



KPPC Research Agenda for the Public Administration Pillar

2019





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The Kuwait Public Policy Center

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I. Proposed Research Agenda

The proposed research agenda includes 12 topics organized under 6 themes selected based on KNDP strategic priorities and future policy orientation:

- 1. Strengthen and Restructure the Organization and Functioning of the Machinery of Government**
 - 1.1 Trace the expansionary size of government and rationalize the right-sizing of Kuwait public administration
 - 1.2 Assess the centralization-decentralization models of public governance and the machinery of public administration and identify the choices and implications for Kuwait
- 2. Build a world-class civil service system**
 - 2.1 Evaluate the existing government-wide Human Resources Management (HRM) policies in Kuwait and identify needed amendment to the civil-service law 1979
 - 2.2 Reform the public sector pay policies in Kuwait: an evaluation of the financial, social and economic implications
 - 2.3 Assess the existing human capital management policies in the public sector: the transition towards a comprehensive competency and talent policy framework
 - 2.4 Foster tomorrow's future leaders and top-talent in Kuwait: the need for a comprehensive policy framework for Kuwait
- 3. Open Government for Accountability and Transparency**
 - 3.1 Impact study of the global trends and policy drivers for open government to enhance transparency and public engagement in Kuwait
 - 3.2 Closing the gap on employees performance management policies in Kuwait: the need for a whole-of-government framework
- 4. Transition Towards Integrated Digital Smart Government**
 - 4.1. Evaluate the impact of digital technologies for Kuwait Government and develop the transformation policy roadmap
 - 4.2 Become a data-driven government: Policy implications for Kuwait
- 5. Foster Citizen-Centric Public Service Delivery**
 - 5.1 Transition towards a citizen- centric service delivery strategy that fosters innovation, efficiency and customer satisfaction
- 6. Rationalize the Public Financial Planning and Management**
 - 6.1 Achieve financial sustainability and efficiency through rationalization of public expenditure and financial management policies

I. Strengthen and Restructure the Organization and Functioning of the Machinery of Government

I.1 Trace the expansionary size of government and rationalize the right-sizing of Kuwait public administration

Context and Policy Gaps

i) Lack of policy and clear guidelines for government arrangements and institutional setup of government entities; ii) current proposals are not accompanied by appropriate feasibility studies or impact assessment at all levels; iii) out of control expansion of the size of government entities; iv) some government sectors suffer from inefficiencies due to overlap or duplications of functions.

Research Objective

The ability to restructure and rearrange government entities is a powerful and blunt instrument to meet existing and emerging policy and developmental challenges. As such, the objectives of this research are i) to investigate and evaluate how the Government of Kuwait has engaged in rearrangements and reconfigurations of government entities in the last 10 years and examine outcomes achieved in terms of what has worked well and what has not; ii) identify existing inefficiencies and overlap or duplications by sector. The research findings will constitute the base for a new policy framework and guidance on how government restructuring can be achieved for maximum efficiency using more considered and planned approach while minimizing costs and generate a restructuring roadmap to address existing inefficiencies

Key Research Questions

- How the size and functions of Kuwait government has evolved over the last 10 years? What can we learn from previous restructuring cases that were completed in the last 10 years in terms of successes, weaknesses, status and outcomes?
- What are the existing regulations and policies governing the process of restructuring and reorganization of government functions? What are the gaps affecting these policies?
- What are the existing methods of reforms and what are the key limitations and issues for the creation, transfer of functions, dissolution and cessation, mergers and demergers, etc.?
- What are the sectors that suffer from overlap, duplications or missing functions
- How can the government rationalize its size based on international standards of efficiency and sustainability?

Expected Outputs

1) Develop a policy framework that sets forth the requirements and principles to support rationalization of government restructuring initiatives and provide policy guidance on how to consolidate government functions and methods of reforms based on international standards; 2) restructuring roadmap to address inefficiencies, overlap and duplication of functions by sector.

