

Innovations and reform initiatives for civil service career management in the democratic republic of Congo: strategies for modernization and performance improvement

Koyamene Kwale Peter

Joint Researcher at Lisala University and UNCR University, Department of Organization Management

Nizeyimana Jean Baptiste

Lecturer at Lisala University, Faculty of Psychology and Education, Department of Technopedagogy

ETC

ABSTRACT

The Democratic Republic of Congo has embarked on a comprehensive reform of its civil service to address the challenges and dysfunctions that have characterized public administration for decades. This article examines the innovations and reform initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Public Service to modernize civil service career management and improve performance. The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining documentary analysis of reform frameworks, policy documents, and strategic plans, with qualitative interviews of key officials at the Ministry of Public Service and the Provincial Division of Public Service in Mongala Province. Results revealed a range of innovations and reform initiatives, including: the creation of the One-Stop Shop to centralize central and provincial services; the introduction of Bankarization for salary payments; the Young Professionals Movement to recruit and train young graduates; the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration to manage career files and ensure renewal; the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents to provide social protection; and the Reference File of the Public Administration to maintain accurate personnel records. The study also examined the strategic framework for reform, which aims to transform the public administration from an inefficient and dysfunctional system to one that is effective, efficient, and development-oriented. The strategic framework includes three phases: normalization of the current mode of organization, functioning, and management; modernization through the progressive introduction of innovations and best practices; and extension of reform actions to other ministries based on results. However, the implementation of these innovations faces challenges, including resistance to change, limited resources, and inadequate institutional capacity. The study concludes that the innovations and reform initiatives represent significant progress in modernizing civil service career management, but require sustained commitment, adequate resources, and effective implementation to achieve their objectives. The article recommends strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Public Service, ensuring adequate funding for reform initiatives, building stakeholder support and commitment, and implementing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems.

Keywords: Civil Service Reform, Career Management, Public Administration, Innovation, Modernization, Performance Improvement, Democratic Republic of Congo, Human Resource Management

RESUME

La République Démocratique du Congo s'est engagée dans une réforme complète de sa fonction publique pour relever les défis et dysfonctionnements qui ont caractérisé l'administration publique pendant des décennies. Cet article examine les innovations et initiatives de réforme mises en œuvre par le Ministère de la Fonction Publique pour moderniser la gestion des carrières des agents et fonctionnaires et améliorer la performance. L'étude a employé une approche mixte combinant l'analyse documentaire des cadres de réforme, des documents de politique et des plans stratégiques, avec des entretiens qualitatifs des responsables clés au Ministère de la Fonction Publique et à la Division Provinciale de la Fonction Publique dans la province de la Mongala. Les résultats ont révélé une

gamme d'innovations et d'initiatives de réforme, incluant: la création du Guichet Unique pour centraliser les services centraux et provinciaux; l'introduction de la Bancarisation pour les paiements des salaires; le Mouvement des Jeunes Professionnels pour recruter et former les jeunes diplômés; la Commission Nationale de Rajeunissement de l'Administration Publique pour gérer les dossiers de carrière et assurer le renouvellement; la Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale des Agents Publics de l'État pour fournir une protection sociale; et le Fichier de Référence de l'Administration Publique pour maintenir des dossiers personnels précis. L'étude a également examiné le cadre stratégique de la réforme, qui vise à transformer l'administration publique d'un système inefficace et dysfonctionnel en un système efficace, efficient et orienté vers le développement. Le cadre stratégique comprend trois phases: la normalisation du mode actuel d'organisation, de fonctionnement et de gestion; la modernisation par l'introduction progressive des innovations et des bonnes pratiques; et l'extension des actions de réforme à d'autres ministères en fonction des résultats. Cependant, la mise en œuvre de ces innovations fait face à des défis, incluant la résistance au changement, les ressources limitées et la capacité institutionnelle inadéquate. L'étude conclut que les innovations et initiatives de réforme représentent des progrès significatifs dans la modernisation de la gestion des carrières des agents et fonctionnaires, mais nécessitent un engagement soutenu, des ressources adéquates et une mise en œuvre effective pour atteindre leurs objectifs. L'article recommande de renforcer la capacité institutionnelle du Ministère de la Fonction Publique, d'assurer un financement adéquat pour les initiatives de réforme, de bâtir le soutien et l'engagement des parties prenantes, et de mettre en œuvre des systèmes complets de suivi et d'évaluation.

