



MINISTRY OF FINANCE

# State of Civil Service Ethics in Finland – a Survey of the Ethical Values and Principles of Central Government Employees

Ministry of Finance publications – 30/2017



Governance Policy



Ministry of Finance publications 30/2017

# State of Civil Service Ethics in Finland – a Survey of the Ethical Values and Principles of Central Government Employees

Timo Moilanen



Ministry of Finance

ISBN PDF: 978-952-251-882-8

Layout: Government Administration Unit, Publications / Anitta Tärkkan

Helsinki 2017



## Description sheet

<b>Published by</b>	Ministry of Finance	August 2017	
<b>Authors</b>	Timo Moilanen		
<b>Title of publication</b>	State of civil service ethics - a survey of the ethical values and principles of central government employees		
<b>Series and publication number</b>	Ministry of Finance publications 30/2017		
<b>ISBN PDF</b>	978-952-251-882-8	<b>ISSN PDF</b>	1797-9714
<b>Website address (URN)</b>	<a href="http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-251-809-5">http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-251-809-5</a>		
<b>Pages</b>	76	<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Keywords</b>	values, ethics, corruption, integrity, civil servants		
<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Finance has examined the values and principles of central government employees by means of surveys conducted in 1999 and 2007. The third survey on ethics carried out in November 2015 looked at central government employees' views of the ethical values and principles related to their work. The survey was based on a recommendation issued by the Advisory Body on Civil Service Ethics (Ministry of Finance 3/2014). A citizen survey, whose results were published separately, was conducted in addition to the survey targeted at civil servants (Ministry of Finance 2/2017).</p> <p>The civil servant survey was addressed to the employees of 12 ministries and 16 government agencies as well as the top management of central government. The survey covered over 4,300 respondents on ministry level, 3,100 respondents on agency level and 400 respondents in the additional sample consisting of top management. A total of 939 responses were received from all branches and levels of government. A good number of responses, 229, were received from the top management. The survey also attracted 531 expert level responses. This was significant, as the expert perspective had been absent in earlier civil servant surveys. Even if the response rate was relatively low (12%), the survey collected the largest set of data on civil service ethics so far.</p> <p>The civil servant survey looked at different aspects of civil service ethics: the change of values in central government, the principles of civil service ethics, situations that present ethical problems as well as different means by which a high level of civil service ethics could be maintained and improved. The survey highlighted the continuity of civil service values and principles but also uncertainties associated with certain new phenomena.</p>			
<b>Publisher</b>	Ministry of Finance		
<b>Publication sales/ Distributed by</b>	Online version: <a href="http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi">julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi</a> Publication sales: <a href="http://julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi">julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi</a>		



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Survey on ethics: background and objectives

This report presents the results of a survey examining the views of central government employees on ethical values and principles related to their work in Finland. The issue of civil service ethics is a pertinent one as the majority of State personnel are civil servants. In 2015, a total of 93% of all State employees were civil servants, compared to only 7% who were working under an employment contract. Civil service ethics refer to ethical and moral considerations related to work, i.e., how one should act in a certain situation. In plain language, civil service ethics involve the rules of the State administration and the principles of good administration. As part of normal, everyday activities, many different situations of ethical choices arise. In the majority of such situations, the right mode of operation is self-evident: it is obvious that civil servants must treat all parties equally and make their decisions based on facts. However, situations can sometimes be complicated and require greater moral consideration (e.g., conflict of interests, problem of many hands, questions of qualifying periods). In addition, it is not sufficient for a civil servant to act impartially in such situations but the actions must also be seen to be impartial. Given its importance, it is hardly surprising that the topic of civil service ethics has received considerable attention from both civil servants and citizens alike<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Requirements on good governance and ethics are not foreign to business. Public companies listed on the Helsinki Stock Exchange, whose registered office is in Finland, abide by the Finnish Corporate Governance Code, a collection of recommendations, prepared by the Securities Market Association for listed companies that supplement obligations arising from legislation. The Code has been prepared to be observed in accordance with the comply-or-explain principle. The premise is that companies comply with all the recommendations of the Governance Code. However, a company may deviate from individual recommendations if it has a justified reason for doing so. In such a case, the company must, in line with the comply-or-explain principle, list the recommendations it deviates from and explain the reasons for such deviation and the method for resolving it. Many large corporations have their own compliance unit for ethical questions and good governance, typically located in the legal affairs department. The function, compliance officer, helps ensure that company employees are aware of their responsibilities and pay enough attention to ethical matters (Ratsula 2016).

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has surveyed the values and principles of the State administration on several occasions. Respondents from earlier surveys conducted in 1999 and 2007 included senior management and employee representatives of government agencies and institutions. The present, third survey is based on a recommendation issued by the Committee on the Ethics of State Civil Servants. The Committee suggested that the present state of civil service ethics should be investigated by organising two surveys in which the respondents would be citizens and State employees (MoF 2014, 50). The survey material concerning civil servants was collected as an electronic questionnaire in November 2015, and this report contains a review of the results. The survey for citizens, proposed by the Committee, was conducted as an electronic questionnaire in June 2016 by TNS Gallup. The results of these surveys were discussed at a joint seminar in November 2016 and will be utilised by the Ministry of Finance and the Advisory Committee on the Ethics of State Civil Servants.

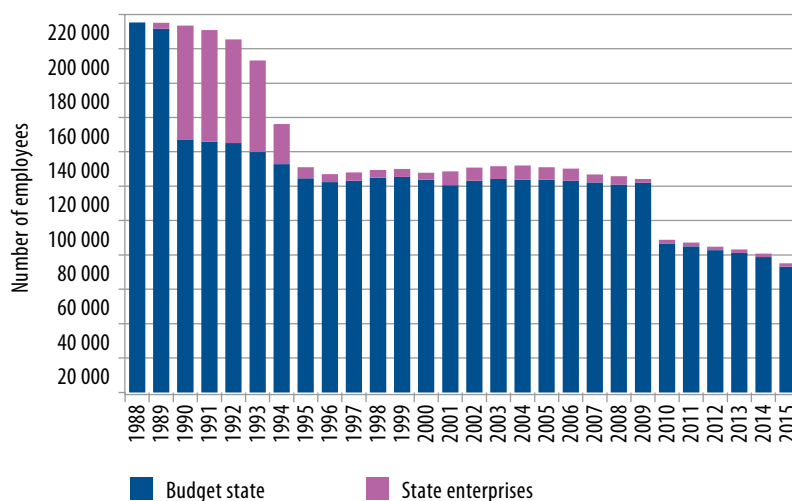
The survey for civil servants looked at different sides of civil service ethics: changes in the values of the State administration, ethical principles, ethically problematic situations, and different ways for maintaining and developing the high standard of civil service ethics. The electronic questionnaire was sent to all the 12 Ministries and 16 government agencies (see Appendices 1 and 2). In addition, the survey was extended to the senior management at all agencies and institutions. The survey was sent to individuals responsible for communications at the agencies, who distributed the cover letter and a link to the Webropol questionnaire through their respective agency's intranet and/or via email. For senior management, the request for a response was sent to the respondents via email. The survey was made available to more than 4300 respondents at the ministerial level, 3100 at the agency level, and 400 to senior management. In all, the sample included approximately 8000 individuals.

A total of 939 responses to the survey were received from all administrative sectors and levels. A total of 327 responses (35%) were obtained from the ministerial level and 612 responses (65%) from the agency level. An exceptionally good number of responses (229, rate of response at 46%) were received from members of senior management. The expert-level perspective, which was missing from the previous ethics surveys, received significant expression with 531 responses. Not many responses were received from supervisors and support staff (93 and 86, respectively). A typical respondent was a civil servant (97%) with a permanent service relationship (86%) who had a higher university degree (78%) and more than 10 years of work experience in the State administration (73%). Women accounted for 60% of all respondents. With regard to the entire State administration, ministries were overrepresented in the survey, so the results reflect the views of the core of central government administration. Although the response rate was relatively modest (12%), the present survey is the most extensive review of civil service ethics thus far in Finland.

## 1.2 Structural change in State administration

The activities of the State administration are subject to various impelling factors. Figure 1 shows that the number of employees within the central government has significantly decreased since the 1990s. According to personnel statistics, in 1988 central government had over 215 000 person-years while the figure for 2015 is slightly over 73 000. The change is due, for example, to the abolition of central agencies at the turn of the 1990s and the transfer of operations to state enterprises and state-owned companies (e.g., State Railways VR and Post and Telecommunications Service PTL). The university reform implemented in 2010 moved approximately 34 000 person-years outside the budget state. The Government Productivity Programme (2003–2010) and the Effectiveness and Productivity Programme (2011–2015) reduced the number of State employees by about 12 000 person-years. The healthcare and social welfare reform and the county government reform, which will come into effect at the beginning of 2020, will abolish ELY Centres and TE Offices, and their staff will be transferred to the counties. With these changes, the number of State employees is estimated to be in the category of approximately 65 000 in 2020.

**Figure 1. Trend in the number of central government staff, 1988–2015**



In addition to the aforementioned structural changes, the State administration has also been impacted by, for example, Finland's membership of the EU and ever increasing international cooperation, the growth in public procurement, and interaction and collaboration with the private sector. The shift of the 2008 financial crisis into a debt crisis and weakened economic growth, for their part, have thrown public finances into an imbalance. Some of the pressure to achieve savings in the central government finances has been answered by cutting appropriations allocated to the operating expenditure of agencies and institutions.

The survey examined the effect of some driving factors on the activities of the respondents' own agency (Table 1). As the table clearly indicates, the impacts of savings in central government finances are visible in the operation of the agencies. More than half of all respondents (56%) considered them to have had a profound effect. Other factors, such as internationalisation and the increase in public procurement, have had some impact but, though in the respondents' opinion, these are less significant compared to the savings measures.

**Table 1. Impact of various factors directed at State administration on the operation of the respondent's own agency (n=939)**

"-" = no impact, "++++" = strong impact

	-	+	++	+++	++++	Total.
Savings measures in central government finances	1	2	10	31	56	100
Use of public procurement	4	11	32	37	16	100
Internationalisation	5	13	28	33	22	100
Intensifying political steering on matters under the agency's authority	6	15	29	32	18	100
Interaction with the private sector	9	17	32	31	11	100
Commercial services provided by the agency	28	21	27	16	8	100

In open answers, the respondents also highlighted other factors targeted at the State administration. These included, for example, deterioration of expertise, changes in work, digitalisation, and the decentralisation of functions. For changes in work, the key aspects included the retirement of employees, decreases in personnel resources, increasing workload, and side-effects related to these. The operating environment of the State administration was deemed to be changing rapidly and leading to constant organisational changes. The expertise of the State administration, along with appreciation, was seen to have deteriorated ("negative perceptions among public towards civil servants"). Digitalisation was seen mostly in a positive light, and it was deemed to have significantly changed the practices and services of the State administration ("digitalisation of the operating environment, technological reforms, reforms related to premises").

*"The operating environment has become extremely unstable, constantly changing"*

### 1.3 Feedback given on the survey

A total of 197 respondents answered the section on feedback. Most of them regarded the survey as topical, extensive, and diversified. Due to such extensiveness, the survey was fairly long: it contained 47 questions, of which nine were sets of questions (for details, see the questionnaire in Appendix 2). In all, the data matrix compiled from the responses included 231 variables, 30 of which were free-format, open answers. Multiplying this with the number of respondents (939) gives an understanding of the scope of the material. The free-format answers alone produced more than 157 pages of concise text. The reverse side of such extensiveness and diversity is that answering the survey took quite a long time (30–60 min per respondent). The length of the survey contributed to the low rate of responses, 12 per cent. If the survey is repeated at a later date, we should consider shortening the questionnaire.

The electronic form was deemed technically functional. A few respondents hoped that they could print or save a copy of the form for themselves. A couple of individuals expressed concerns related to the identifiability of respondents despite the anonymous nature of the questionnaire. Constraining the question pattern 19 to only five choices was regarded as undesirable (see page 32). Questions concerning the field of education also left room for improvement. Several respondents suggested that the field of law should be added to the choices and they should be given an opportunity to choose multiple sectors of education. The respondents also proposed some additional questions<sup>2</sup>.

In its current format, the survey is a general study that is suited for all administrative sectors and agencies. Alongside it, one should consider using a survey tailored to a specific branch that can better take into account the specific questions of that field (a survey concerning the prosecution service, the ethics of the police, etc.).

