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To cite this article: Pan Suk Kim & Alexander Kotchegura (2017) Talent management in government in times of economic instability: selected cases from the BRICS countries, *Public Money & Management*, 37:1, 7-14, DOI: [10.1080/09540962.2016.1249223](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2016.1249223)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2016.1249223>



Published online: 24 Nov 2016.



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Talent management in government in times of economic instability: selected cases from the BRICS countries

Pan Suk Kim and Alexander Kotchegura

This paper explores the policies that three BRICS countries used to tackle the growing problem of attracting and retaining talent in public sector institutions. The authors trace the changes in these countries' strategies and approaches resulting from growing budgetary constraints; labour market shifts; new demographic trends; increasing demands for higher performance by public servants; and complex challenges faced by governments worldwide. Although talent management in public sector institutions was a government priority for the three countries—Brazil, China, and Russia—the results achieved have been modest. The authors draw lessons for other governments from their analysis.

Keywords: Brazil; BRICS; China; government; Russia; talent management.

The ability of governments to attract, retain and develop talented professionals is one of the strongest competitive advantages of any country in overcoming numerous external and internal pressures. This paper explores the human resource (HR) policies of three BRICS countries—Brazil, China and Russia—that were designed to resolve the problem of attracting and retaining talented specialists in public sector institutions. We analyse the extent to which these HR strategies have been successful and whether they offer lessons for other countries.

In both the private and public sectors around the world, the 'war for talent' is intensifying (Michaels *et al.*, 2001). Both private and public organizations are facing an increasingly competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining talented employees. Accordingly, a key HR strategy nowadays is 'talent management', i.e. anticipating the human capital an organization needs to improve business value, and make it possible for the organization to reach its goals. The issue of talent management is covered rather well in the literature related to the development of businesses (Paauwe, 2004; Armstrong, 2006; Devine and Powell, 2008; Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Kim, 2008; Boselie, 2010). However, analogous research on the public sector is scarce (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013), with very few international comparisons of country-specific

experiences.

In this paper 'talent management' is taken to mean the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organization, either due to their high potential for the future or because they are in business/operationally-critical roles (CIPD, 2009). In other words, talent management consists of attraction, retention and motivation of individuals capable of making a real contribution to the successful realization of an organization's goals. In order to conduct a proper examination, this paper relies on a combination of documentary- and interview-based research and uses a process tracing method for analysing the respective evidence and experience, as well as searching for causal mechanisms that allow for interpretation and explanation of the findings.

Global trends in talent management

The findings of recent studies (PwC, 2012) demonstrate that in the coming decades, talent will be one of the scarcest resources worldwide. About three quarters of employers globally acknowledged that lack of experience, skills or knowledge was the primary reason for the struggle to hire appropriate employees (PwC, 2012; Heidrick & Struggles International, 2015). With aging populations, together with the falling quality of secondary and higher

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education in many industrial nations, competition for talent will only become fiercer (Michaels *et al.*, 2001).

The Global Talent Index (GTI), produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit and published by Heidrick & Struggles International (2015), benchmarks countries according to their capacity for developing, attracting and retaining talent. It covers both the private and public sectors and includes 60 countries. As shown in table 1, the US and the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway) were the highest performers in both the 2011 and 2015 indices. Our three selected countries (China, Russia and Brazil) were placed remarkably close in the GTI 2015, occupying 31st, 34th, and 38th places, respectively. In GTI 2011, their respective places were 33rd, 34th and 42nd (Heidrick & Struggles International, 2011).

Compared to other countries in the GTI, China had the largest score improvement in 2015, boosted by Beijing's increasing willingness to accommodate foreign specialists—a change in approach explained in part by the impending reduction of the flow of young workers entering the labour market. Brazil also made significant progress in 2015, with employment growing quickly, expenditure on education rising and the language skills of the workforce improving. Competition for high-end talent is expected to become an area of intense rivalry as nations around the world try to avoid being left behind as suppliers of natural resources and cheap labour, unable to achieve long-term growth.

