequently produced to accompany a process or a system. These tools standardize activities to ease recording, reporting, consistent application of rules but are prized for their ability to produce reliable outcome or results for users and administrators. Such tools include templates, forms, checklists, questionnaires, applications, assessments, case studies, weblinks and more.

3.5 Training Programs and Learning Systems

In every reform there is a need to develop training programs to enable and mobilize people to effect change. Such training programs are often directed to particular groups: leaders and managers, technical experts and stakeholders. The identification of competencies required to launch and sustain the change are necessary to ensure all key contributors to the change are effectively equipped to implement the change. Learning systems infer a longer term and more varied form of training that builds sustainability as well as continuous improvement. Such systems include think tanks, blended learning, succession planning, knowledge management which are essentially built as an integrated part of an organization and not simply as a one off training program.

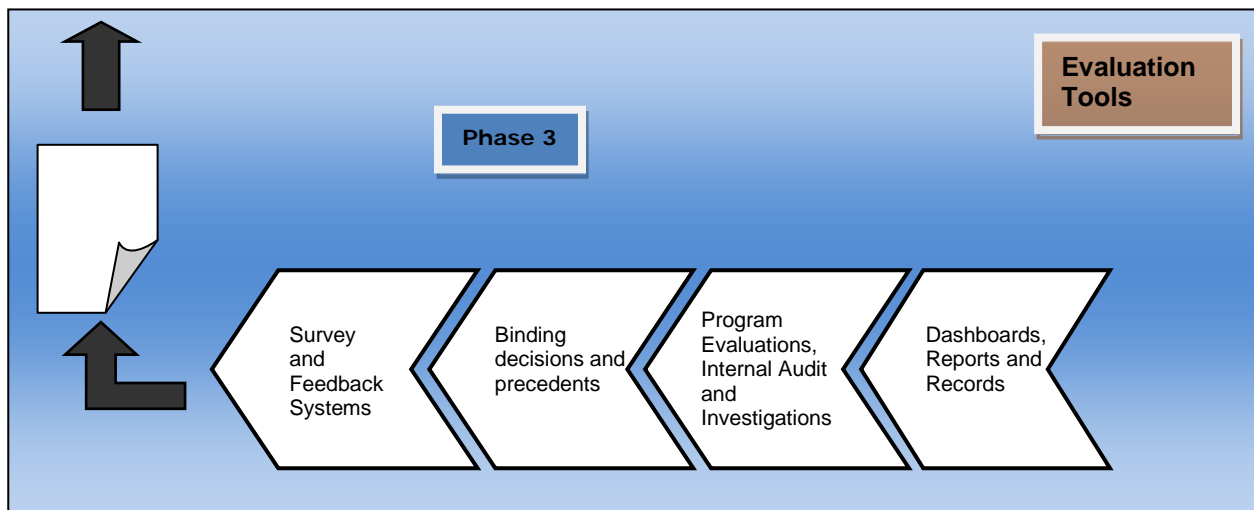


Figure 4: Phase 3 – Evaluation Tools

4. Phase 3: Evaluation Tools

Evaluation tools are a rather simplistic way of referring to the wide array of techniques and approaches available to organizations to check and report on their progress and their effectiveness. It also provides opportunities to identify and solve problems, record and report on matters that did or did not work, modify and improve implementation processes and systems, to reward accomplishments, benchmark performance standards and to learn from mistakes. Evaluation tools are considered to be an integral part of a civil service reform as they provide a collection of information that serves to support ongoing policy decisions affecting civil service management.

4.1 Survey and Feedback Systems:

Survey and feedback systems are evaluation tools which are integrated as part of an implementation process (e.g. service level checks, training course evaluations) or are brought in at regular interval to evaluate implementation. (e.g. employee surveys, employee performance evaluations). The design of these evaluation tools are developed before implementation and are often a critical part of monitoring the performance of organizations during and after implementation.

4.2 Program Evaluations and Internal Audit

Civil service reforms need to be formally evaluated to ascertain the degree to which the intended outcomes are realized and whether the desired changes are consistent with legislation and policies. Audits and program evaluations are targeted approaches which measure the effectiveness, efficiency and value of civil service reform programs or measure a host of civil service reform outcomes using pre-determined evaluation criteria (e.g. safety, costs, employee retention, legislative compliance, etc.)

4.3 Binding Decisions and Precedents

Binding decisions resulting from arbitration, adjudication and litigation offer a valuable source of information and guidance for the evaluation and revision of civil service reforms. Precedents which emerge and establish themselves as accepted practices over time also provide guidance and are often used in determining the effectiveness of a reform.

4.4 Dashboards, Reports and Records

In order to effectively use the data selected and collected to measure performance it must be analyzed, summarized and communicated to those authorized to implement the reform. Dashboards, reports and records organize data so as to facilitate the assessment of reform work.

5. Conclusion

This guideline provides a very cursory overview of the many tools available to implement a civil service reform. These tools are linked together by great leadership who communicate the need to meet expected results with consistency and urgency. Planning early and preparing organizations for the complexity of change inherent in civil service reforms are key to a successful outcome. ▼



Ms. Bégin is an accomplished human resources consultant and strategist with over 25 years of public sector experience in human resources management, workforce management, strategic planning, evaluation and organizational development. In private practice, she has worked in Canada, Asia, Africa and the Middle-East, facilitating practical action plans for the modernization and strengthening of civil service management.

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