*“Good questions!  
I hope this will lead to  
something  
more than just instructions!  
Ethics will not change with  
instructions but by changing  
the practices.”*

<sup>2</sup> Respondents hoped that the survey would also deal with the following questions: concrete cases of ethics (through a description of an actual situation or series of scenarios), the operation of old-boys' networks, the various forms of structural corruption, the share of women in management positions, the implementation of innovations and reforms (new devices and applications), age discrimination, personnel policy, ethics in the management of agencies, the impact of organisational changes, the realisation of citizens' rights, the role of the media, use of social media, global ethical values, environmental values, political appointments, the effect of changes in the political culture on a civil servant's role, fixed-term service relationships, perspectives related to liability for acts in office and situations where civil servants are forced to act against their own moral principles or the law.

## 2 Values and principles in State administration

### 2.1 Formation of the values of State administration

Administrative values have a long history. They are rooted in the position of the State administration in society and with the role of civil servants as part of the politico-administrative system. According to Max Weber's ideal model, bureaucracy is an impersonal mode of administration that is technically the most efficient. The outcome of the activity of a bureaucratic organisation can be anticipated and this, to use a common metaphor, makes it an administrative machine. Since this activity is determined by laws, statutes and instructions, the operation of the system does not leave room for moral consideration. According to Weber, administration and politics must be kept separate due to their different sources of legitimacy: the legitimacy of bureaucracy is based on legality, whereas the legitimacy of politics is founded on charisma. Any mixing of these would be fatal in Weber's view, and without the "moral discipline and self-denial of civil servants", the entire administrative system would be falling to pieces (Weber 1918, 95).

The ideal model of bureaucracy, outlined by Weber one hundred years ago, is a poor description of the present reality. Today, rules-driven bureaucracy is generally seen as the opposite of an efficient organisation. Civil servants have been granted more room to consider their methods of operation, and senior civil servants play an active role in policy formulation. The governance of the current society requires expertise that the civil service effectively possesses. When civil servants can affect the methods and goals of operation with their own choices, questions concerning civil service ethics move to the centre. The Weberian approach is still relevant because it emphasises the rule of law and loyalty towards democratically elected institutions. However, it is too narrow for use as an ethical guideline and it does not rise to the present day challenges. In the past few decades, civil service ethics have been developed for example through the definition of the values of the State administration (Demmke & Moilanen 2014).

In Finland, the values of the State administration are specified in different documents. One key document is the Government's Decision in Principle on State's personnel policy from 2001. It sets the goal of a basis of clear values and ethical standards, and specifies the core values in the State administration. According to the Decision in Principle, the State administration's values are founded on democracy, rule of law and the Nordic welfare society amid an increasingly global environment. Personnel policy starts with the premise that the Government, through its decisions, confirms the basic values of the State administration, which consist of the following values: effectiveness, quality and expertise, the service principle, transparency, trust, equality, impartiality, independence and responsibility. The Decision in Principle is a combination of traditional administrative values and more recent values that emphasise economic efficiency.

In the late 1990s, civil service ethics were investigated in a survey conducted by the Ethics Committee (MoF 2000). The majority of the civil servants who answered the survey considered that the core values of the State administration had undergone changes during the past decade. Only 3% of the respondents deemed that the basic values had remained unchanged. More than half of the respondents found that the most important values in the State administration were rule of law (66%), service principle (62%), expertise (58%), impartiality (58%) and justice (57%). Other values that were highlighted included openness (48%), results-orientedness (42%) and integrity (34%). When asked about one's own agency, expertise (82%) took the lead over the rule of law. In general, the grounds of civil service ethics were deemed to be sufficiently clear (61%)<sup>3</sup>.

In the current survey, values were looked at in three different ways. Firstly, the importance of values was investigated by asking respondents to assess the importance of the values in the State administration on a scale ranging from one to five. Secondly, respondents were asked to choose no more than five of the values they found to be the most important, i.e. the core values of the State administration. Thirdly, respondents were asked to assess how well the administrative values are realised in practice.

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3 MoF (2000). Civil service ethics. A study of the foundations of civil service ethics, its present state, and areas of development. Ministry of Finance working group memoranda 8/2000. The survey was repeated later by Mirva Peiponen (2007). Values in the Daily Job of the Civil Servant. Analysis of current status of civil service ethics. Ministry of Finance research papers and studies, 4/2007.

## 2.2 Core values in State administration

As Table 2 shows, the respondents found all of the 14 values reviewed in the survey to be very or somewhat important. This is not a surprising result, given that they involve values relevant to administrative work. The average of all values was 4.24. Respondents' views of the importance of values are surprisingly homogenous and there are no major differences between the groups of respondents (for details, see Appendix 3, Table 20). Amongst other important values, respondents highlighted especially continuous reform ("questioning deeply held ideas", "courage"), holistic approach ("no partial-optimization", "cooperation across boundaries", "taking responsibility for a perspective broader than one's own sector"), eco-friendliness ("promotion of and compliance with environmental values"), predictability and justifiability, human rights and a good work ethic.

**Table 2.** How important do you find the values listed below in terms of State administration as a whole? (n=939)

1 = not important 5 = very important

Value	Average	SD
Expertise	4.79	0.50
Impartiality and independence	4.76	0.54
Rule of law and responsibility	4.76	0.53
Trust	4.75	0.52
Service principle	4.59	0.62
Openness	4.56	0.66
Equality	4.42	0.78
Result-orientedness	4.32	0.77
Dedication	3.98	0.83
Innovativeness	3.92	0.90
Economic efficiency	3.84	0.90
Collegiality	3.73	0.96
Obedience	3.56	0.89
General acceptability	3.35	0.98

When the values are reviewed through a forced-choice method, the differences between them become more prominent (Table 3). Although all the values are important, if choices have to be made between them, some values are more fundamental than others. The top group contains the three core values – expertise, impartiality and the rule of law – with a response rate of clearly over 70%. The middle group (40-50%) includes openness, trust and the service principle. Economic values, result-orientedness (34%) and economic efficiency (16%) are not core values in the State administration in respondents' opinion. Only 16%



of all respondents regarded innovativeness, mentioned as a new virtue for civil servants in the Government Programme, as a core value<sup>4</sup>. Equality (22%) was also left far behind. Women and men had minor differences in their attitudes towards equality: equality was regarded as a core value by 25% of the women and 17% of the men. Only 1% of the respondents, 12 individuals, found obedience to be a core value in the State administration. Obedience as compliance with a supervisor's orders and instructions is important for practical administration, such as supervision of work, but it is not viewed as a core value. Administrative work is not blind obedience but requires using one's own discretion.

**Table 3. Core values in State administration (n=939)**

	% of the respondents
Expertise	77.5
Impartiality	76.8
Rule of law and responsibility	70.4
Openness	47.1
Trust	46.1
Service principle	42.7
Result-orientedness	34.0
Equality	21.7
Economic efficiency	16.2
Innovativeness	16.0
General acceptability	10.1
Dedication	4.6
Collegiality	2.4
Obedience	1.3

Although the core values of the State administration are very similar across personnel groups, proportional differences in weighting that are specific to each group can be observed. Managers and supervisors underline the results-orientedness more than other groups. Management, more than other groups, emphasise the service principle, openness and innovativeness, whereas supervisors stress the rule of law and trust. Experts, on the other hand, stress expertise and impartiality more than other groups of respondents,

4 In 2015, the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) accepted innovativeness and the promotion of innovations as ethical values for external audits and audit professionals. The National Audit Office of Finland has stressed upon the need to raise innovativeness and bold reform as part of the ethical principles of good administration (NAO 2014, 12). Willingness to be of service, another new virtue of civil servants mentioned in the Government Programme, is not actually a new value in the State administration. The service principle has long been an important ethical value in the civil service, which gained more weight with the Administrative Procedure Act enacted in the early 1980s.

while members of the support staff emphasise equality and collegiality, which are important for the work community (for details, see Appendix 3, Table 21). Respondents working at agencies stressed the service principle more than Ministry employees (48% vs. 32%).

## 2.3 Realisation of values in administrative practices

Respondents were also asked about how well the values of the State administration are realised in practice (Table 4). In the respondents' view, the core values of the State administration are realised quite well, only openness was deemed to be realised relatively poorly (3.53). Openness can be regarded as a distinctive, traditional value of Nordic states. Challenges and development possibilities related to openness have been recognised and, in recent years, openness has been enhanced with the help of the Open Government Partnership programme, for instance.<sup>5</sup> Realisation of the rule of law and responsibility was found to be especially good (4.44). The rule of law and responsibility is such an integral part of the administrative culture in Finland that it is taken for granted and sometimes it is not even seen as a value. Innovativeness (3.11) was assessed as the value that was realised the least. On the whole, the respondents regarded all the values listed in the survey as important and also deemed that they are well realised in their own agency (average of 3.81). When all personnel groups are compared, management systematically assessed the realisation of all the values to be higher than the other personnel groups (see Appendix 3, Table 22).

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about the programme, see <http://vm.fi/hallinnon-avoimuus/avoim-hallinto>. The COCOPS comparative study for senior European civil service management also highlighted that, in the opinion of senior management in the State administration, Finland has recently invested heavily in measures that increase openness and transparency (Virtanen 2016, 132-135).

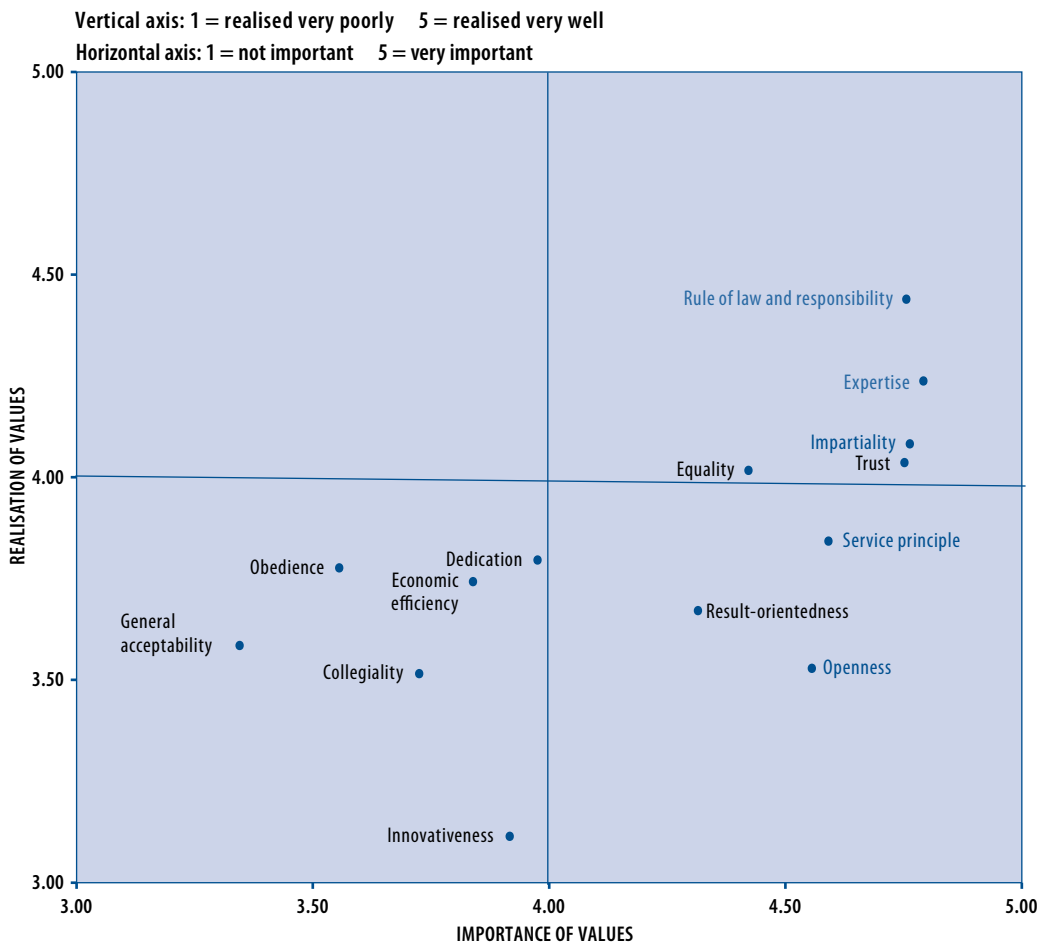
**Table 4.** How well do your own agency's practices correspond to the values in the State administration? (n=939)

1= realised very poorly 5 = realised very well

	Average	SD
Rule of law and responsibility	4.44	.751
Expertise	4.24	.785
Impartiality and independence	4.08	.970
Trust	4.04	.887
Equality	4.02	.874
Service principle	3.84	.877
Dedication	3.80	.874
Obedience	3.78	.804
Economic efficiency	3.74	.935
Result-orientedness	3.67	.936
General acceptability	3.58	.856
Openness	3.53	.986
Collegiality	3.51	.875
Innovativeness	3.11	.994

When the findings are analysed in more depth, proportional differences can be observed between the importance of values and the realisation of values. The importance of the values is shown on the horizontal axis and their realisation on the vertical axis in Figure 2. The most important section in Figure 2 is the upper right corner where values deemed important are also realised well. Here are located expertise, the rule of law and impartiality of the core values in the State administration marked with a blue colour. At the bottom-right corner are the important values that are not realised very well in practice. The values in this section must be actively enhanced (openness, results-orientedness, the service principle). The two values lying between the two sections, equality and trust, should be monitored.