Although each country has its own peculiarities and contextual setting, certain principles exist that provide guidance for improved talent management. Embedding the principle of merit is critical for successful talent

management, attracting 'the best and brightest' and utilizing talent appropriately. A performance management system that is able to motivate, reward and retain talented people, and also effectively deal with under-performers, is a precondition for attracting high-calibre professionals. Another prerequisite for an effective national human resource management (HRM) policy is the ability to cultivate and sustain one's own human capital capable of assisting in the resolution of urgent problems in the country's development. If there is a major shortage of talent internally (for example because of failures in secondary and higher education), the opportunities for bringing in specialists from abroad to work in central government organizations are, for obvious reasons, very limited.

Similarly, the aspirations of talented professionals, although uniform in general, can have country-specific nuances that should be taken into account when developing a talent management strategy. This problem is well-illustrated by the EY Institute for Emerging Markets Studies (2014) in co-operation with the Skolkovo Business School following a survey of professionals in high-demand roles in the BRICS countries. Career goals in the different countries varied. For example, when career goals were ranked according to desirability (1 being the highest and 10 being the lowest), the following was found:

- 'To be secure or stable in my job' ranked 2 in Brazil and Russia and 4.5 in China.
- 'To be dedicated to a cause or to feel that I am serving a greater good' ranked 3 in Brazil, 7 in Russia and 8 in China.
- 'To be entrepreneurial or creative and

Table 1. The Global Talent Index 2015.

Rank 1–15 (Score: 58.4 to 74.5)		Rank 16–30 (Score: 46.4 to 58.4)		Rank 31–45 (Score: 38.9 to 46.4)		Rank 46–60 (Score: 26.3 to 38.9)	
1	United States	16	France	31	China	46	South Africa
2	Denmark	17	Ireland	32	Argentina	47	Peru
3	Finland	18	Belgium	33	Greece	48	Egypt
4	Sweden	19	Taiwan	34	Russia	49	Bulgaria
5	Norway	20	Austria	35	India	50	Ecuador
6	Singapore	21	South Korea	36	Mexico	51	Venezuela
7	Australia	22	Spain	37	Romania	52	Kazakhstan
8	Canada	23	Italy	38	Brazil	53	Vietnam
9	Switzerland	24	Japan	39	Malaysia	54	Pakistan
10	Hong Kong	25	Czech Republic	40	Saudi Arabia	55	Iran
11	Germany	26	Chile	41	Colombia	56	Indonesia
12	Israel	27	Portugal	42	Ukraine	57	Sri Lanka
13	The Netherlands	28	Poland	43	Turkey	58	Algeria
14	United Kingdom	29	Slovakia	44	Philippines	59	Nigeria
15	New Zealand	30	Hungary	45	Thailand	60	Azerbaijan

Source: Heidrick and Struggles International (2015, p. 5).

innovative' was ranked 4 in Brazil, 8 in Russia, and 4.5 in China.

- 'To be autonomous or independent' was ranked 8 in Brazil, 4 in Russia and 3 in China (see table 2).

Perhaps surprisingly, the value of 'work-life balance' was ranked highest in all three countries, while having an 'international career' was ranked lowest (9) in all three countries. These findings are important because being aware of the goals and life priorities of a talented professional and adjusting employment policies accordingly is critical for the ability of any organization, including governments, to retain high-performing employees.

Success in the race for talent also depends on careful consideration of cultural peculiarities, for example traditions, mentality and behavioural patterns. For example, in China, when dealing with talented professionals, it is critical to take into account informal values and concepts such as 'face' (*Miànzi*) and personal relationships (*Guanxi*). In China, deference, loyalty and work ethic are often valued more than ability, and this is one of the factors that HR managers must take into account if they want to be successful in finding and retaining talented professionals.

What people value in compensation practices differs across the selected BRICS countries. Opportunity for high future earnings is an attractive offering in Brazil, while secure and steady income in the present is particularly important in Russia, where it is ranked first. Interestingly, stock options (or other forms of equity-based pay) and high future earnings have a higher rank in China than in Brazil and Russia, suggesting a long-term focus (table 3).