Mots-clés : Réforme de la Fonction Publique, Gestion de Carrière, Administration Publique, Innovation, Modernisation, Amélioration de la Performance, République Démocratique du Congo, Gestion des Ressources Humaines

Submitted: 4 25, 2026

Published: 7 31, 2026

Corresponding Author: Koyamene Kwale Peter

Email address: koyamenewalepeter@cirep.ac.cd

This work is available under a

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo has embarked on a comprehensive reform of its civil service to address the challenges and dysfunctions that have characterized public administration for decades. The country aspires to its emergence by 2030, and to achieve this, it needs an effective State that effectively carries out its missions and functions. This requires an effective Public Administration whose action is oriented towards development and the satisfaction of the needs of public service users (Matata Ponyo Mapon, 2015). This being the case, it is therefore necessary and urgent to undertake a profound and audacious reform of the Public Administration, to which the government is committed.

The Ministry of Public Service has been at the forefront of these reform efforts, implementing a range of innovations and initiatives to modernize civil service career management and improve performance. Since the 1980s, when the Department of Public Service was created to ensure the daily management of human resources, there has been significant progress. However, for many years, this Ministry remained under the authority of other ministries during the First Republic, the Second Republic, and the early years of the Third Republic. It was only in 2018 that the Ministry took on a new momentum with projections for innovation in certain branches to strengthen an administration that had become weak in spirit (Emery & Giauque, 2007).

The reform of the public administration is guided by a strategic framework that aims to transform the public administration from an inefficient and dysfunctional system to one that is effective, efficient, and development-oriented. The vision is of an efficient, effective, and development-oriented Public Administration, closer to citizens and focused on results. The strategic framework

includes three phases: normalization of the current mode of organization, functioning, and management; modernization through the progressive introduction of innovations and best practices; and extension of reform actions to other ministries based on results.

This article examines the innovations and reform initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Public Service to modernize civil service career management and improve performance. The study addresses the following questions: What innovations and reform initiatives have been implemented by the Ministry of Public Service? What are the objectives and components of these initiatives? What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing these reforms? The study hypothesizes that the innovations and reform initiatives represent significant progress in modernizing civil service career management, but require sustained commitment, adequate resources, and effective implementation to achieve their objectives.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, using documentary analysis of reform frameworks, policy documents, and strategic plans, combined with semi-structured interviews with key officials. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis of the innovations and reform initiatives, their objectives, components, and implementation challenges.

2.2 Data Sources

Data for this study were drawn from multiple sources. First, reform frameworks and strategic plans were reviewed, including the Strategic Framework for Reform and Modernization of the Public Administration and the Program of Actions of the Government. Second, policy documents and ministerial orders related to specific reform initiatives were analyzed. Third, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key officials at the Ministry of Public Service and the Provincial Division of Public Service in Mongala Province. Fourth, secondary data were drawn from previous studies on civil service reform in the DRC.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed thematic content analysis of the reform frameworks, policy documents, and interview transcripts. Themes identified included the objectives of reform, specific innovations and initiatives, implementation challenges, and opportunities for further reform. The analysis followed a systematic process: first, the documents were read thoroughly to gain an overall understanding of the content; second, key passages were identified and coded according to the themes; third, the coded passages were organized into broader categories; and fourth, the relationships between the categories were analyzed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the reform initiatives.