**Figure 2. The importance of values in the State administration and their realisation in the practices of one's own agency**



In the respondents' opinion, values placed on the left side of the figure are not considered as important as those on the right. They can be described as other values. The figure does not include a single other value that is realised well; instead, all the other values are found in the bottom-left corner. Since these are not considered core values, their development is not similarly crucial. Nevertheless, they are not irrelevant. For example, economic efficiency is an important instrumental value. Since resources are limited, they must be used as efficiently as possible. This requirement is especially topical in this age of financial scarcity. There also exists a great need for innovations as the practices of the State administration are designed, implemented and assessed.

## 2.4 Values and ethical principles in agency documents

Besides guidelines and publications prepared by the Government, the Ministry of Finance and other parties, administrative values, principles and other issues on civil service ethics are often discussed in agencies' own documents, such as an operational or personnel strategy. Other agency-specific documents mentioned by respondents included the agency's ethical guidelines, ethical codes<sup>6</sup>, an orientation guide and ethical instructions for judges. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the respondents stated that values and principles are discussed in the agency's own documents. However, many respondents pointed out that values are formally discussed at management level, not amongst employees broadly. While it is true that values are specified as part of the agency's work on strategy, actual ethical questions are rarely discussed. As one respondent put it, "if they are, then very superficially. The operational strategy contains hardly any questions on civil service ethics". The definition of values, as related to the strategy process, was deemed heavily management-oriented ("the discussion must have remained at the level of supervisors and the management team"). Another observation made by respondents concerned the monitoring of realisation of values. Values have been specified but their practical realisation is not monitored and possible problems are not discussed<sup>7</sup> ("Values have been defined but not actively monitored").

It is common knowledge that values listed in agencies' strategy documents do not usually correspond to the permanent ethical values in State administration (cf. MoF 2000, 43-44). For instance, expertise, rule of law and impartiality do not appear in the agencies' strategy documents. Instead, the agencies emphasise customer-orientedness, results-orientedness and digitalisation. The dissimilarity of the values may seem alarmingly large and raise questions about a breakdown in the value base of the State administration. However, in reality agencies do not aim to set permanent administrative values. Rather, they set strategic values that are emphasised over specific period of time.

*"[Values] are discussed at information events for personnel, but personnel should be involved in preparing them in order for them to come to life. After all, we are an expert organisation."*

<sup>6</sup> According to the international COCOPS study, senior managers in the State administration in Finland say that codes of conduct are hardly used at all as a management instrument (Virtanen 2016, 132-135)

<sup>7</sup> "They have been discussed but it is unclear what will be done/what will happen if the strategy is not in line with the values or good administration - this is often the case."

## 2.5 Prominent ethical characteristics of agencies

Pursuant to Table 5, a quarter (23%) of the respondents deemed that their own agency's range of duties included specific situations that diverge from the other agencies and require ethical decision-making. According to the open answers (100 responses), such situations included, for example, foreign representations containing a great deal of practices that diverge from Finnish values and ethics<sup>8</sup>, classified information ("not all matters can be processed publicly"), financing decisions ("general lobbying by beneficiaries"), environmental questions ("animal welfare", "continuous conflict between the environmental administration and agricultural and forestry administration"), health-related matters (welfare of patients), an emphasised requirement for independence in the work done by courts of law<sup>9</sup>, permits and supervision-related tasks ("the financial interests of the trade vs. the realisation of legislation"; "special permits for drugs"), and enforcement tasks ("[...] we have to balance debtor's and creditor's interests"). However, most respondents think that their own agency's range of duties does not include ethical questions specific only to their own agency (39%) or that their existence is difficult to assess (37%).

**Table 5. Does your agency's range of duties include situations that are typical for you, which diverge from other agencies and require ethical decision-making? (n=939)**

	No	Yes	Hard to say	Total
Management	61	22	17	100
Supervisor	45	22	33	100
Expert	31	24	45	100
Support staff	26	24	50	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>8</sup> "Many host states of diplomatic missions have deeply-rooted societal practices (corruption, nepotism, bribery, etc.) that cannot be influenced and with which we have to learn to live, without getting involved in these practices in any way".

<sup>9</sup> "[...] in a court of law, certain values, such as independence and acting according to the law, not other parties' motives, is even many times more important than in other branches of government. In this environment, it is impossible to distinguish values and ethics from basic work"; "A court of law must be independent from both authorities that represent the executive branch of government and those which appear there as parties concerned, but also independent from the opinions of the media and the general public, which do not correspond to administration of justice according to legislation as well as the obligations and principles of international treaties".

## 2.6 Clarity of regulation on questions of civil service ethics

Besides the values of the State administration, respondents were also asked about the clarity of regulation on certain general matters concerning civil service ethics. Regulation refers to legal provisions, executive orders and administrative instructions pertaining to the matter. For example, the acceptance of secondary occupation is laid down in the State Civil Servants' Act (section 18), the State Civil Servants' Decree (sections 18 and 19), the Ministry of Finance's instruction on the secondary occupations of civil servants (VM/1591/00.00.00/2010) as well as in agency-specific orders and instructions<sup>10</sup>. Table 6 looks at typical ethical questions that are regulated by different means.

**Table 6.** Is ethical regulation concerning conduct sufficiently clear? (n=939)

1 = regulation is unclear 5 = regulation is clear

	Average	SD
Processing of confidential and secret information	4.23	0.94
Gifts and other benefits offered to personnel	4.03	1.01
Procedures concerning secondary occupations	4.02	1.03
Participating in trips offered by outside parties	3.96	1.13
Using equipment used at work (such as phone and email) for the management of private affairs	3.90	1.04
Practices concerning public procurement	3.72	1.01
Management of conflict-of-interest situations	3.69	1.03
Participation in events offered by outside parties (concerts, sports events, etc.)	3.68	1.11
Conduct in social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	3.32	1.11
Political activities of employees	3.17	1.22
Fixed-term restriction on a new job upon leaving the employ of the State to prevent conflict of interest (waiting period of 6–12 months)	2.85	1.23
Fixed-term restriction on working duties when entering the employ of the State from other sectors to prevent conflict of interest	2.73	1.19

Respondents viewed regulation concerning the processing of confidential and secret information to be the clearest (4.23). Rules on gifts and other benefits offered to personnel (4.03) and participating in trips arranged by outside parties (3.96) were also regarded as fairly clear, and the same applies to procedures concerning secondary occupations (4.02) and management of disqualification situations (3.69). The respondents found rules concerning the use of social media<sup>11</sup> (3.32) and the participation of civil servants in political

<sup>10</sup> For instance, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court have their own instructions on secondary occupations.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the recommendation by the Advisory Committee on the Ethics of the State Civil Servants concerning civil servants in social media, dated 15 June 2016 (VM/956/00.01.00.00/2014).

*“These matters are not discussed much at all, so different civil servants may have different views of the matters, even if they have been given instructions.”*

activities (3.17) to be less clear than the previous subjects. The topics that raised the most questions amongst the respondents were the waiting period related to an exit from State employ in certain situations (2.85) and the waiting period associated with entry into State employ (2.73). The ambiguity was also visible such that almost a third of the respondents were unable to answer questions concerning the entry waiting period (31%) and the exit waiting period (29%). The question on political activities by State personnel also proved difficult to answer (19%). The differences between the groups of respondents were fairly small: managers and supervisors deemed regulation to be slightly clearer than experts and support staff (for more details, see Appendix 3, Table 23).

A total of 112 comments were received to the set of questions on the clarity of regulation. The majority of the respondents felt that most of the questions reviewed were regulated clearly enough, which is also confirmed by Table 6 above. In the respondents' opinion, the real challenge is that the regulation of different questions is scattered in many places and civil servants may not necessarily be aware of such regulations (“If you look for information on these separately, you will certainly find it. However, comprehensive guidelines are lacking, at least at the agency level. Nor at the Ministry, either. There is rarely any orientation at all, especially in short, fixed-term service relationships”; “Any problems with the aforementioned matters are rarely due to a lack of clarity in regulation but, instead, due to a lack of knowledge of such regulation and, to some extent, to a lack of interest”; “Regulation/guidelines may be clear, but individual civil servants are not necessarily aware of them. The State Civil Servants' Act and the instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance and are fragmented and difficult to comprehend, even for someone dealing with these matters on a daily basis, let alone other civil servants”). Respondents considered discussion and training, which increase awareness of the subject, as key methods for improving the situation. Compiling existing regulation into one document was also found to be useful (cf. subsection 3.2)<sup>12</sup>.

Of the individual subjects, public procurement and questions of waiting periods garnered the most attention in open answers. The application of procurement legislation seemed very difficult for many respondents (“reinventing the wheel again and again”, “clear lack of

<sup>12</sup> “Orders and instructions in the State administration are an incoherent entity that is challenging for employees to manage. You have, for example, orders issued by the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury, and agencies' own; also, it is not always clear which orders are in effect. Central government steering and issuing of orders should be clarified. It should be clear to everyone who is responsible for overall steering of central government, and that authority should take overall responsibility for such steering. The government should have an Order Manual with all the orders concerning personnel and the agency, compiled under different sections with their period of validity and finding it in Intra should be made easy, including a separate search function. Every agency could supplement the manual with its own norms.”



know-how”, “the procedures are so complicated that, even with a minor purchase, several lawyers from the relevant field must be consulted”), and more support for making acquisitions was needed from government’s central purchasing body Hansel, for instance. The management of conflict-of-interest through a waiting period was unclear for many respondents (cf. Table 6 above). Many respondents said that no attention at all is paid to the question but there are examples to the contrary (“When I began to work for the State, certain working duties were not entrusted to me due to conflict of interest.”). With regard to political advisers, management of conflicts of interest was considered difficult (“Especially individuals recruited to the staff of Ministers often arrive directly from lobbying organisations, but how can you place a waiting period of 6-12 months on them?”). Respondents said that the political activities of civil servants are not regulated at all. In a few cases the respondents commented that current regulation is too detailed and in conflict with the general deregulation trend in State administration<sup>13</sup>.

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13 The contradiction between detailed guidelines and the development of new kinds of practices is sometimes difficult. Perhaps the time has passed for detailed guidelines and it would be more important to explain the grand themes. Also, civil servants could be trusted more than before”.

## 3 Measures that strengthen civil service ethics

### 3.1 Values discussions

Awareness of values and principles in civil service ethics, ethical sensitivity, cannot take root if they are not discussed within a work community or more widely in public. According to evaluations made by respondents (Table 7), values are usually discussed in informal situations, such as at the coffee table (61%), or at internal meetings, such as departmental and unit meetings, or during employee info events (56%). Ethical values are discussed especially at training events directed at management (58%). Specific ethics days (13%) or other events (8%), such as meetings of management teams, orientation events or supervisor days, are less frequent.

According to the responses, managers discuss values and ethical matters more than other groups. On the other hand, management can also recognise ethical matters better than others. Only 3% of the managers stated that there was no discussion at all on questions related to values and civil service ethics. Of the experts, one in five (21%) felt that there was no discussion on values. There was less discussion of values at ministries than agencies: of respondents working at the ministry level, 22% said that values were not discussed, whereas at agencies 12% of the respondents held this opinion. Experts working at ministries carried out less discussion of values (26%) than other groups.