The cases of China, Brazil and Russia

People's Republic of China

The Chinese government has undertaken extensive reform of its civil service over the past several years (OECD, 2005). In 2001, for the first time, a chapter on human resources development (HRD) was made part of the 10th National Five-Year Plan in China. In 2003, the Central Organization Department of the Chinese Communist Party organized the first national conference on HRD, where the decision was made to establish the Central Group for the Co-ordination of Talented Personnel—one of its priority tasks being global recruitment of talent. Consequently, China announced a new talent strategy that included major talent-attracting programmes and projects covering various aspects of talent management. A programme that received a lot of attention was the *One*

Thousand Talents Programme, which aimed to incentivize at least 2,000 high-level overseas talented professionals and experts of any nationality to move to China over a five-to-10 year period (Zhao and Zhu, 2009). When the programme was introduced in 2008, its goal was to attract experts and scholars who had been educated overseas and encourage them to work in advanced and high-tech industries as well as to start their own businesses in (Wei, 2016).

In June 2010, China issued a medium- and long-term plan for the development of human capital, which was the first of its kind since the formation of the current political regime in the country in 1949. The plan, entitled the *National Programme for Long- and Medium-term Development of Human Capital (2010–2020)*, laid down the guiding principles for carrying out a strategy to strengthen the nation through human capital development. The plan listed six major categories of talent that the government would help cultivate: political leaders and civil servants; business entrepreneurs; technical professionals; highly-skilled specialists in different industries; specialists for rural areas and agriculture; and professional social workers (Wang, 2012).

The significance of attracting and retaining talent had been emphasized in the basic

Table 2. Ranking of career goals on level of desirability.

<i>Level of desirability</i>	Brazil	China	Russia
To have work-life balance	1	1	1
To be secure or stable in my job	2	4.5	2
To be dedicated to a cause or to feel that I am serving a greater good	3	8	7
To be entrepreneurial or creative and innovative	4	4.5	8
To be competitively or intellectually challenged	5.5	7	5
To be a technical or functional expert	5.5	6	3
To be a leader or manager of people	7	2	6
To be autonomous or independent	8	3	4
To have an international career	9	9	9

Note: 1 = highest ranked; 9 = lowest ranked.

Source: EY Institute for Emerging Markets Studies (2014, p. 11).

Table 3. Ranking the most desirable features in compensation packages.

<i>Compensation packages</i>	Brazil	China	Russia
Secure and steady income	2	5	1
Rapid salary increases from promotions	4	1*	2
Opportunity for high future earnings	1	3	3*
Competitive base salary	3	6	5
Variable pay for high performance	5	4	3*
Stock options (or equivalent equity-based compensation)	6	1*	6

Note: 1 = highest ranked, * = joint ranking.

Source: EY Institute for Emerging Markets Studies (2014, p. 28).

documents of civil service reform launched in 1993. The policies adopted at that time highlighted the need for the civil service to make terms of employment more attractive and more competitive (Burns, 2010; Burns and Zhiren, 2010). In 2002, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) introduced the *Regulations on Selecting and Appointing Party and Government Leading Cadres*, which provided for a more professional assessment of candidates and allowed public consultation in the process of promotion to leadership positions. This period was also marked by the expansion of opportunities for training overseas. Since 2007, China has sent around 40,000 officials a year for training abroad (Jarrett and Huihan, 2009).

To emphasize the importance of developing professional and performance-oriented civil service, in 2008 the Chinese government established a semi-independent State Bureau of Civil Servants which reports to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS), a merger of the former Ministry of Personnel and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Brødsgaard and Gang, 2014). Recruiting channels for civil servants were widened, and fixed term contracts introduced. The Chinese government started to attract individuals from a wider range of backgrounds, including those with employment experience in state-owned enterprises, law firms and multinational corporations. Under the new contract system, government departments no longer need to train their own personnel but can directly hire skilled individuals from the labour market (Li, 2014).

The contextual background in China is characterized by several trends that affect attraction and retention of talented professionals. First, China's population is aging rapidly, due to an increase in average life-span and the one-child policy. In 2010, China's aging population reached a record high: the number of people above the age of 60 rose from 7.3 million in 1998 to 167.1 million, amounting for 12.5% of the entire population. In the next 10 to 30 years, China will become an aging society (Mehta, 2015).

Second, there is a general shortage of highly-qualified professionals. According to PwC (2012), more than 60% of CEOs in China find it hard to recruit appropriately skilled talent. Moreover, many companies and enterprises complain that the skill shortage is worsening at all levels (Mehta, 2015).