1.2 Assess the centralization-decentralization models of public governance and the machinery of public administration and identify the choices and implications for Kuwait

Context and Policy Gaps

i) Urgent need to restructure the overall machinery of the public administration; ii) existing structure not fully efficient and inadequate to achieve Kuwait 2035; iii) fragmentation of the existing governance model and lack of whole-of-government approaches;

Research Objective

Review and assess the existing state and challenges of the machinery of government and analyze available options based on international trends and best practice in order to identify an optimal model for Kuwait government in terms of the right level of centralization-decentralization needed. This research will present options of the governance and operating models, their advantages and disadvantages while addressing the following dimensions:

- Develop an optimal governance and operating model with options including an evaluation of the pros and cons and expected impact on the short and long term;
- Develop a detailed baseline mapping of government entities by sector to identify key mandates and functions affected by levels of overlap, duplications and missing functions;

Key Research Questions

- What are the latest global trends and international best practice in public governance models? What are the most relevant lessons for Kuwait?
- What are the existing functions of Kuwait center of government? What are the key weaknesses and opportunities for improvement?
- What are the available options for an optimal operating model?
- What is the optimal level of centralization for the restructuring of the machinery of government?
- What are the expected impact of restructuring of the various options?

Expected Outputs

Policy implications associated with the level of centralization-decentralization of the center of government and recommendations for the optimal model for Kuwait.

2. Build a world-class civil service system

2.1 Evaluate the existing government-wide Human Resources Management (HRM) policies in Kuwait and identify needed amendment to the civil-service law 1979

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Outdatedness of the Civil Service Law 1979; ii) Fragmentation of human resources policies across all government entities; iii) Inconsistencies in applying civil service law 1979; iv) uncontrolled job inflation of public sector employees; v) out-of-control wage bill.

Research Objective

The main objective of the research is to conduct a government-wide Human Resources Management baseline and assessment of existing policies versus the actual practice and application by various government entities. More specifically the research will map all HRM policies and application of the civil service law of 1975 and its bylaws across the various ministries and entities (target about 83 entities) in order to identify and evaluate weaknesses, strengths, inconsistencies and areas of improvement.

Key Research Questions

- How is the civil service law of 1975 and its related HR policies applied across government?
- Which entities are applying the civil service law of 1975 and which entities have their own HR policies and how this misalignment is affecting the wage bill?
- What are the key inefficiencies and ineffectiveness affecting the Human Resources Management functions and lifecycle (from recruitment, development, promotion, mobility and separation)?
- To what extent are government entities succeeding in developing their HR strategic plans (3 -5 years) beyond the yearly recruitment plans?
- What are the key inefficiencies in the organizational development and structures?

Expected Outputs

Identify necessary amendments to the Civil Service Law of 1979 and its bylaws and propose new HR policies and identify which HRM policies that need to be unified across all government entities and those policies that can remain decentralized.

2.2 Reform the public sector pay policies in Kuwait: an evaluation of the financial, social and economic implications

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Outdatedness of the Civil Service Law 1979; ii) Inconsistencies in applying pay and benefits policies across government entities as per Civil Service Law ; iii) the increasing wage bill cost; iv) public sector pay policies distorting the labour market;

Research Objective

Conduct a comprehensive review of compensation and benefits policies across Kuwait government entities:

- Collecting and evaluating the current state of compensation and benefits policies across 80+ entities;
- Evaluating the senior positions compensation practices to enable pay and benefit policy comparison;
- Assessing pay policies against actual practices and trends in the private sector;
- Reporting on global and regional trends for public sector pay;
- Benchmark cash and non cash benefits;
- Developing key policy recommendations for an optimal, unified compensation framework

Key Research Questions

- How are government entities currently administering the salary and pay policies (in practice versus policy)?
- What are the inefficiencies of the existing salary and grading system?
- How salary reviews, increases for promotions, forecasts, bonus are processed (in practice versus policy)? And the level of linking pay to performance?
- Review civil service allowances and benefits versus other human resources policies across government entities that do not apply civil service law
- How are jobs getting evaluated and pay levels defined?
- Specially for fresh graduates / entry level positions being ?And how these policies are hindering nationalization in the private sector? What are the necessary policy changes?

Expected Outputs

Develop policy options to amend existing civil service pay and grade policies in a way to better control the wage bill and achieve better alignment with the private sector, and sustainable financial and socio-economic development.