**Table 7. Forums for values discussions at ministries and agencies, by personnel groups**

	Discussions at the coffee table	Internal meetings	Personnel training	Ethics days	Other event	No discussion
Management	69	74	58	16	11	3
Supervisor	69	66	42	18	8	11
Expert	57	46	33	10	8	21
Support staff	56	55	33	16	7	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>

## 3.2 Values in the Daily Job handbook

The Values in the Daily Job (MoF 2004) project looked for ways to include agencies' own values as part of administrative practices and to specify good practices, in order to thus maintain and strengthen shared values in the State administration. The project also produced a handbook called Values in the Daily Job, which was published in the following year (MoF 2005). The publication contains a thorough review of values included in the Government's Decision in Principle, as well as the key statutes of the State Civil Servants' Act and their purpose. The handbook is intended for use as training material and it is also used as auxiliary material in the Government's joint induction course.

The present survey examined how familiar the respondents were with the Values in the Daily Job handbook. One-half of the respondents stated they had dealt with the book in some way. On closer inspection, a third of the respondents (32%) had heard about the book and 16% said they had read it. Of the respondents, 5% had actually used the book. Agency management (9%) and supervisors (11%) stand out as users of the book. Only 3% of experts and not a single member of the support staff had used the book.

**Table 8.** Familiarity with the Values in the Daily Job handbook, by personnel groups (n=939)

	I am not familiar with it	I have heard about it	I have read it	I have used it	Total
Management	28	41	22	9	100
Supervisor	45	29	15	11	100
Expert	52	30	15	3	100
Support staff	65	24	10	0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of the 53 respondents who commented on the question found the book useful (“a good read”; “basic text”; “the book was used as a cornerstone in the establishment of our agency's ethical principles and instructions”). The book was widely distributed in the State administration when it was published ten years ago but, with time, familiarity with the book has decreased (cf. the table above). The publication is distributed to new civil servants at ministries as part of the Government's joint induction course, or VN passport. Any other systematic use of the publication at the agency level is unknown. However, in the survey there was no divergence in responses between ministries and agencies (see Appendix 3, Table 29). The answers show that there remains clear demand for

*“This book should have a new edition, highlighting instructions for everyone as an integral part of it. Besides having a separate guide, it would be more important to link ethical questions to, for example, other instructions, training events, practical situations. Ethics and values are not separate matters but related to the daily work.”*

the book in the State administration (“The ethics handbook for the State administration should be part of the orientation package for all State civil servants!”). Essential information should be compiled into one place, be readily available and it should be linked to as part of the normal development of operations.

### 3.3 Need for training on civil service ethics

More than half of all respondents (58%) saw that training on civil service ethics is needed at their agency. The majority of the respondents who had been in an ethically difficult situation and had used their own discretion (see subsection 4.3) regarded ethics training as necessary (73%). Respondents were also asked to explain the matters on which training should be arranged. A total of 286 open answers to the question were received, with the majority favouring general training on civil service ethics. It means repetition of basic issues and a review of the principles of good administration<sup>14</sup>, discussion on the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, the State Civil Servants' Act and the Administrative Procedure Act, and paying attention to amendments occurring in regulation. The individual matters mentioned most often included questions of disqualification (25), the service principle (16), social media (15), gifts and hospitality (10), confidential information and the secrecy obligation (8), public procurement such as consultancy services (7) and matters concerning equality (6).

There are two approaches to the arrangement of ethics training. The traditional way is to hold events focused on ethics for all personnel (such as ethics days) or to target them at certain sections (such as public procurement). The other method is to include training on ethics as part of other personnel training. Civil service ethics is a natural part of both management coaching and orientation training for new civil servants. In practice, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive but supplement each other.

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<sup>14</sup> Regulation concerning good administration is part of the Administrative Procedure Act. Pursuant to section 6 of the Act, an authority shall treat the customers of the administration on an equal basis and exercise its competence only for purposes that are acceptable under the law. The acts of the authority shall be impartial and proportionate to the objective. They shall protect legitimate expectations as based on the legal system. According to section 7 of the Administrative Procedure Act, an authority's obligation to communicate its operations and services and on the rights and obligations of organisations in matters related to their sector are laid down in the Act on the Openness of Government Activities.

### 3.4 Civil service ethics and personnel management

Civil service ethics can be influenced by measures related to the employer and personnel policy and by management and leadership<sup>15</sup>. The clearer the responsibilities and requirements that come with a certain job and the better they can be communicated to staff, the less likely it is that ethical problems will arise. Questions concerning management and leadership were aimed at agency managers and supervisors (322 respondents). On the basis of their answers, perspectives on civil service ethics are noted especially in the orientation of new employees and agency communications, whereas the utilisation of staff mobility to avoid conflict-of-interest situations was a foreign concept to respondents (Table 9). A high percentage alone does not mean that ethical viewpoints are taken into account well. There are major differences in the quality of HR measures at agencies and it would be important to identify and share best practices that support civil service ethics.

**Table 9. Utilisation of different HR measures in the development of civil service ethics (n=322)**

	Recruitment	Orientation	Personnel training	Mobility	Communications	Management training
Yes	53	76	65	18	73	41
Hard to say	42	20	23	36	20	34
No	6	5	12	46	7	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Recruitment.** Half of the respondents said that the requirements of civil service ethics are taken into consideration in the recruitment of new employees. On the basis of the comments (108 replies), during a job interview the participants go through matters related in particular to private interests, the applicants' background (personnel security clearance, etc.) and perspectives on equality. A review of values was deemed particularly important when the person being recruited comes from the private sector. Many respondents emphasised that the recruitment process itself must be managed in a professional, objective and fair manner.

*“During a job interview, it is important to thoroughly review matters of disqualification”*

**Orientation.** The majority of the respondents (76%) were of the opinion that, in the orientation of a new employee, ethical requirements related to the position as a civil servant are brought up. The open answers (144 replies) highlighted that orientation training practices vary. The best cases involve a systematic programme

*“Learning the ways and instructions of the workplace through discussion and guidance”*

<sup>15</sup> For municipal directors' recent views on ethics and corruption, see Ojajarvi 2015.

where the new employee is not left alone with extensive guidelines but, rather, things are discussed in light of concrete cases and the most important things are brought to the fore (such as the responsibility of a reporting official and questions of disqualification). For example, at the National Audit Office, new civil servants discuss the significance of values and how these values are visible in daily work with the Director-General of the agency<sup>16</sup>. With regard to individual subjects, the secrecy obligation and questions of information security are clearly discussed the most during orientation.

*"Matters are reiterated regularly in personnel training and, for example, when guidelines are reformed."*

**Personnel training.** Training is the traditional way of developing the ethical competence of personnel. Two-thirds of managers and supervisors responded that personnel training arranged by the agency pays attention to the requirements of civil service ethics. Comments received to the question (96 replies) showed that agency-specific practices vary ("as part of reiterative training", "in the training of supervisors", "in the training of reporting officials", "information bulletins").

**Management training.** Fewer than half of all managers and supervisors (41%) stated that civil service ethics is discussed in management training programmes. The link is not very strong because a third of managers (34%) could not comment on the matter, and even the open answers (38 replies) do not make the question more concrete. On the basis of the answers, ethical matters are discussed at, for example, management workshops, in supervisory training, Finnish Institute of Public Management HAUS management courses (JOKO, JUST), on management negotiation days and on the Management Forum. The data suggests that perspectives on civil service ethics could be even more systematically integrated as part of management training.

*"We try to support mobility for many reasons. The agency is very decentralised in terms of offices, and very close cooperation relationships are formed, especially in small localities, with links to municipal politics and regional development. This can be partially prevented through staff mobility and the entire agency's joint operational processes and resource planning."*

**Mobility.** Utilisation of staff mobility to prevent excessively close relationships with the agency's customers and interest groups was a foreign concept for most managers and supervisors: only a fifth of the respondents said that mobility was used to prevent excessively close relationships. Light was shed on the matter by the open answers (34 replies). For example, excessively close relationships can form in visa-related matters when applicants are served by the same official repeatedly, and during inspection visits to customers' premises. As methods concern-

<sup>16</sup> In the National Audit Office's value matrix, values of the agency (responsibility, openness, objectivity, appreciation) are reviewed from four different perspectives (management, action as a member of the work community, operation during audit work and interaction with audit and supervision objects and other cooperating parties, and the Audit Office's values through outsiders' eyes).

ing mobility, the respondents mentioned a nationwide practice and sharing of workload, rotation of regional responsibilities, variation of inspection objects and sector-specific job or career rotation systems (e.g., administration of foreign affairs, and the National Defence Forces).

**Communications.** Most of the respondents (73%) regarded that values, principles and instructions are brought up in agency communications. The main focus in the open answers was on the agency's internal communications. The most common comment was on the fact that instructions and guidelines are easily available on the agency's intranet. This also includes different information events and open and fair communication in general. Among methods of external communications, respondents mentioned the agency's website, letters to customers and the annual report.

### 3.5 Senior management's duty to disclose private interests

Pursuant to section 8 a of the State Civil Servants' Act, persons appointed as senior civil servants must before the appointment submit information about their business activities, holdings in businesses and other assets, as well as other tasks, secondary occupations and other private interests that may be relevant to the assessment of their capabilities for managing the duties of the position being filled. The declaration is submitted in the first instance before the appointment to office and, after that, if any information changes or a relevant authority so requests. The purpose of this provision is to prevent a situation where private interests created before the official career begins would cause conflicts of interest (for details, see MoF 2014).

On the basis of the responses, 136 respondents fell within the duty to declare private interests. Of these, 117 respondents said they had submitted such information during the appointment phase. Since a declaration of private interests is a precondition for the appointment of senior civil servants, it is quite likely that some of the respondents are not actually covered by section 8 a. Only the aforementioned 117 respondents were included in a further analysis. Of these, 72 respondents (62%) had not updated the declaration of private interests after their appointment<sup>17</sup>. Those who had updated their details justified it with changes in their secondary occupations ("whenever changes occur"). Respondents

<sup>17</sup> In an audit of legality and the appropriateness of senior management's procedures, the National Audit Office of Finland pointed out that "declarations of private interests by senior management must always be kept up to date" (NAO 2016, 14). The Ministry of Finance compiled updated declarations of private interests by civil service management (answers from a total of 126 senior civil servants). Most of the senior civil servants who submitted the declaration had nothing to report. The details can be found on the website <http://vm.fi/valtio-tyonantajana/johtajana-valtiolla/ylimman-johdon-sidonnaisuudet>.

working as experts on cooperation with the EU pointed out that the procedure for declaring private interests to EU institutions is more detailed and systematic than the Finnish practice.

Managers and supervisors were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the duty to declare above-mentioned interests. A total of 72 open answers to the question were received, with 80% of the respondents finding the matter useful (“necessary in terms of openness”, “an important measure with regard to trust and impartiality”). The matter was unclear for one respondent in 10 (“I cannot say”), and the remaining 10% were not convinced of the procedure's usefulness (“a dead letter”, “minor benefit, minor trouble”, “quite bureaucratic”).

*“Openness maintains trust”*

### 3.6 Waiting period in a public-sector employment contract

Managers and supervisors were asked about whether a situation with a conflict of interest related to leaving State employ could be created in their agency. Such a situation may occur, for example, if a supervisor enters the employ of a party being supervised. In order to prevent conflicts of interest, an agreement on a waiting period can be made with a civil servant before the work begins. Signing an agreement on a waiting period requires the civil servant to have, in that position, access to information that is secret or otherwise protected by provisions that restrict publicity, which could be essentially used to the benefit of oneself or another in the new position. Such information can typically be accessed by senior civil servants and leading experts and, in some cases, by junior civil servants. The waiting period can be a maximum of six months from the end of the employment relationship and compensation equivalent to the salary would be paid for this period<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The amendment to the State Civil Servants' Act concerning waiting periods entered into effect on 1 January 2017. A new section, 44 a, has been added to the State Civil Servants' Act that includes provisions on an agreement on a waiting period, a special restriction period in the period after a service relationship and compensation paid for such a period. The purpose of setting such a restriction period is that when a civil servant starts with other duties after the restriction period, the information he or she knows which is to be protected has lost such significance that it could be used to the benefit of oneself or another or to another party's detriment. Such an agreement can also include a provision on a contractual penalty whose maximum amount is twice the amount paid. Civil servants have, during a public office relationship and a fixed term matching the restriction period after the end of the relationship, a duty to declare if they start another public office relationship, take a new job, or start running a business or practicing a trade. However, an agreement on a waiting period is not binding on a civil servant whose public office relationship ends due to a reason attributable to the employer.