Third, apart from difficulties in finding appropriate candidates, the deficit in government has worsened as a result of an exodus of officials,

particularly in regional governments. An online job website (www.zhaopin.com) reported that more than 10,000 civil servants and other government officials had posted their résumés just three weeks after the 2014 Spring Festival. In addition, an article in *China Daily* (Wilson, 2015) claims that a growing number of public servants are looking for jobs in the private sector.

Fourth, the current level of salaries is often referred to as a major reason for civil servants resigning. This may be true, especially for individuals with rare professional skills. However, many experts point also to problems in the promotions system, which often fails to ensure the career advancement of many capable civil servants in accordance with their performance (Wang, 2015). The formal career ladder in the local and regional civil service is often quite compressed, with limited opportunities to reward performance.

Overall, our preliminary analysis reveals that the measures undertaken to develop a meritocracy in the Chinese civil service (which is a prerequisite for successful talent management) and attract talent internally and externally have not been successful. The large-scale strategies for attracting talent, for example the *One Thousand Talents Programme*, have so far been focused mainly on assisting business- and state-run enterprises and seem to have had only a marginal impact on the civil service (Wang, 2010).

Brazil

The Brazilian public sector played an important role in creating the conditions for recent advances in the country's economic and social development. However, Brazil has a challenging task of introducing more effective HRM into its state administration if these advances are going to be sustained (Velarde *et al.*, 2014). Brazil initiated a far-reaching reform of its civil service during the administration of President Cardoso (1995–2003), which has been described as one of the most ambitious civil service reform programmes in the region (Gaetani and Heredia, 2002). Strengthening meritocratic principles in the civil service administration was one of the reform's major objectives. Efforts were also made to introduce more flexible and results-oriented personnel management practices to facilitate selection and retention of talent. In advancing new approaches in HRM, a number of significant, though not always sustainable, initiatives were launched. In particular, public entry exams were made compulsory for the careers of the core group of senior executives. Additionally, the introduction of performance bonuses and selective wage increases contributed to staffing

the central government with highly-qualified civil servants recruited on the basis of merit.

Regrettably, the pace of reform slowed down under subsequent presidential administrations. International organizations (for example the OECD, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank) and many domestic and foreign experts point to a number of bottlenecks that currently impede the implementation of modern HRM principles in the Brazilian government. A typical feature of the Brazilian public administration is a complex system of job categories. Originally, this was designed to meet the primary requirement of preventing patronage and ensuring an objective and transparent process for access to public employment. However, strong restrictions on hiring staff outside the rigid civil service employment framework of public examinations and narrow job categories have reduced opportunities for attracting the best possible individuals to the Brazilian civil service.

There is a relatively small corps of 'strategic careers' officials in the Brazilian civil service who fall under a largely separate regime of incentives (performance bonuses and career advances). These officials are an élite minority of civil servants whose remuneration is kept competitive with the private sector by means of special performance bonuses. The main differences between strategic careers and regular staff is that their contracts are shorter, and strategic career holders can be dismissed without explanation and returned to their original post. A good proportion of management positions are open to external recruitment, and ministries manage their own recruitment processes (Velarde *et al.*, 2014).

The majority of civil servants do not enjoy a privileged status and work under weak in-career performance incentives. As a result, there is a drain of highly-qualified civil servants to the private sector. The Ministry of Planning, Budgeting and Management is assigned the function of developing and enforcing HRM policies across the entire state administration. However, its actual authority in some important areas of public management (for example fiscal block institutions) is quite limited. For example, there is no single unified approach to performance-related remuneration. The creation of incentives for talented professionals often depends on the status of the ministry, the disposition of superiors and the availability of funds (Velarde *et al.*, 2014). The bulk of Brazilian civil service personnel gained their employment after passing a very traditional public examination, which is not specifically

designed to identify talent. There are no policies in place to identify potential leadership early in the careers of civil servants. Besides, trade unions have historically had strong influence over the civil service cadre's related issues, which have often negatively affected the flexibility of HRM policies.

Other weaknesses that have an impact on the process of attracting and retaining talent include:

- A lack of modern competency management, which is particularly important for senior management posts and positions of special responsibility; as a result, these positions are filled without proper skill profile requirements.
- The absence of an approved nationwide strategy designed to ensure successful and regular acquisition, by the government, of capacity and talent and its subsequent motivation.
- Constraints linked to a 'dominance of irresponsible discretion' in all aspects of personnel administration (for example entry, promotion, remuneration, firing) and a 'tacit bargain' between the political and bureaucratic élites (Velarde *et al.*, 2014). As a result, many issues of HRM in the civil service are politically very sensitive.