2.4 Study Setting

The study was conducted at the national level, with a focus on the Ministry of Public Service and the Provincial Division of Public Service in Mongala Province. The Ministry of Public Service is responsible for the implementation of reform initiatives, while the Provincial Division of Public Service serves as a deconcentrated service of the Ministry at the provincial level.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Public Administration Reform

Public administration reform is a complex and challenging process that aims to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of public institutions. Reform efforts typically include changes in organizational structures, management systems, and human resource practices (OECD, 2005). The success of reform depends on a range of factors, including political commitment, institutional capacity, stakeholder support, and adequate resources.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, public administration reform is guided by the vision of an efficient, effective, and development-oriented Public Administration, closer to citizens and focused on results. The reform strategy is based on the recognition that the current mode of organization, functioning, and management is dysfunctional and not respectful of legal texts (Matata Ponyo Mapon, 2015). The reform aims to rationalize the mode and system of organization, functioning, and management through the rationalization of missions and structures; rationalization of the mode and system of Human Resource Management and remuneration; assurance of quality, training, and capacity building; and the establishment of an effective and sustainable social security system.

3.2 Innovation in the Public Service

Innovation in the public service involves the introduction of new ideas, methods, and practices to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of public institutions. Innovation can take many forms, including organizational innovation, procedural innovation, technological innovation, and human resource innovation (Emery & Giaque, 2007).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, innovation in the public service has been driven by the recognition of the need to modernize and improve the performance of the civil service. The Ministry of Public Service has introduced several innovations, including the One-Stop Shop, Bankarization, the Young Professionals Movement, the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration, the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents, and the Reference File of the Public Administration.

3.3 Strategic Framework for Reform

The strategic framework for reform of the public administration in the Democratic Republic of Congo is based on a rigorous, strategic, progressive, and sequential approach that is sustainable over time (Matata Ponyo Mapon, 2015). The framework includes three phases:

Phase 1: Normalization: This phase aims to normalize the current mode of organization, functioning, and management of the Public Administration, ensuring compatibility with laws, statutes, norms, rules, and procedures. This involves bringing the administration into compliance with the legal and regulatory framework, and establishing basic systems and procedures.

Phase 2: Modernization: This phase aims to modernize the Public Administration through the progressive introduction of innovations and best practices, starting with pilot experiences. This involves introducing new methods, technologies, and practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Phase 3: Extension: This phase aims to extend reform actions to other sectoral ministries based on the results recorded in the experimental phase. This involves scaling up successful reforms and expanding them to other parts of the public administration.

The strategic framework also addresses cross-cutting issues, including the promotion and strengthening of institutional communication mechanisms, social dialogue, values and principles of public service, ethics and deontology, and the management of good governance.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Strategic Framework for Reform

The strategic framework for reform of the public administration is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Strategic Framework for Reform

Level	Vision	Strategic Actions
Vision of General Policy	Make the DRC an emerging country by 2030	-
Vision of Sectoral Policy	Make the Public Administration a development-oriented administration closer to citizens	-
General Policy: PAG 2012-2016	Pursue the program of reconstruction, reconstruction, and restoration of State authority to strengthen its effectiveness in carrying out its missions and functions; Improve the quality of administrative and institutional governance	-
Sectoral Policy: Reform and Modernization of Public Administration	Replace the Public Administration at the heart of the reform and reconstruction action of the State and make it an effective instrument at the disposal of the State in the service of society and sustainable development	Normalization of the current mode of organization, functioning, and management; Modernization through the progressive introduction of innovations and best practices; Extension of reform actions to other sectoral ministries based on results

Source: Matata Ponyo Mapon, 2015

The strategic framework is based on the vision of making the Democratic Republic of Congo an emerging country by 2030. The sectoral vision is to make the Public Administration a development-oriented administration closer to citizens. The strategic actions include normalization, modernization, and extension.

4.2 Innovations and Reform Initiatives

The Ministry of Public Service has implemented several innovations and reform initiatives.