Almost half of all managers and supervisors (44%) found the post-government-employment-related conflict of interest possible in their own agency. A third of the respondents (36%) stated that such a situation with a conflict of interest could not emerge at their agency, and a fifth (20%) could not evaluate the question. When the answers are reviewed in relation to the type of agency, one can see that respondents working at the ministries see conflicts of interest related to leaving State employ more frequently (60%) than those working at agencies (39%). If special ethical characteristic features were seen in the range of duties of the ministry (see subsection 2.5), situations with a conflict of interest were deemed very possible (71%).

A total of 33 open answers were received to the question, divided into four groups. A fifth of the respondents (21%) felt that mobility does not involve any conflict of interest ("in my field, such a situation cannot be formed in my opinion"; "waiting periods and constraints are mere prohibitions based on envy, used simply to make it more difficult to leave the public sector to work for enterprises. There are so few genuine conflicts of interest that they could be agreed upon in individual employment contracts, as is done in the private sector"). A third of the respondents (30%) considered conflicts of interest possible in principle ("possible in exceptional cases", "can probably be created if and when a civil servant joins a business they have supervised", "there are many things that must be kept secret"). A quarter (28%) of those who commented saw actual situations with a conflict of interest created ("there is a great risk with the development of information systems, for example", "we process early-stage information included in trade and business secrets, and knowledge of it could be of financial benefit to a competitor"). Twenty-one per cent commented on the matter in other ways ("this was studied a year ago").

## 4 Assessments on activities in violation of civil service ethics

### 4.1 Unethical practices

The respondents were asked to assess the seriousness of certain unethical practices and their occurrence at the agency level. Tables 10 and 11 show certain typical unethical practices and phenomena that commonly occur in public administration and working life. The list used in the survey is based on previous research.

The respondents saw bribery as clearly the most serious individual unethical practice (Table 10). Besides bribery, other items that were brought up included workplace bullying (38% of the respondents) and influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest (37%). Surprisingly, nepotism (17%) did not stand out in the answers, and the figure for inappropriate lobbying (7%) is surprisingly low. It is clear that all the matters listed in the table are unethical practices, but ranking them according to their seriousness turned out to be difficult<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> In open answers, many respondents pointed out that there were many more highly inappropriate practices than the five options used in the survey. For example, there were four discrimination options alone. This made it difficult to answer the question and reduces its credibility in terms of less important matters. This indicator should be improved in the future.

**Table 10. Which of the following unethical practices are most critical to be kept out of the public administration? Choose the five most harmful practices (n=939)**

Unethical practice	% of the respondents
Bribery	69.8
Workplace bullying	38.1
Influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest	36.7
Favouritism of persons with the same political affiliations	33.0
Making a decision without proper preparations	32.3
Discrimination on the basis of gender	31.7
Insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties	31.0
Sexual harassment at workplaces	25.0
Discrimination on the basis of ethnic background	22.3
Unwillingness for reforms	21.7
Nepotism	17.4
Placing the interests of one's own duties before the common good	16.6
Inefficient use of resources	16.3
Use of unnecessarily difficult official language	15.1
Identification with an interest group	13.2
Withholding information	12.8
Unnecessarily complicated processing of a matter	12.7
Excessively hectic pace of work	12.4
Protecting the inappropriate conduct of colleagues	10.5
Unnecessary delaying of the matter	9.5
Inappropriate lobbying	6.9
Withholding sufficient communication of matters	6.3
Absences without cause	4.7
Tending to personal matters during working hours	2.7
Misuse of tools or premises	1.4

Table 11 shows respondents' views of the occurrence of unethical practices in their own agencies. The respondents find that the most common unethical practices are insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties (3.90) and an excessively hectic pace of work (3.83). Use of unnecessarily difficult official language was also seen as relatively common (3.16). Bribery, the most serious unethical practice in Table 10, does not occur in the State administration according to the respondents' observations (1.37). Although some bribery sentences have been handed down in Finland in recent years that aroused a lot of attention, in international comparisons Finland has been regarded as a country with very little corruption. Usually, corruption refers to a subject broader than bribery including, for example, situations with conflicts of interest and trading in influence. Fight against corrup-

tion has gained more weight in Finland and, in accordance with a recommendation issued by the Council of Europe, the first anti-corruption strategy<sup>20</sup> is being prepared.

**Table 11. The practices listed below are commonly regarded as unethical. Do they occur in your agency? (n=939)**

1=they do not occur 5=they do occur

	Average	SD
Insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties	3.90	1.04
Excessively hectic pace of work	3.83	1.04
Use of unnecessarily difficult official language	3.16	1.11
Tending to personal matters during working hours	3.02	1.12
Withholding information	3.01	1.20
Unwillingness for reforms	2.96	1.15
Unnecessarily complicated processing of a matter	2.95	1.20
Inefficient use of resources	2.90	1.20
Placing the interests of one's own duties before the common good	2.85	1.19
Making a decision without proper preparations	2.72	1.17
Withholding sufficient communication of matters	2.64	1.17
Unnecessary delaying of the matter	2.40	1.18
Identification with an interest group	2.18	1.21
Absences without cause	2.14	1.08
Protecting the inappropriate conduct of colleagues	2.14	1.21
Favouritism of persons with the same political views	2.08	1.33
Workplace bullying	2.03	1.10
Influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest	1.87	1.04
Discrimination on the basis of gender	1.76	1.05
Inappropriate lobbying	1.76	1.00
Misuse of tools or premises	1.75	0.90
Nepotism	1.66	1.03
Discrimination on the basis of ethnic background	1.38	0.75
Bribery	1.37	0.72
Sexual harassment at workplaces	1.36	0.67

20 A cooperation network preventing corruption has prepared a draft (20 September 2016) for a national Strategy Preventing Corruption for the period 2016–2020. This involves a concrete action plan aimed at strengthening structures that support the prevention of corruption, increasing awareness of corruption in different sectors and transparency, facilitating the revelation of corruption cases, developing legislation related to bribery offences and promoting research pertaining to corruption.

Figure 3. Grouping of unethical practices

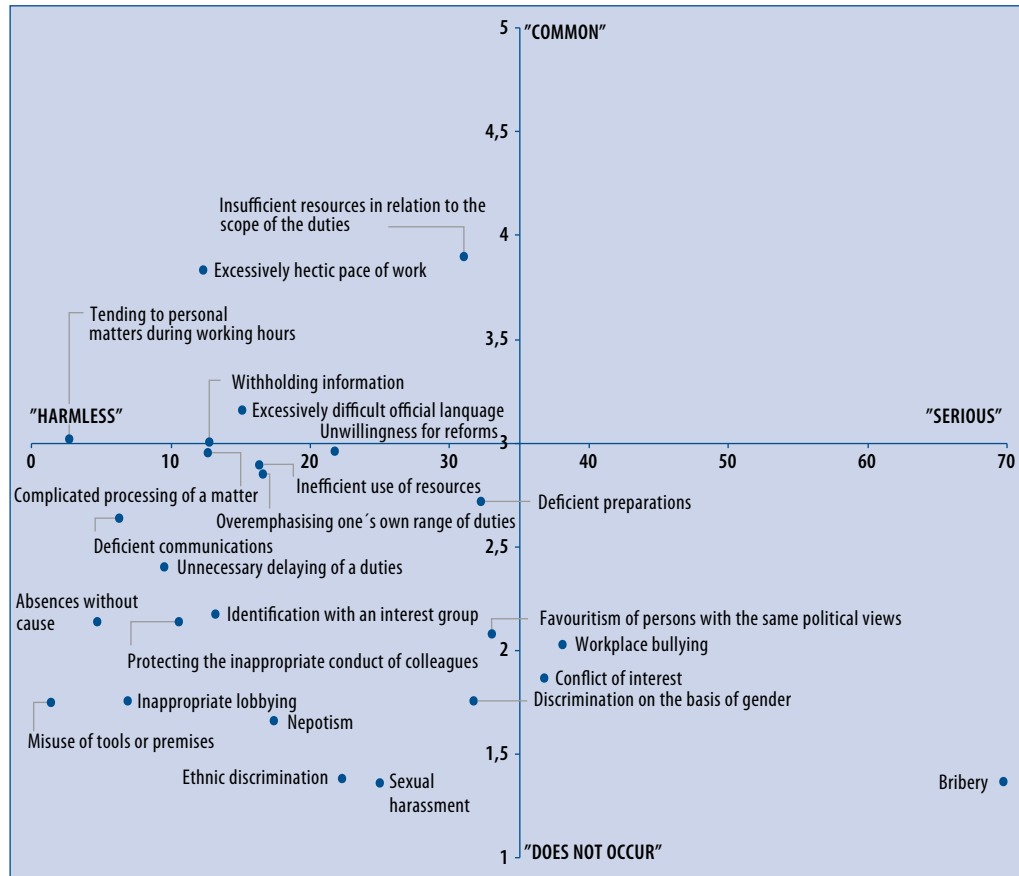


Figure 3 combines the answers reviewed above with regard to the seriousness of certain practices deemed unethical (horizontal axis) and their prevalence (vertical axis). The right edge of the figure contains unethical practices deemed serious, and the top section includes unethical practices deemed most prevalent. The most critical section is located to the uppermost right, and the section requiring the fewest measures in the bottom-left corner.

On the basis of the answers, the situation in the State administration seems to be under control. In the respondents' views, there are hardly any instances of the most unethical practices - bribery, workplace bullying, conflict of interest - in State agencies. The most prevalent individual matter shown in the answers is the scarcity of resources, which may deteriorate the quality of work and services. Most of the answers were placed in the 'safe' square downwards and to the left, and none of the matters rose to the dangerous square uppermost and to the right. On the other hand, although hardly any serious unethical practices occur in the respondents' opinion, just one single case can significantly undermine trust in the State administration. One specific challenge is that positive trends do not usually make to the news; only bad news items, such as abuses, are newsworthy.

Open answers also listed other practices deemed unethical by the respondents. Most of the 170 comments received to the question were targeted at deficiencies in management and supervisory work. In some answers, managers were found to be acting inappropriately (favouritism, discrimination, protection) or using an incorrect management style (authoritarianism). Failure by management to deal with problems (problems with alcohol, accepting inefficient work) was also regarded as difficult. Other inappropriate practices included cuts in resources (overly complicated assignments without orientation, too much work), problems caused by over-regulation (rigidity, complexity, bureaucracy) and poor information systems (outdated, inefficient).

*"Neglect of supervisory duties. Most often the supervisor is an expert who does not want or know how to lead. Employees manage their own work, and with a few people this is manifested as laziness."*

## 4.2 Disclosing unethical conduct

Abuses and other ethical problems can be solved in many different ways. Many countries have specific civil servants responsible for ethics<sup>21</sup>, who give advice on ethical questions such as declaring private interests and assessing conflicts of interest. According to Table 12, a third of the respondents told that their agency has an individual to whom they can report any problems observed. On the basis of open answers, this party is usually a civil servant's own supervisor (cf. Table 13) or internal control (audit unit). Protected email and other information systems have been developed to protect whistle-blowers. A tenth of the respondents said that such instruments are also available in agencies in Finland<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 12. Does your agency have methods in use to help disclose abuses or other unethical conduct? (n=939)**

Method	%
Reporting to a designated individual	31
Other method	14
No, it does not	12
Protected email	9
Can't say	45

21 At federal agencies in the United States, for example, the individual in charge of ethics is a Designated Agency Official, while in the Netherlands it is a Confidential Integrity Counsellor. In business, ensuring good governance is the responsibility of a Compliance Officer.

22 Cf. reporting channels used in business: online form, email address, on-duty helpline, physical address or all of the above. A reporting channel can also be a system maintained by an outside service provider (Ratsula 2016, 234-235).

Among other methods for disclosing abuses and unethical activities, respondents listed development discussions, other agency-specific feedback boxes or anonymous feedback channels, a shop steward and an occupational safety representative, as well as reporting the issue to the National Audit Office of Finland. Development cooperation projects make use of an electronic reporting channel, so-called corruption button, pertaining to suspected abuses<sup>23</sup>. Research institutions follow the guidelines issued by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) concerning good scientific practice<sup>24</sup>. Different personnel and job satisfaction surveys and the model for active or early intervention were also mentioned.