In recent years, the Brazilian authorities have been implementing initiatives to introduce strategic personnel management into their HRM practices. In March 2012, the Ministry of Planning, Budgeting and Management launched two major projects: regular systematic planning of the needs in personnel to provide government with the capacity to think ahead in order to have the right servants, in the right place, at the right time; and introducing professional development plans as integrated guidelines for the federal executive government workforce (OECD, 2012). In addition, a number of proposals have been brought forward with the aim of introducing strategic competency management, including competency profiling and competency assessments. These measures have been complemented by a new policy requiring high-level qualifications for civil servants. Ministries are supposed to develop qualification plans for their employees based on competencies, and efforts are being made to modernize methods of learning and development (OECD, 2012). Regardless of how timely the above initiatives are, they are not as successful as they should be because they are not part of a unified

comprehensive strategy for attracting talent and modernizing HRM across entire civil service.

The Russian Federation

The Russian Federation's shortage of highly-competent specialists in certain areas, especially those who could help the government cope with the implications of the global economic and financial crisis or possessed rare technical expertise, became particularly acute in 2008–2009. A sign of this deficit of talent was the extension of the contracts of many civil servants who were over the retirement age. Special amendments were made to existing legislation, raising the age ceiling for retirement for certain categories of civil servants. In an address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in 2008, the then president (Dmitry Medvedev: 2008–2012) stressed the need to create a new system of developing and utilizing personnel (called 'personnel reserves' or 'talent pools'), which would attract the most talented, innovative and professionally-competent people to the civil service (OECD, 2013).

The idea of establishing personnel reserves at different levels of both the federal and regional governments originally emerged in response to the demand to develop an effective way of filling vacancies with qualified and competent civil servants. Article 64 of the Federal Law on the State Civil Service now allows all civil servants and other citizens to be appointed to civil service positions based on the results of a competition. The mechanism for personnel reserves was also designed to provide openness and transparency in decisions about making reappointments; to allow for better data and information management regarding human resources; to improve career planning for civil servants; and to widen the opportunities for talented professionals to get appointments or promotions at different levels of federal and regional government.

In 2008–2009, a system of 'reserves of executive cadres' (REC) was introduced. The RECs serve as an incubator and pool of high-calibre managers, who are capable of filling top-level posts in the federal and regional government. The RECs are organized in levels: special executive reserve under the president (or 'presidential thousand'), federal level, federal districts level, and the level of the regions of the Russian Federation. The lists of the RECs at different levels were drawn up largely on the basis of experts' opinions. Professionals included in the RECs undergo

special executive training. Between 25% and 40% (depending on the REC level) of the people included in the RECs have been appointed to high-ranking positions in the federal and regional government (Borshchevskiy, 2014).

Some observers (Klimenko and Klishch, 2013; Yuzhakov *et al.*, 2016) point to progress in the selection and appointment of civil servants following the introduction of a competency framework, although delivery has been uneven across regions. At the same time, professional development programmes with a time horizon of no less than three years have been introduced across the federal and regional government since 2010. They are intended to enhance the qualifications and professionalism of civil servants, as well as to ensure better career planning for civil servants, especially people with the potential to perform complex tasks of high responsibility.

Since the reward and compensation system is one of the key factors that determine attractiveness of public sector jobs for talented professionals, the level of remuneration of civil servants has been raised significantly within the framework of civil service reform. At present, it is between 1.5 and two times higher than the average salary in respective regions of the Russian Federation (Falyakhov, 2014). In addition, rolling out a performance-related pay system to attract and retain talent, especially for senior positions, has had a high priority. A performance bonus was recently introduced for 'executive' and 'assistant (counselor)' categories of civil servants. The size of their performance bonus depends on achieving performance indicators, which are now part of fixed-term contracts (from one to four years) for senior officials. From 1 January 2017, this bonus will be extended to civil servants in all federal and regional state bodies in senior positions.