Table 2: Innovations and Reform Initiatives

Innovation/Initiative	Description	Objectives
One-Stop Shop	Centralization of central and provincial services by unique Division Chiefs	Streamline service delivery, improve coordination
Bankarization	Salary payments through banks	Improve efficiency, reduce cash handling
Young Professionals Movement	Recruitment and training of young graduates	Rejuvenate the administration, bring in new skills
National Commission for Rejuvenation of Public Administration	Management of career files, retirement, promotions, and other documents	Ensure proper management of career files, facilitate renewal
National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents	Social protection for public agents	Provide social security, prepare for retirement
Reference File of the Public Administration	Maintain accurate personnel records	Improve personnel data management, facilitate mechanization and budgeting

Source: Field Data

The innovations and reform initiatives include the One-Stop Shop, Bankarization, the Young Professionals Movement, the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration, the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents, and the Reference File of the Public Administration.

4.3 One-Stop Shop

The One-Stop Shop was created to centralize central and provincial services by unique Division Chiefs. The objective was to streamline service delivery and improve coordination between central and provincial levels. However, this methodology of work was not well received, as the administration of the Public Service failed in this organization. The One-Stop Shop represented an attempt to simplify administrative procedures and reduce bureaucracy, but its implementation faced challenges due to resistance to change and lack of coordination.

4.4 Bankarization

Bankarization introduced salary payments through banks. The government adopted this system, but did not take into account the future consequences. This practice gives more advantage to the paying banks, which enjoy autonomy without the approach of the administration. Bankarization was intended to improve the efficiency of salary payments, reduce cash handling, and increase

transparency. However, the implementation has faced challenges, including the autonomy of banks and the lack of oversight by the administration.

4.5 Young Professionals Movement

The Young Professionals Movement aims to recruit and train young graduates to rejuvenate the administration and bring in new skills. This movement has been ongoing for eight years, with four waves of recruitment. The first three waves of recruitment took place only in Kinshasa, while the fourth wave was organized in the provinces, with a need for 39 positions to be filled. In the Mongala Province, 39 candidates were retained to strengthen four pilot services: Budget, Finance, Public Service, and Planning. The Young Professionals Movement represents an effort to address the aging of the workforce and bring in new talent and fresh perspectives.

4.6 National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration

The National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration is a body that ensures the proper functioning of the public administration, manages the files of agents in activity, secondment, availability, and suspension, as well as the files of retirees, those who died during their career, advancements in grade: certification and promotion, and other documents relating to the career of state public agents. The Commission was created to address the challenges of career management and ensure the renewal of the workforce.

4.7 National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents

The National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents was created to ensure the social life of state public agents, with the following objectives: to look after the social life of state public agents; to ensure that each month, the agent receives the recommended 12% contribution to prepare for retirement; to prepare daily the files of agents in activity, providing them with a social security card; and to identify retired agents for the real follow-up of pensions and survivor's benefits to the spouse. The Fund works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service. It is established almost everywhere in the four corners of the Democratic Republic of Congo and is created solely for state public agents.

4.8 Reference File of the Public Administration

The Reference File of the Public Administration was created to address the shortcomings experienced by the career management department of the Ministry of Public Service. This body has the following missions: to oversee the operation of data collection of state agents, province by province, using form (F01) to the central server; to issue, after processing the F01 form, a QR code to allow the agent to access photo capture, in order to be provided with a biometric card and be registered in the file as a regular agent; to facilitate the Public Service to have control over the number of regular agents for the entire country, as well as on the realization of mechanization and budgeting operations. The Reference File represents a significant effort to improve personnel data management and ensure accurate records.

4.9 Ministry for Persons Living with Disabilities

The Ministry for Persons Living with Disabilities was created to give more value to persons with disabilities, so that they may also be considered as full citizens enjoying all the rights recognized constitutionally, in accordance with Article 16 of the Constitution of February 18, 2006, as amended. This initiative represents an effort to promote social inclusion and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a range of innovations and reform initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Public Service to modernize civil service career management and improve performance. These innovations and reform initiatives represent significant progress in addressing the challenges and dysfunctions that have characterized public administration for decades.