However, many respondents were not aware of a method for disclosing abuses (45%) or thought that no method exists (12%). Although there are different ways of reporting abuses, they are not used systematically and disclosing unethical behaviour has not been managed as a whole.

### 4.3 Ethically difficult situations

According to Table 13, the most common discussion partner in solving ethically difficult situations is one's immediate supervisor (74%) or with the management of the agency (37%). Internal audit (19%) and the Office for the Government as Employer (11%), which is responsible for civil service ethics at the central level, are more infrequent discussion partners for the respondents.

**Table 13.** If you want to ask for advice in an ethically difficult situation, who can you turn to? (n=939)

	%
Immediate supervisor	74
Management of the agency	37
Internal audit	19
Office for the Government as Employer	11
Other party	17

<sup>23</sup> <https://vaarinkayttoilmoitus.fi/#/?lang=en>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK\\_ohje\\_2012.pdf](http://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK_ohje_2012.pdf)

*“Colleagues in a similar official position”*

In the open answers, two groups stood above the others: colleagues and the administrative unit. A quarter of the respondents (31) said they could ask for help from their colleagues (“an experienced colleague”, “a good co-worker”). Difficult issues are not discussed with just anyone. Instead, the individuals must trust each other. On the basis of the answers, experts speak to other experts, supervisors to other supervisors and managers to other managers. The other significant discussion partner mentioned in the open answers was the agency's administrative unit (26) and especially agency lawyers (“administrative lawyer”, “HR lawyer”, 20). In the resolution of questions related to civil service ethics, legal competence is relevant, although, fundamentally, ethical questions pertain to values, not legal provisions.

Among other parties the respondents mentioned the ministry or a steering agency (9), a labour union (6), supervisory authorities (the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Chancellor of Justice, the National Audit Office of Finland, 5 references in total), and occupational health care (4). A worrisome aspect is that some of the respondents felt that they have no discussion partner at all (“Nobody”; “I can't turn to anyone”; “I don't know, certainly not the management of my own agency”, 19 references). The key in such discussions is that the other party can be trusted.

According to Table 14, almost half (43%) of the respondents said they had confronted an ethically difficult situation in their work that required them to use their own discretion. Such situations are typical for management (53%), supervisors (54%) and experts (41%), but less frequent for support staff (23%).

**Table 14.** Have you confronted in your work ethically difficult situations where you had to use your own discretion? (n=939)

	No	Yes	Total
Management	47	53	100
Supervisor	46	54	100
Expert	60	41	100
Support staff	77	23	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

The nature of such ethically difficult situations is very obvious from the open answers (289) received to the question. Usually, ethically difficult situations pertained to different events with customers or stakeholders that can involve different kinds of hospitality such as meals offered or participation in cultural or sports events. Also gifts given to civil servants and trips arranged by other parties gave pause to respondents. The second most



common type of situation concerned conflicts of interest (secondary occupation, friends and relatives as applicants, etc.), and ethically difficult situations related to public procurement got the third most references. Pressure from management, poor conduct of colleagues and management of dismissal situations received a few mentions.

**Table 15. Typical ethically difficult situations mentioned in open answers**

Events with customers or stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an invitation to a dinner or concert offered by a customer/partner and alike</li> <li>- lunch benefits offered by customers during the processing of benefits</li> <li>- a customer sent a gift card for good service, but I returned it</li> </ul>
Situations with conflict-of-interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation in supervision when the case involves someone I know previously</li> <li>- secondary occupation: what kind of an event can I participate as an instructor (for a fee)</li> </ul>
Public procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- as an employee responsible for public procurement, participation in any events arranged by potential contractual partners must be considered on a case-by-case basis</li> <li>- a supplier who had submitted an offer sends an invitation to lunch during the procurement procedure and sends Christmas presents</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- people's difficult personal situations</li> <li>- responsibility for the lawfulness of official actions and political will are in conflict</li> <li>- pressure from my own supervisor to influence the content of expert work done by my subordinates</li> <li>- when a colleague did not understand taking on a double role in activity concerning state subsidies (gave advice on the preparation of the application and wanted to evaluate the project in question)</li> </ul>

A clear majority of the managers and supervisors who answered the survey (72%) said their subordinates had contacted them on questions related to civil service ethics. Open answers received to the question (135) were divided into four main groups. The most common subject in civil service ethics due to which subordinates contact their supervisors is related to questions of conflicts-of-interest (42%). Typical questions include, for example, "usually in matters concerning secondary occupations", "the kinds of events arranged by stakeholders it is appropriate to attend", and "food and drinks, gifts". The other subject involves rectifying problems (19%) that includes matters like "cases of bullying, favouritism" and "equal treatment, inappropriate conduct". The third reason for contacts concerns the clarification of unclear issues (19%), for example, "when they themselves don't know how to act" and "in the clarification of an interpretation". The other matters (20%) include questions of customer service ("equal treatment of customers"), and questions on publicity and matters related to social media ("in writing on social media").

## 5 Government is changing, are civil service ethics changing, too?

### 5.1 Change in the values of State administration

At the beginning of this report, we pointed out some driving factors directed at the State administration that are instrumental in bringing change in administrative practices (see subsection 1.2). However, while the structures and practices of the State administration are changing, are its values and principles changing, too? As Table 16 indicates, the majority of the respondents thought that the values of the State administration are also in transformation. The most common view was that the values of the State administration have changed somewhat (54%). A quarter of the respondents found the change to be a major one (25%). As many as three-quarters of the respondents (79%) felt that some degree of change had taken place in recent years. Less than a tenth of the respondents deemed that the values of the State administration have remained unchanged (8%). The youngest cohorts and those who had been in the State's employ for less than five years could not assess the magnitude of change (12%). The difference between the groups of respondents were fairly insignificant.

**Table 16. Have in your opinion the values in the State administration changed in recent years? (n=939)**

Position	Hard to say	They have remained	They have changed somewhat	They have changed a great deal	Total
Management	5	8	63	24	100
Supervisor	4	10	54	32	100
Expert	17	8	51	24	100
Support staff	14	5	53	28	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Open answers (323) brought out many kinds of views on the changes in values. Some respondents felt that the values in the State administration, especially openness and customer service, have developed in a positive direction. However, many respondents considered that, after the financial situation became more dire, values have even hardened (“the values, publically expressed, have not changed much, but dwindling resources and constant urgency have a practical effect on what the values are and how they are realised”; “the state of public finances challenges the fundamental values”). It is a known fact that budget and personnel cuts can influence attitudes towards work. They have been observed to diminish job satisfaction, trust in the management of the agency and commitment to work. On the basis of earlier research, however, dissatisfaction does not lead to serious, unethical conduct, if the values of the State administration and the ethos of public service are in order (OECD 2016, Demmke & Moilanen 2012).

## 5.2 Current state of civil service ethics compared with the early 2000s

The respondents were asked to assess the present state of civil service ethics in the State administration by comparing it with the situation in the early 2000s (Table 17). As much as a quarter of the respondents (227) regarded the question as difficult and could not answer it. This is especially applicable to younger cohorts (under 29 years and aged 30–39 years) who had less than five years of work experience with the central government. Of them, as many as 75% could not assess the current situation in relation to the earlier one. The majority of those who answered the question held the view that over the years civil service ethics had either improved (48%) or remained unchanged (31%). A fifth of the respondents (20%), on the other hand, considered that civil service ethics had deteriorated. When considered according to different groups of respondents, management assessed the trend as more positive than experts, supervisors or support staff.

**Table 17.** An assessment of the trend in civil service ethics compared with the early 2000s, differentiated by personnel group (n=712)

	Worse	Unchanged	Better	Total
Management	8	29	63	100
Supervisor	21	40	39	100
Expert	26	33	41	100
Support staff	26	19	55	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

A look at the open answers gives a good idea of the reasons for these assessments. Respondents who saw that the situation had improved emphasised the strengthening of openness and transparency in the State administration and society at large. People talk more about the administrative values and civil service ethics, and attitudes towards unethical conduct have become more strict. In the respondents' evaluation, civil servants' awareness of civil service ethics has improved. A fifth of the respondents felt that the situation had deteriorated. The majority of them thought this deterioration was due to worsening working conditions in the State administration. Reasons for this poor trend were deemed to be savings in central government finances, a decrease in personnel resources and the tightness of schedules for legal drafting. Experts, in particular, regarded deficient preparations as an ethical problem. Some respondents thought that different kinds of inappropriate influence have increased. As such, they listed a growth in the influence of lobbying businesses and politicisation of the civil service. In individual explanations, the deterioration of civil service ethics was seen to be due to the selfishness of civil servants and furthering of their own interests.

### 5.3 Future of civil service ethics

A total of 384 open answers were given to the question of the future of the values of civil service ethics. A commonly shared assessment amongst the respondents is that the resources of central government finances will remain scarce in the future, while goals and expectations are all the while increasing. This emphasises the significance of the values. In the respondents' view, the values of the State administration will remain but their mutual weighting will change. It was deemed that, with this trend, values have hardened: economic values (results-orientedness and efficiency) dominate and, alongside them, openness and innovativeness are gaining more importance than before. Many respondents stressed that, this trend notwithstanding, the importance of the traditional values in the State administration (rule of law, expertise, impartiality) must be preserved.

**Table 18. Respondents' assessments of the significance of the administrative values in the future**

- The significance of values should increase when you live in difficult and challenging times. Only institutions with a strong basis of values can cope with the challenges and make a positive contribution to the well-being of society.
- The significance of values does not change but values do; one would hope for small steps backwards from excessive obedience to market values.
- The significance of values will change in the future. Society around us challenges the entire State administration. One must be able to justify decisions made with no exceptions, more openness is required, the authorities do not have as much authority as before. The necessity and efficiency of the administration are being questioned.
- The poor financial situation increases the significance of innovativeness. I hope new methods of work and procedures will be developed, and that the agencies will also be heard in this development work. Unnecessary tasks can be eliminated and this way we can operate more economically.
- Good, solid values do not change at all but withstand the turmoil of the world. The method, the instruments used to implement values will change. It is worrisome if the significance of values decreases.
- Innovativeness will increase, the government sector is still rigid in places, traditional in certain practices. Dedication will decrease, future generations will no longer think that even a job with the government sector is permanent or sacrifice themselves for the employer to do anything at all, on any terms whatsoever.
- With the degree of haste, expertise and the rule of law and responsibilities may become loose. On the other hand, the requirement for openness will rise, perhaps making the preparations for decisions even more careful.
- The question depends on how the agency and operating units are managed. The working culture should become more innovative and develop through engagement. Engagement is one of the values not included on the lists in the questions. Our agency remains hierarchical and old-fashioned in terms of its administration. A reform is needed.
- Will change quite a lot when structures and practices change. Values that the State administration represents must be persistently brought out and sharpened. Citizens must be able to trust fundamental values (impartiality, rule of law, equality).
- The service principle, results-orientedness and innovativeness are rising values because these days the operation of the State administration is regarded as a service and citizens are seen as customers.
- I'm afraid that the economy increasingly sets the limits to the realisation of the values and thus undermines them.
- The fundamental values are permanent; the emphasis changes as circumstances change.
- It may even change to some extent, due to the digitalisation of the services of the State administration, for example. When parties on both sides become invisible, this may also affect the ethics of operation. It will emphasise at least speed (= economic efficiency?) and openness (customers can monitor the processing phase of their affairs).
- Hopefully the silo mentality will decrease and cooperation will increase. In that case, we will need trust, openness and working together for a common goal.
- In the future, we will need increasingly new and innovative solutions and dynamics - however, they must be founded in the law and good administration.

## 5.4 Measures impacting civil service ethics

When we talk about ethics, we can distinguish two basic approaches to ethical conduct. The compliance approach aims to prevent unethical conduct by means of detailed rules and punishments linked to them. In the integrity approach, the focus is on encouraging and supporting ethical conduct such that ethical values and principles are internalised. Both in Finland and internationally, the focus of ethics work has increasingly shifted from retroactive consequences towards preventive and guiding measures. Integrity approach

emphasises aspirational goals and encourages people. The Committee on Ethics of State Civil Servants has stressed the integrity approach, namely value-based ethics work, and has considered important to increase awareness of civil service ethics (MoF 2014, 17)<sup>25</sup>.

