

24th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by Brazilian Institute of Public and Business Management (IBGEPE)

Agenda item 8: Strategies for changing mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting younger workers

We would like to share with CEPA the case that just happened on 2025, in the City of Brusque, in the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. We just have undertaken a groundbreaking initiative that reflects a deep commitment to modernizing public administration, directly connected with the Item 8 of the agenda. For the first time in the history of the city, the Town Hall has opened a public selection process to fill key commissioned leadership positions that was traditionally assigned through political appointments. This project represents a fundamental shift in the mindset of municipal governance, that we just select meritocracy even political preferences, we choose quality even governability, and we choose institutional credibility at the center of the decision-making. The spaces opened by the Town Hall of Brusque was:

- Municipal Secretary of Transit and Mobility
- Director of Public Transportation, Department of Traffic and Mobility
- Director of Transparency, Department of Transparency and Accountability
- Director of Partnerships and Concessions, Department of Partnerships and Agreements
- Director of Procurement and Contracts, Department of Public Works
- Director of Administrative and Financial, Department of Education
- Director of Strategic Contracts, Office of the City Attorney
- Coordinator of Land Regularization, Office of the City Attorney
- Coordinator of the Process Office, Department of Administration and Strategic Management
- Coordinator of Content and Media, Department of Institutional Relations

The public call for applicants was launched nationally in January 25, and had inviting candidates to apply based on their technical qualifications, leadership potential, and motivation to contribute to a high-performing, ethical, and future-oriented public sector. The process included a rigorous multi-stage evaluation, comprising technical knowledge assessments, and after weeks of evaluation, ten (10) professionals were selected to assume, and these individuals were chosen not for their political affiliations but for their ability, mainly, to drive results and work collaboratively. Importantly, 94% of the selected candidates hold undergraduate degrees, and most of 40% have completed postgraduate or advanced degrees, demonstrating a high standard of academic and professional achievement.

The initiative has drawn the attention of professionals from multiple sectors, including business, academia, civil society, and other levels of government. Candidates came from all five regions of Brazil, and some had international backgrounds or experience abroad. A total of 2,078 applications were received—a clear sign of the broad interest in contributing to a new model of local government, including 26 of the 27 Brazilian states, and members of USA and Portugal too. Many of them expressed a strong desire to contribute their skills to public service, citing the transparency and seriousness of the selection process as key motivators.

This move by the Town Hall of Brusque directly addresses key challenges discussed under Agenda item 8: changing public sector mindsets, retaining top talent, and attracting younger professionals. Rather than relying on traditional recruitment mechanisms or outdated career structures, Brusque has chosen to innovate by designing a process that values skills, public purpose, and the capacity to lead change. One of the most significant outcomes of this initiative is the revitalization of the image of public service itself. The selection process has sent a powerful message to citizens and professionals alike: the public sector can be a space for innovation, excellence, and meaningful contribution. It has helped reposition local government as a desirable and purposeful career path for young professionals seeking impact-driven work. This is an essential step in reversing the global trend of youth disengagement from government and rebuilding trust in public institutions.

Moreover, the initiative aligns with broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening the capacity and legitimacy of local institutions. Building trust through competence, inclusion, and transparency is fundamental to effective governance. The Brusque experience shows that such goals can be advanced not only through national policies but also through practical, localized innovations in human resource management in local governments.

In conclusion, the experience of Brusque provides a powerful and practical model for other municipalities and public institutions worldwide. It demonstrates that even a simple selection process, dedicating 10 positions of political confidence, it is possible to promote a culture of excellence, attract highly qualified professionals, and help to redefine the role of government in the eyes of society.