2.3 Assess the existing human capital management policies in the public sector: the transition towards a comprehensive competency and talent policy framework

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Lack of skills and competencies framework for public sector employees; ii) government entities lack the capability and control in identifying skills gap and competencies; iii) Inefficiencies in providing training and development conducted currently in ad hoc way; iv) high costs and fragmentation of public sector training and development.

Research Objective

Human capital development is not only important for the private sector and economic growth but is critical for the public sector to have the right set of skills and competencies to achieve Kuwait Vision 2035. Competency framework, competency-based management and competency models are becoming key tools in human resource management today and there has been a world- wide expansion in the use and adoption of competency models by several governments who achieved positive results in effective, clear rules-based recruiting process, tailor-made training and development process.

This research will investigate existing training and development policies for public service and identify key challenges and weaknesses and provide policy recommendations and the requirements of competency framework based on holistic model of managerial competency for Kuwait public sector.

Key Research Questions

- If and how Kuwait public service is currently evaluating workforce needs and capabilities for the next 5 years and beyond?
- What are the key challenges and issues of the training and development policies?
- How development needs are assessed and training courses are selected, evaluated, monitored and improved? What are the metrics used to assess performance of development policies and outcomes?
- To what extent development policies are linked to performance?
- If and how are government entities currently identifying the skills and competencies needs and gaps and incorporate these needs into their strategic workforce planning?
- What are the existing capability gaps and capacity of HR departments in attracting the right talent?
- What are the needed specialized expertise to manage and deliver complex services for the future digital government?

Expected Outputs

Evaluative study of the existing human capital management policies under the civil service law of 1970 and development of a comprehensive competency and talent policy framework.

2.4 Foster tomorrow's future leaders and top-talent in Kuwait: the need for a comprehensive policy framework for Kuwait

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Weak strategic workforce planning and lack of long term top talent strategy ; ii) lack of competency and talent framework for public service; iii) fragmented approach for the development of top talent; iv) weak accountability, high level of corruption and inefficiencies in service delivery;

Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to examine how the Kuwait government entities are currently attracting, developing, nurturing and developing its pipeline of future talent and leaders.

The research will examine existing HR policies targeting leadership and top talent and run a survey with employees who received advanced leadership training as top talent in the last 3 to 5 years and evaluate the impact of this trainings on career path and performance. The research will consider government entities who apply the civil service law and entities who have their independent top talent policies and evaluate the scope, depth and outcomes variation across these policies. The research findings will provide a develop "future leaders and top-talent policy framework" that will enhance and complement existing policies in the civil service law in Kuwait.

Key Research Questions

- What are the existing policies to attract and develop future leaders and top talent? What are the key issues and weaknesses in the existing policies?
- To what extent existing HR policies are helping the government nurture and prepare its top pool talent?
- Identify global and regional trends in top talent policies (how government elsewhere are developing their pipelines of future leaders? What type of policies and programs are used for top talent?
- How can the government attract the right top talent and meet the demands for highly qualified talent in certain critical specialties such as program managers and systems engineers (or experienced experts in complex systems integration)

Expected Outputs

Evaluation of the existing policies and develop future leaders and top-talent policy framework that will enhance and complement existing policies in the civil service law in Kuwait.

3. Open Government for Accountability and Transparency

3.1 Impact study of the global trends and policy drivers for open government to enhance transparency and public engagement in Kuwait

Context and Policy Gaps

i) Fragmented and incremental approach to public engagement and lack of systematic public engagement framework; ii) lack of information, capabilities and about how to leverage best practice in adopting public engagement mechanisms.

Research Objective

There is agreement that the Kuwait government needs to strengthen its capabilities in the areas of transparency and public engagement. The KNDP 2015/2025 stresses the importance to further public engagement without specifically defining how government entities will achieve a wider public engagement, and little consideration for the actual cost, benefits, and resources needed. Here is a great deal to learn more about the impact of open government, the best way to incentivize senior officials and managers to pursue them and strategies for planning for and making choices about integrating openness into government programs and how to deliver high-quality participation, what factors would be considered and identify associated costs and reflect them into government budgets... How can government entities select the most appropriate strategies and tools for transparency for their work?