Table 19 looks at several measures that have an impact on ethics in light of earlier research. The respondents were asked to assess which ethics instruments would make an impact in their opinion. Itemisation by personnel groups is presented in Table 24.

**Table 19. Civil service ethics can be influenced in many different ways.**  
In your view, to what extent would the following measures make an impact? (n=939)

1=hardly any impact 2=minor impact 3=major impact

	Average	SD
An example set by management through its own conduct	2.9	0.33
Personnel training	2.6	0.53
Keeping civil service ethics in focus through discussion	2.5	0.56
Measures related to civil service law (caution, warning, dismissal)	2.5	0.60
Highlighting values in communications	2.4	0.64
Legislative measures	2.4	0.62
Protecting whistle-blowers against inappropriate consequences (such as deterioration of career possibilities, dismissal)	2.3	0.67
Appropriate employment conditions (pay)	2.3	0.67
Supervision by outside parties (such as the National Audit Office, the police)	2.3	0.61
Supervision by the agency's own internal audit unit	2.3	0.61
Preparation of agency-specific codes of conduct	2.2	0.67
Discussion events concerning ethics (the agency's ethics day)	2.1	0.68
Recommendations issued by the Committee on Ethics of State Civil Servants	1.9	0.65
Assigning responsibility for ethics work (an advisor in charge of ethics at the agency)	1.9	0.67

The results emphasise soft measures that promote integrity. The respondents regarded an example set by the management through its own conduct (2.9) to be a key measure for influencing civil service ethics. Managers have a dual responsibility in terms of civil service ethics. On the one hand, they can make decision within the limits of their authority and they can affect the formation of different policies through their position. On the other hand, managers affect the practices of the whole agency and its administrative culture through their own conduct. Practices adopted by management quickly permeate through

<sup>25</sup> Also the National Audit Office has deemed that the implementation of good administration requires both the compliance and integrity approaches. However, an approach based on principles, combined with the use of common sense, usually implements the service principle and innovativeness more efficiently (NAO 2014, 15).

the entire organisation. It is important for managers to broadly understand responsibilities associated with their roles as civil servants.

Personnel training (2.6) is the classic way of developing civil service ethics. Training can be arranged in a centralised manner for the entire State administration and specifically for agencies in a decentralised fashion (see subsections 3.3 and 3.4). The respondents place more trust in highlighting civil service ethics through informal discussions (2.5) than in the usefulness of specific discussion events (2.1)<sup>26</sup>.

Here, one should note that there does not exist a single individual measure that could quickly influence civil service ethics. This is a complicated package that is impacted by numerous factors. For example, while training is relevant, increasing it alone cannot solve everything. Legislation is important, but merely tightening sentences does not accomplish a major change. A sensible combination of various measures is required.

*"For me, values have always been important. State administration should be an example to others in the openness and ethicality of operation. This is a way of creating trust. Setting an example is a significant force."*

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26 The Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury have highlighted the significance of values. However, in Finland ethics has not had the same weight in public decision-making and practical administrative work as in many other countries, such as Sweden. In Finland, the values of the State administration and ethical management have been mostly discussed under the leadership of consultants and administrative scientists (Pöysti 2010, 154).

## 6 Summary

In November 2015, the Ministry of Finance conducted a survey on the ethical values and principles of central government employees. The Ministry of Finance has surveyed the values and principles of the State administration on few occasions. The present third survey is based on a recommendation issued by the Committee on Ethics of State Civil Servants. The Committee suggested analysing the present state of civil service ethics by arranging two surveys that would be answered by citizens and State employees (MoF 2014, p. 50). The survey material concerning civil servants was collected as an electronic Webropol survey in November 2015, and the survey for citizens was conducted in TNS Gallup's Forum panel in June 2016. A joint seminar on the results of the surveys was held in November 2016.

The survey for civil servants was answered by staff employed by 12 ministries and 16 agencies, and by the senior management of central government. The survey covered more than 4300 respondents at the ministry level, 3100 at the agency level, and 400 in an additional sample for senior management. In all, the sample included slightly fewer than 8000 individuals. A total of 939 responses to the survey were received from all administrative sectors and levels. A total of 327 responses (35%) were obtained from the ministry level and 612 responses (65%) from the agency level. An exceptionally good number (229 responses) were received from members of senior management. The expert perspective, which had been missing from previous civil service surveys, also received substantial strength through 531 answers. Although the rate of response was relatively modest (12%), the present survey is the most comprehensive review of civil service ethics in Finland thus far.

The survey for civil servants looked at different aspects of civil service ethics: changes in the values of the State administration, principles on civil service ethics, ethically problematic situations and different ways for maintaining and developing the high ethical standards. On the basis of the responses, traditional civil service values are still held in high regard: over 70% of all respondents regarded expertise, impartiality, independence and the rule of law as core values in the State administration. Openness, trust and the service principle came after these. According to the respondents' evaluations, in their own agency's operation the value that was realised the best, by far, was the rule of law. Expertise,



impartiality and independence were materialised fairly well. Innovativeness, collegiality and openness were the values realised the worst. However, assessed as a whole, the situation is rather good, as the most important values (the core values of the State administration) were realised the best.

Besides the values of the State administration, respondents were also asked about the clarity of regulation on general questions concerning civil service ethics. Regulation refers to legal provisions, executive orders and administrative instructions pertaining to the matter. For example, the acceptance of secondary occupation is laid down in the State Civil Servants' Act (section 18), the State Civil Servants' Decree (sections 18 and 19), the Ministry of Finance's instruction on the secondary occupations of civil servants (VM/1591/00.00.00/2010), as well as in agency-specific orders and instructions. According to the respondents, procedures concerning secondary occupations are fairly clear. The respondents found the regulation on confidential and secret information to be the clearest. Rules pertaining to gifts or other benefits and participation in trips offered by outsiders were considered to be fairly clear. The topics that raised the most questions amongst the respondents were the waiting period related to exit from State employ and the waiting period associated with entry into State employ in certain situations. Regulation of these matters requires further action.

The civil servants regarded bribery as the absolutely most serious unethical practice. The situation is well under control on the basis of the responses because there is hardly any bribery in the State administration in Finland. Among other serious unethical practices, respondents listed workplace bullying, influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest, favouritism of persons with the same political views, discrimination on the basis of gender, deficient preparations and insufficient resources in operations. When asked how unethical practices are manifested in the respondents' agencies, the most common ones were insufficient resources, excessively hectic pace of work, use of unnecessarily difficult official language and tending to personal matters during working hours. The situation can be deemed good in the sense that, in the respondents' views, the most serious unethical practices are very rare. Attention should be paid to the fact that an excessively hectic pace of work and insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties are general causes for concern.

When all said, there is no single individual measure that could be used to improve civil service ethics. This is a complicated package that is impacted by numerous factors. For example, while the training of civil servants is relevant, increasing it alone cannot solve everything. Legislation is important, but merely tightening sentences does not accomplish a major change. In the respondents' opinions, the overwhelmingly most effective factor impacting civil service ethics is an example given by the management through its own conduct. Other key measures included personnel training, discussion of ethical questions and measures related to civil service law.

Finally, the respondents were asked to assess the present state of civil service ethics with the situation in the early 2000s. The majority of those who answered the survey saw that civil service ethics had either improved (48%) or remained unchanged (31%) over the years. On the other hand, a fifth of the respondents (20%) considered that civil service ethics had deteriorated. In a review by personnel groups, management assessed the trend as more positive than experts, supervisors or support staff. Respondents who saw that the situation had improved emphasised the increase in openness and transparency in the State administration and society at large. People talk more about the values of the State administration and civil service ethics, and attitudes towards unethical conduct have become more strict. Respondents who found that the situation had weakened attributed the change to a deterioration in the working conditions of the State administration (savings, personnel cuts, tight schedules). According to some respondents, different kinds of inappropriate influence had increased. As such, they mentioned a growth in the influence of lobbying businesses and politicisation of the civil service. On the whole, for the most part civil servants considered the change in civil service ethics as being positive.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Agencies and institutions that took part in the survey**

Prime Minister's Office

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Ministry of Employment and the Economy

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Ministry of Education and Culture

Ministry of the Environment

Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland

Finnish Food Safety Authority

Prosecutor's Office of Helsinki

Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation TEKES

Itä- and Keski-Uusimaa's Enforcement Office

Regional State Administrative Agency of Southwestern Finland

Finnish Medicines Agency

Agency for Rural Affairs

Legal Register Centre

National Board of Education

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Ostrobothnia

National Police Board

Local Register Office of Central Finland

Government Institute for Economic Research

Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority

Population Register Centre

## APPENDIX 2: Survey questionnaire

### State of Civil Service Ethics in Finland – a Survey of the Ethical Values and Principles of Central Government Employees

#### RESPONDENT'S ORGANISATION AND POSITION

##### 1. Administrative sector

- Prime Minister's Office
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of the Interior
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Ministry of Employment and the Economy
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Ministry of Education and Culture
- Ministry of the Environment

##### 2. Level of administration

- Ministry
- Agency

##### 3. Position

- Management
- Supervisor
- Expert
- Support staff

**4. Over the last years there have been various driving factors impacting State administration. Have the following factors had any impact on the operation of your agency?**

- Interaction with the private sector
- Commercial services provided by the agency
- Savings measures in central government finances
- Use of public procurement
- Internationalisation
- Intensifying political steering on matters falling under the jurisdiction of your own agency's authority
- Other driving factors, which

**ADMINISTRATIVE VALUES**

The following table presents a list of values which are generally deemed significant in public life. These values are assigned slightly varying importance in different countries and in different times. Many of the values are discussed in, for example, State's personnel strategy, Government's policy decisions and decision in principles as well as in society at large.

**5. In your opinion, how important are the following values for the central government as a whole?**

1 = not important    5 = very important

1. **General acceptability:** acting consistently with the general opinion
2. **Collegiality:** acting loyally and displaying solidarity towards fellow workers
3. **Expertise:** acting on the basis of competence and expertise ensuring high-quality services; preparation of matters and decision-making is carried out professionally
4. **Service principle:** acting with respect towards citizens and helping them
5. **Economic efficiency:** acting so that the goals are achieved with minimum costs
6. **Obedience:** acting according to superiors' directions and instructions
7. **Impartiality and independence:** decisions are objective and based on facts; acting free from improper outside influence; independence from interest groups and public interest
8. **Openness:** acting openly and transparently without concealing
9. **Result-orientedness:** acting efficiently focusing on outcome
10. **Rule of law and responsibility:** acting in compliance with existing laws and regulations; civil servants are responsible for the lawfulness of their official actions
11. **Equality:** treating citizens equally and providing services in both national languages, promoting equality among sexes
12. **Dedication:** performing one's tasks with dedication and diligence

13. **Trust:** acting according to requirements of good administrative behaviour and citizens can trust that public authorities promote public interest

14. **Innovativeness:** trying out new ways of working boldly

15. **Other,** what

**6. How well are the following values realised in practice in your own administration?**

1 = not realised    5 = fully realised

1. General acceptability
2. Collegiality
3. Expertise
4. Service principle
5. Economic efficiency
6. Obedience
7. Impartiality and independence
8. Openness
9. Result-orientedness
10. Rule of law and responsibility
11. Equality
12. Dedication
13. Trust
14. Innovativeness
15. Other, what

**7. In your opinion, which of the following values are the most important for State administration on a general level? Select at the most five of the following:**

1. General acceptability
2. Collegiality
3. Expertise
4. Service principle
5. Economic efficiency
6. Obedience
7. Impartiality and independence
8. Openness
9. Result-orientedness
10. Rule of law and responsibility
11. Equality



- 12. Dedication
- 13. Trust
- 14. Innovativeness
- 15. Other, what

**8. Have the values of the State administration undergone changes during the last years?**

- Stayed the same
- Changed somewhat
- Changed a lot
- Hard to say

Comments:

**9. Do you anticipate that administrative values are going to change in the near future (what, why)?**

**CIVIL SERVICE ETHICS AND CODES OF CONDUCT**

**10. In your opinion, how well are the following ethically relevant matters regulated (ethics legislation, ethics codes, decrees, orders and guidelines)?**

1 = Regulations are unclear 5 = Regulations are clear

- Gifts and other benefits offered to personnel
- Procedures concerning secondary occupations
- Using equipment used at work (such as phone and email) for the management of private affairs
- Practices concerning public procurement
- Management of conflict-of-interest situations
- Participation in events offered by outside parties (concerts, sports events, etc.)
- Conduct in social media (facebook, twitter, etc.)
- Processing of confidential and secret information
- Fixed-term restriction on a new job upon leaving the employ of the State to prevent conflicts of interest (waiting period of 6–12 months)
- Fixed-term restriction on working duties when entering the employ of the State from other sectors to prevent conflicts of interest
- Participating in trips offered by outside parties
- Political activities of employees

Comments:

**11. Do people discuss matters related to administrative values or civil servants' ethics in your agency?**

Please select all options applicable to you.