However, measures to improve talent management in the government have not triggered an increased flow of talent to the civil service, nor have they contributed to a notable retention of increasingly sought-after professionals. This is mainly because these measures have not been part of a unified, comprehensive strategy and they have generally been generally poorly co-ordinated. Moreover, their enforcement lacks consistency and effective incentives, as well as an effective strategy to overcome various obstacles and bottlenecks, for example patronage. Furthermore, HRM reform efforts have been adversely affected by austerity measures.

Drastic cuts and downsizing (for example the recent 30% reduction in city administration staff in Moscow) impact trust and morale, and staff can be left concerned about continuation of employment, as well as being overloaded.

Conclusions

Our analysis of the recent experiences of three BRICS countries shows that the governments of all three (China, Brazil and Russia) are very aware of the issue of a talent deficit in their public sector institutions, and that they have tried to develop policies to address the problem. However, we found that, so far, none of the countries has managed to implement a comprehensive strategy to attract and retain talent, and hence the results have been modest.

Our analysis leads us to conclude that the governments of the countries in question are not doing enough to effectively retain and manage their best officials, particularly in times of financial constraint. Addressing this deficit would be easier than finding, attracting, training and retaining new staff. High-calibre professionals who leave government service do not just take away their skills, knowledge and experience, but they can also leave demoralized colleagues behind them. Talent does not unfold in all situations—no matter how talented an individual may be, he or she may never be successful or effective if the environment is not conducive or appropriate for the utilization of his or her talent. This issue seems to have been underestimated by our BRICS countries in developing their respective talent management-oriented policies.

Our study also revealed notable differences in the approaches of the selected countries and the results achieved. China appears to have made much more progress than Brazil and Russia in setting up a sound base for attracting, nurturing and retaining talent. This is evidenced by strategic nationwide initiatives geared towards identifying and attracting talented professionals both domestically and globally. Of the three countries, China has the greatest potential to make considerable advances in the race for talent because its central government has an impressive track record of the strategic planning required to meet economic and social challenges. In addition, China has already launched an ambitious programme of talent identification, attraction and development. However, this does not mean that China is bound to be more successful in the medium and long term in the race for public sector talent, as there are serious

constraints that need to be properly addressed. HRM in the Chinese civil service remains under the strict control of the ruling party.

Brazil managed to provide performance-based incentives to a narrow group of high-ranking officials who were appointed largely on merit. However, overall advancement in implementing modern HRM principles across the entire civil service has been hampered by powerful interest groups, outdated practices in hiring and appointment of civil servants and the influence of the trade unions.

Russia has established pools (reserves) of talented individuals at the federal and regional tiers of government in order to provide quality training and then use people from the pools to fill vacancies in top-level positions. However, progress in attracting and retaining talent across the whole of government has been hampered by the absence of a unified centre of civil service management, weak incentives, largely non-transparent selection procedures and a shortage of funding.

The three selected BRICS countries are experiencing serious difficulties in developing and implementing sound comprehensive strategies to attract and retain talented individuals in their governments. There are a lot of barriers on the way to successful attraction and retention of the best and brightest in public sector institutions, for example the highly-politicized environment, the domination of patron–client relationships, an egalitarian mentality, low trust in government, and outdated rules and procedures (Kim, 2008; OECD, 2005, 2012, 2013). The greatest challenge lies in the need to ensure that the adopted policies are applied consistently and effectively and are corrected quickly if they are failing. To deal with talent shortages, governments need to identify high-potential employees; support them in learning what they need; and recognize that the best employers will get the best talent—the public sector is in competition with the private sector for talent.

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IMPACT

One of the prerequisites of effective talent management is careful consideration of the professional and life aspirations and priorities of the best and brightest individuals, and maintenance of sound performance-based incentives for the officials in question. Embedding the principle of merit, as well as making a favourable working environment, is critical for successful talent management—attracting ‘the best and brightest’ and utilizing talent appropriately. Particular attention should be paid to consistent efforts in order to effectively retain and manage existing highly-competent officials, particularly in times of economic recession and uncertainty. It is also important to realize that talent does not unfold in all situations—no matter how talented an individual may be, he or she may not be successful or effective if the environment is not conducive or appropriate for the utilization of his/her talent.

Drastic across-the-board cuts should be avoided and/or replaced by targeted optimization based on a thorough audit of the human resource management functions and performance assessment. Another must is a well-developed long-term strategy to identify, attract and retain talented professionals in the public sector, which should be supported irrespective of which political authority is in power at the time.