Key Research Questions

- What are the global trends in creating open government? What are the main policy drivers in leading practice and lessons for Kuwait? How will the use of technology increase transparency and public engagement?
- What kinds of incentives best catalyze public engagement and
- How can government entities most effectively get information to the public who will use it?
- Which channels (e.g. the media, internet, twitter, etc.) are most effective in engaging the public?
- When is it best to use face-to-face vs online-driven interactions?
- What is the relationship between transparency and participation along the policy continuum (from policy development, to implementation to evaluation?)
- How government can create a culture that reflects the values of participation and transparency?

Expected Outputs

A policy guidance on how to maximize the concept of open government to enhance transparency and implement effective public engagement mechanisms.

3.2 Closing the gap on employees performance management policies in Kuwait: the need for a whole-of-government framework

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Weak accountability for civil servants; ii) financial planning across government are not tied to performance outcomes; iii) lack of citizen- centric policies that ensure quality of public services and customer satisfaction; iv) lack of policies that promote efficiencies in service design and delivery and v) poor quality and outcomes of public services and lack of measurement of performance.

Research Objective

Performance management deals with the challenge governments face in defining, measuring, and stimulating employee performance with the ultimate goal of improving organizational performance, and hence, involving multiple levels of analysis linked to strategic human resource management (HRM) as well as performance appraisal. This research will investigate available options for a whole-of-government performance management models in order to enhance understanding of how and why performance management works. The research will focus on different levels of analysis as well as cross-level influences areas of interest. For example, how and when do individual and group performance influence organizational performance (and vice versa).

Key Research Questions

- What are the key requirements for the setup a national integrated results-oriented management process to combat bureaucracy and diagnose sources of inefficiencies?
- To what extent can performance management help establish an efficient accountability mechanism and motivate civil servants to improve performance? and what are the potential risks and limitations?
- How performance management frameworks can move government departments to focus on results and improve service delivery? what are the set of policies needed to setup a good performance management system?
- What are the drivers for success? Role of the various entities involved in the management of the performance system (best practices and global trends)

Expected Outputs

Provide a policy framework to support and complement existing policies to enhance public sector employees performance and ensure performance is tied to results and accountability.

4. Transition Towards Integrated Digital Smart Government

4.1 Evaluate the impact of digital technologies for Kuwait Government and develop the transformation policy roadmap

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Weak policies and regulations that support the use of digital technologies for government; ii) lack of national strategy for e-government; iii) fragmented landscape across government entities on how to leverage use of digital technologies.

Research Objective

This research aims at addressing the potential of digital technologies such as blockchain and Artificial intelligence and provide insight and frame key issues impacting digital technologies and government, particularly focused on how these technologies can improve e-government in areas such as identity management, payment accuracy, service delivery and supply chain, etc. This research will address also the issues of privacy and security implications on government, individuals and society in Kuwait.

Key Research Questions

- How can digital technologies benefit government?
- How can government partner with the private sector to unleash the potential and lead the way to a broad-based digital technologies (AI and blockchain) evolution that drives economic vitality and diversification in Kuwait?
- What are the required policies and regulations needed for Kuwait to mitigate the potential and risks associated with new technologies (privacy and security)?
- Identify priority sectors that can leverage digital technologies

Expected Outputs

Policy framework on how the government can embrace and leverage the potential of digital technologies in support of the National Development Plan and the achievement of Kuwait 2035.

4.2 Become a data-driven government: Policy implications for Kuwait

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Weak transparency and accountability; ii) weak evidenced-based decision making.

Research Objective

When government leverage data to inform decision-making they are more legitimate and effective, and when institutions open data to the public, new public value is created.

Although the use of data to inform decision-making across sectors is growing, there exists little understanding of the conditions under which data-driven decision-making is most effective, particularly in the governance context. To inform ongoing initiatives associated with data-driven governance, this research will articulate and map a number of data-driven governance themes and research questions in order to develop a comprehensive policy guidance for government entities on how to pursue and implement data and use information technologies and computational modeling to inform policy and program design, evaluation, analysis, management and decision making.