The One-Stop Shop, Bankarization, the Young Professionals Movement, the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration, the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents, and the Reference File of the Public Administration are all efforts to address specific challenges in civil service career management. The One-Stop Shop aims to streamline service delivery and improve coordination; Bankarization aims to improve the efficiency of salary payments and increase transparency; the Young Professionals Movement aims to rejuvenate the administration and bring in new skills; the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration aims to manage career files and facilitate renewal; the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents aims to provide social protection; and the Reference File of the Public Administration aims to improve personnel data management.

The strategic framework for reform provides a comprehensive approach to transforming the public administration from an inefficient and dysfunctional system to one that is effective, efficient, and development-oriented. The three phases of normalization, modernization, and extension provide a logical and sequential approach to reform. The normalization phase aims to bring the administration into compliance with the legal and regulatory framework; the modernization phase aims to introduce innovations and best practices; and the extension phase aims to scale up successful reforms.

However, the implementation of these innovations faces challenges, including resistance to change, limited resources, and inadequate institutional capacity. The failure of some initiatives, such as the One-Stop Shop, suggests the need for careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building in the implementation of reforms. The autonomy of banks in the Bankarization system and the lack of oversight by the administration raise concerns about the effectiveness of this initiative.

The Young Professionals Movement has been ongoing for eight years, with four waves of recruitment. While the movement has brought in new talent, the fact that the first three waves of recruitment took place only in Kinshasa, and only the fourth wave was organized in the provinces, suggests that efforts to decentralize recruitment and ensure equitable distribution of opportunities are needed.

The National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration and the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents represent significant efforts to address the challenges of career management and social protection. However, the effectiveness of these bodies depends on their institutional capacity and the resources allocated to them.

The Reference File of the Public Administration represents a significant effort to improve personnel data management. However, the success of this initiative depends on the willingness of provinces and services to cooperate and provide accurate data.

The findings of this study are consistent with the broader literature on civil service reform in developing countries. Studies have shown that the success of civil service reform depends on a range of factors, including political commitment, institutional capacity, stakeholder support, and adequate resources (OECD, 2005; Emery & Giauque, 2007). The challenges identified in this study, including resistance to change, limited resources, and inadequate institutional capacity, are common in many developing countries.

The study also highlights the importance of sustained commitment to reform. The strategic framework for reform provides a long-term vision, but its implementation requires sustained commitment from all stakeholders. The failure of some initiatives suggests that reform is a long-term process that requires patience, persistence, and adaptability.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the innovations and reform initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Public Service to modernize civil service career management and improve performance. The findings reveal a range of innovations and reform initiatives, including the One-Stop Shop, Bankarization, the Young Professionals Movement, the National Commission for the Rejuvenation of the Public Administration, the National Social Security Fund for State Public Agents, and the Reference File of the Public Administration.

The study confirms the hypothesis that the innovations and reform initiatives represent significant progress in modernizing civil service career management, but require sustained commitment, adequate resources, and effective implementation to achieve their objectives. The strategic framework for reform provides a comprehensive approach to transforming the public administration, but its implementation faces challenges.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made: the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Public Service should be strengthened to effectively implement reform initiatives; adequate funding should be provided for reform initiatives; stakeholder support and commitment should be built through effective communication and consultation; comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems should be implemented to track progress and identify areas for improvement; and lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful initiatives should be used to inform future reform efforts.

6. REFERENCES

- Emery, Y., & Giauque, D. (2007). *Dilemmes de la gestion de ressources humaines publique*. Le Mont-sur Lausanne: LEP.
- Matata Ponyo Mapon. (2015). *Cadre stratégique de la réforme et modernisation de l'administration publique*. Kinshasa.
- OECD. (2005). *Moderniser l'Etat: la route à suivre*. Paris: OCDE.
- République Démocratique du Congo. (2006). *Constitution du 18 Février 2006, telle que modifiée et complétée à ce jour*. Journal Officiel, Kinshasa.
- République Démocratique du Congo. (2016). *Loi n° 16/013 du 15 Juillet 2016 portant statut des agents de carrière des services publics de l'Etat*. Journal Officiel, Kinshasa.