HOW TO PERFORM REMOTE EXAMINATION FOR CIVIL SERVANTS?

CURRENT SITUATION AND THE CHALLENGE

The challenge is to create a modern and user-friendly remote (online) candidate testing platform that would enable the Civil Service Department to implement a centralized selection of civil servants. The platform should allow testing many candidates in real-time, ensuring the confidentiality of test questions and fairness of this selection stage (candidates have to take the test themselves and without using additional sources or other assistance). It is also important that the selection commission receives the test results promptly.

This tool would be used in the selection process when a large number of applications is received to select applicants for the second stage, an oral interview (remote or live). This would save applicants' time, make more efficient use of the time during the selection process, shorten the time of organizing competitions, and allow institutions to hire the required civil servants faster.

Until spring 2020, most of the competitions for civil servants took place live in the Civil Service Department. About 21.3% of competitions and selections were organized partly remotely when candidates and part of the selection committee were located at the institution, and other part of the selection committee (from the Civil Service Department) connected remotely. On the 16th of March 2020, following the announcement of the first quarantine for COVID-19, the legislation was changed and the remote selection of civil servants started within a few days. Lithuania is probably the only OECD country that has managed to move to a completely remote selection of civil servants in a short period of time. During the second quarantine, the entire selection for the civil service takes place solely remotely - using the Microsoft TEAMS platform.

It is clear that even after the COVID-19 threat, a significant number of competitions will continue to be remote. This is convenient for both the applicants and the selection committee because there is no need to drive anywhere, the traffic intensity is not increased, the applicants do not take up parking spaces near the institutions, etc. However, remote selection currently has some limitations, in particular competitions and selections with a large number of candidates. When such competitions take place in the Civil Service Department, they are organized in two stages. Applicants first take the computer test, and the best ones are selected for the second stage. The Civil Service Department has a testing platform, but it is not fully adapted for remote use. Thus, if such competitions cannot be organized live (for example, due to quarantine), they must be either postponed or an oral interview with all candidates has to be organized. This takes a lot of time for the selection committee – competitions and selections can take 2 or 3 days. Thus, as the duration is increasing, the time of selection committee is being used inefficiently, and institutions have to wait longer for the required civil servants.

It is planned that the remote testing platform will be used for about 30% of competitions organized by the Civil Service Department, which is about 940-980 competitions per year.

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WHY IT IS THE PROBLEM AND WHY WE WANT TO SOLVE IT

More competitions could be organized remotely. Due to certain circumstances when it is not possible to organize testing in the Civil Service Department, there will be no need to postpone the selection process with a large number of candidates. Institutions would be able to more quickly recruit required civil servants. This would ensure the smooth and fast provision of services to the population. Unemployed applicants would find employment faster and would not need state aid. The time spent by applicants and selection commissions would be used more efficiently, and they could focus more on preparing for the second round of selection. Candidates' time would be saved – they would not have to come to the Civil Service Department just for the test, it would increase their satisfaction with the selection process for the civil service and the trust in the civil service in general. It is likely that the newly developed testing platform could be used not only by the Civil Service Department, but also by other public sector bodies.

SOLUTION

It is important that the remote testing platform could ensure:
- The confidentiality of the test tasks so that they are not disclosed to third parties.
- That the candidate taking the test does not use the assistance of other persons, sources of information.
- To ensure equal opportunities, transparency, and fairness of the competition for all candidates.

WHAT WILL THE DEVELOPED SOLUTION HAVE TO ADAPT TO

The legal environment to implement this decision has already changed. It is possible to use an existing testing platform of the Civil Service Department, which is currently used in a stationary way or to build a new one without linking it to an existing system. We also have a significant test base and plan to expand it.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

The main indicator is the shortened duration of the competitions and selection process, more objective and efficient evaluation of applicants, increased satisfaction of applicants.

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