Key Research Questions

Map data-driven governance themes and research questions:

- What types of information and information-rich applications yield improved citizen decision-making?
- What types of information contributed by a citizen or community are most useful in developing and optimizing public services, and how can that information be made actionable?
- How can data be analyzed for or by governing institutions to uncover new opportunities for change?
- How can distributed governance stakeholders better coordinate to improve outcomes?

Expected Outputs

Policy framework and principles for the successful implementation of data-driven government in Kuwait.

5. Foster Citizen-Centric Public Service Delivery

5.1 Transition towards a citizen- centric service delivery strategy that fosters innovation, efficiency and customer satisfaction

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Lack of a national strategy for service delivery; ii) limited service optimization, automation leads to higher costs ; iii) multiple interdependencies amongst services and entities work in silos, redundancies of processes; iv) lack of a government body that oversees service coordination and delivery; v) lack of service performance culture and standards (barely any service performance KPIs); vi) limited private sector engagement; vii) growing customer expectations

Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to conduct a government- wide research around service delivery in order to develop a national service delivery strategy and include the following dimensions:

1. Conduct a comprehensive service mapping and assessment of existing services and create a comprehensive electronic database
2. Conduct a market research survey for customer satisfaction and customer needs and expectations vis a vis selected set of priority services
3. Conduct a survey with senior officials and leadership about the future of service delivery orientations and requirements
4. Benchmark best practice and global trends in service design and delivery models with a special focus on fostering innovation
5. Develop a national service delivery strategy

Key Research Questions

- What are the existing government services currently offered by government entities (develop a detailed inventory through a survey)?
- How are these services currently performed, and what are the potential opportunities and efficiencies that need to be addressed?
- What is the current level of customer satisfaction? (individuals and businesses)? Do we currently run customer satisfaction surveys?
- To what extent customer needs and expectations in terms of gaps, channel preferences, issues are tracked and embedded in the design and delivery?
- What are the main service interdependencies, alignment needs and collaboration issues across government entities?
- What are the current leading practice and models of service delivery and to-be-model for the future of service delivery?

Expected Outputs

The proposed research will allow the Kuwait government to develop a national citizen-centric service delivery strategy supported by a set of policies and guidelines and most importantly, policies to engage the private sector and foster innovation within and through government.

6. Rationalize the Public Financial Planning and Management

6.1 Achieve fiscal sustainability and efficiency through rationalization of public expenditures and sound financial planning and management policies

Situation and Policy Gap

i) Burden of the wage bill; ii) disconnection between fiscal planning and performance results; iii) heavy dependence on oil and high reliance on the public sector.

Research Objective

Kuwait government assumes primary responsibility for the welfare of citizen, provides free medical care, government-supported housing, interest-free loans, free education until graduation from university, guaranteed employment. According to latest budget forecast, the government will have a deficit for the first time. A focused research agenda around public expenditure and financial planning and management is more critical than ever in order to: i) identify inefficiencies in operational functions and service provision; ii) build capacity of government entities to analyze financial and economic impact of policy making and evaluation; and iii) adopt strategies for cost reduction such as shared services or public private partnerships and the transformation towards digital government.

Key Research Questions

- What are the existing policies and strategies in place that help government entities achieve savings in operational functions and allow more rationalization and cost savings?
- How can government entities leverage technology to cut cost while improving their quality of services and performance? What are the main inefficiencies in operational functions that will require business process reengineering?
- To what extent, and in what areas, should the government's reliance upon contractors be reduced or increased or public private partnerships be adopted? How can government develop and define better financial metrics?
- Assess government fee-generating programs that do not recover their costs (fee structures and levels are dictated by issues other than cost recovery).
- To what extent citizen-facing operations that rely on manual paper based business processes can be consolidated and removed/transformed to electronic platforms as possible - at the same time rationalizing the government field operations footprint – where government can reduce costs and improve citizen's experience.

Expected Outputs

Provide policy recommendations to support government efforts in reducing spending, generate sustainable cost savings with clear targets and adoption of commercial best practices in government operations such as public private partnerships and outsourcing mechanisms.



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