- At the coffee table or other informal gathering
- Unit, department or personnel meetings
- Personnel training
- Specific events focusing on the ways of the workplace (e.g., ethics day)
- Other occasion, what:
- People do not discuss ethics in the public sector

**12. Are you familiar with the Values in the daily job - civil servant's ethics handbook (MoF 2005)?**

- I have not heard about it
- I have heard about it
- I have read it
- I have utilised it

Comments:

**13. Have administrative values, principles or other issues relating to civil servants' ethics been taken into account in the action strategy, personnel strategy or other document of your agency?**

- No
- Yes
- Hard to say

Comments:

**14. Does your agency have methods in use to help disclose abuses or other unethical conduct?**

- Can't say
- No, it does not
- Protected email
- Reporting to a designated individual
- Other method, what

**15. Have you confronted in your work ethically difficult situations where you had to use your own discretion?**

- No, I have not
- Yes, I have. Please describe the situation(s):

**16. If you want to ask for advice in an ethically difficult situation, who can you turn to?**

**Please select all options applicable to you**

- Immediate supervisor
- Management of the agency
- Internal audit
- Office for the Government as Employer
- Other, what:

**17. In your opinion, does your agency need ethics training?**

- No
- Yes, in which matters:

**ETHICALLY DEMANDING SITUATIONS**

**18. The practices listed below are commonly regarded as unethical. Do they occur in your agency?**

1 = does not occur    5 = does occur

- Bribery
- Use of unnecessarily difficult official language
- Tending to personal matters during working hours
- Influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest
- Favouritism of persons with the same political views
- Discrimination on the basis of gender
- Discrimination on the basis of ethnic background
- Nepotism
- Making a decision without proper preparations
- Excessively hectic pace of work
- Insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties
- Withholding information
- Unnecessary delaying of the matter

- Identification with an interest group
- Unwillingness for reforms
- Misuse of tools or premises
- Sexual harassment at workplaces
- Placing the interests of one's own duties before the common good
- Withholding sufficient communication of matters
- Unnecessarily complicated processing of a matter
- Workplace bullying
- Protecting the inappropriate conduct of colleagues
- Inefficient use of resources
- Absences without cause
- Inappropriate lobbying

**19. Which of the following unethical practices are most critical to be kept out of the public administration? Please choose the five most harmful practices.**

- Bribery
- Use of unnecessarily difficult official language
- Tending to personal matters during working hours
- Influencing the handling of a matter despite a conflict of interest
- Favouritism of persons with the same political views
- Discrimination on the basis of gender
- Discrimination on the basis of ethnic background
- Nepotism
- Making a decision without proper preparations
- Excessively hectic pace of work
- Insufficient resources in relation to the scope of the duties
- Withholding information
- Unnecessary delaying of the matter
- Identification with an interest group
- Unwillingness for reforms
- Misuse of tools or premises
- Sexual harassment at workplaces
- Placing the interests of one's own duties before the common good
- Withholding sufficient communication of matters

- Unnecessarily complicated processing of a matter
- Workplace bullying
- Protecting the inappropriate conduct of colleagues
- Inefficient use of resources
- Absences without cause
- Inappropriate lobbying

**20. Are there any other bad practices or problems in State administration which should be taken into account?**

Comments:

**21. Does your agency's range of duties include situations that are typical for you, which diverge from other agencies and require ethical decision-making?**

- No
- Yes
- Hard to say

Comments:

**22. How do you find the following statements concerning civil service ethics?**

1 = fully agree 5 = fully disagree

- Management is more interested in achieving the desired outcome rather than ethics
- Agency's practices are consistent with the principles of civil service ethics
- My agency always takes seriously unethical behaviour
- Staff does not hesitate to bring out news to the superiors
- In my agency staff can recognise ethical points of view
- Superiors do not pay attention to civil service ethics
- Civil servants should not participate in political activities
- I can tell of unethical conduct when I see it
- Civil service ethics extend to the leisure-time of staff
- It is acceptable to turn to press to redress the unfair practices of one's agency

Comments:

**23. Do you accept that civil servants present their personal views, which differ from Government's or agency's views, in public?**

- Never
- Only in quite exceptional situations
- Whenever personal view is based on objective grounds
- Always when the person herself or himself feels that it is necessary

Comments:

**N.B. Questions 24-34 are for management and superiors only. Other respondents move automatically to question 35.**

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Civil service ethics can be promoted via various management arrangements. The following questions are meant for management and superiors.

**24. Are the requirements of civil service ethics taken into consideration in the recruitment of new employees?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**25. Are ethical matters linked to the position as a civil servant brought up in the orientation of a new employee?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**26. Are the requirements of civil service ethics paid attention to in personnel training (e.g., in dealing with a conflict-of-interest situation)?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**27. Do you use mobility policies in order to prevent excessively close relationships with the agency's customers and interest groups?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**28. Do you bring up values, principles and instructions in agency's communications?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**29. Are the requirements of civil service ethics discussed in management training programmes?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**30. Have your subordinates contacted you on questions related to civil service ethics?**

- No
- Difficult to say
- Yes, please describe how:

**31. Pursuant to section 8 a of the State Civil Servants' Act, persons appointed as senior civil servants must before the appointment submit information about their business and other interests in order to avoid conflict-of-interest situations. Have you submitted the aforementioned declaration?**

- My position is not within the scope of the section 8 a
- No
- Yes

**32. Have you updated the declaration after your appointment?**

- My position is not within the scope of the section 8 a
- No
- Yes

Comments:

**33. What is your opinion regarding the usefulness of the duty to declare the above-mentioned private interests?**

Comments:

**34. Government as employer regards mobility between public sector, private sector and the third sector desirable. However, in some cases direct transfer from the State employ to private employ may lead to a conflict-of-interest situation. In order to prevent conflicts of interest from arising, it is possible to make a public-sector employment contract with senior civil servants and those civil servants, who deal with very delicate information or information with substantial economic value. In the contract, a waiting period of 6-12 months can be agreed with a civil servant before the new work begins. Could this kind of conflict of interest arise in your agency?**

- No
- Yes
- Difficult to say

Comments:

#### **CIVIL SERVICE ETHICS TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE**

**35. In your opinion, how has the civil servants' ethics changed compared to what it was in early 2000s?**

Please select only one answer.

- Worse
- Same
- Better
- Difficult to say

What has changed?

**36. Civil service ethics can be influenced in many different ways. In your view, to what extent would the following measures make an impact?**

hardly any impact    minor impact    major impact

- Legislative measures
- Personnel training
- An example set by management through its own conduct
- Highlighting values in communications
- Supervision by external parties (such as the National Audit Office, the police)
- Supervision by the agency's own internal audit unit



- Appropriate employment conditions (pay)
- Keeping civil service ethics in focus through discussion
- Assigning responsibility for ethics work (an advisor in charge of ethics at the agency)
- Measures related to civil service law (caution, warning, dismissal)
- Protecting whistle-blowers against inappropriate consequences (such as deterioration of career possibilities, dismissal)
- Preparation of agency-specific codes of conduct
- Discussion events concerning ethics (the agency's ethics day)
- Recommendations issued by the Committee on Ethics of State Civil Servants

**37. In your opinion, which ethical matters should be improved the most in Finland in the future?**

Comments:

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENT**

**38. Please select your age group**

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

**39. Gender**

- Female
- Male

**40. Years of experience for working for the State administration**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

**41. Other work experience (more than a year)**

Please select all options applicable to you.

- Other public administration experience (municipalities, institutions under public law)
- Experience from state-owned companies and state enterprises
- Experience from private sector
- Experience from third sector

**42. Level of education**

- Higher academic degree
- Lower academic degree
- Vocational degree
- No degree

**43. Field of education**

- Generic programmes and qualifications
- Education science and teacher training
- Arts and humanities
- Social sciences and business
- Natural sciences
- Engineering, manufacturing and construction
- Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary
- Health and welfare
- Services
- Other

**44. Type of employment relationship**

- Civil service relationship
- Contractual employment relationship

**45. Duration of employment relationship**

- Permanent
- Fixed-term

**46. If you are offered an opportunity to work elsewhere, which of the following sectors would you be interested in?**

Please select all options applicable to you.

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Third sector
- Politics

**47 What do you think about the survey questions? Was there anything important which was not covered in this survey?**

Comments:

## APPENDIX 3: Additional information on key tables

**Table 20.** How important do you find the values listed below in terms of State administration as a whole? (by personnel group, n=939)

1= not important 5 = very important

	Management (n=229)	Supervisor (n=93)	Expert (n=531)	Support staff (n=86)	Total (n=939)
Expertise	4.82	4.69	4.81	4.73	4.79
Impartiality and independence	4.85	4.69	4.75	4.69	4.76
Rule of law and responsibility	4.78	4.73	4.75	4.74	4.76
Trust	4.84	4.72	4.73	4.72	4.75
Service principle	4.67	4.55	4.55	4.67	4.59
Openness	4.67	4.43	4.53	4.57	4.56
Equality	4.46	4.40	4.39	4.52	4.42
Result-orientedness	4.58	4.34	4.20	4.28	4.32
Dedication	4.06	3.89	3.94	4.09	3.98
Innovativeness	4.20	3.77	3.82	3.93	3.92
Economic efficiency	4.16	3.91	3.71	3.73	3.84
Collegiality	3.63	3.58	3.75	4.01	3.73
Obedience	3.69	3.59	3.45	3.81	3.56
General acceptability	3.41	3.39	3.29	3.44	3.35

**Table 21.** Core values in State administration by personnel group (forced choice method, n=939)

	Management (n=229)	Supervisor (n=93)	Expert (n=531)	Support staff (n=86)	Total (n=939)
Expertise	73.4	68.8	80.6	79.1	77.5
Impartiality and independence	74.7	72.0	79.5	70.9	76.8
Rule of law and responsibility	62.0	75.3	73.4	68.6	70.4
Openness	52.0	39.8	46.9	43.0	47.1
Trust	45.0	54.8	45.2	45.3	46.1
Service principle	52.0	43.0	38.6	43.0	42.7
Result-orientedness	48.0	51.6	26.9	20.9	34.0
Equality	12.7	17.2	23.9	37.2	21.7
Economic efficiency	17.0	16.1	15.3	19.8	16.2
Innovativeness	24.5	14.0	13.4	11.6	16.0
General acceptability	9.6	7.5	10.7	10.5	10.1
Dedication	3.5	5.4	4.9	4.7	4.6
Collegiality	0.4	2.2	2.4	8.1	2.4
Obedience	0.4	2.2	1.5	1.2	1.3

**Table 22.** How well do your own agency's practices correspond to the values in the State administration? (by personnel group, n=939)

	Management (n=229)	Supervisor (n=93)	Expert (n=531)	Support staff (n=86)	Total (n=939)
Rule of law and responsibility	4.66	4.46	4.35	4.34	4.44
Expertise	4.49	4.25	4.14	4.16	4.24
Impartiality and independence	4.56	4.12	3.90	3.88	4.08
Trust	4.36	4.03	3.92	3.92	4.04
Equality	4.36	3.98	3.90	3.87	4.02
Service principle	4.13	3.86	3.71	3.86	3.84
Dedication	4.05	3.83	3.71	3.64	3.80
Obedience	3.77	3.80	3.78	3.77	3.78
Economic efficiency	4.14	3.85	3.57	3.64	3.74
Result-orientedness	4.09	3.69	3.51	3.53	3.67
General acceptability	3.82	3.65	3.47	3.63	3.58
Openness	4.01	3.58	3.34	3.35	3.53
Collegiality	3.67	3.42	3.47	3.47	3.51
Innovativeness	3.53	3.12	2.92	3.17	3.11

**Table 23. Is ethical regulation concerning conduct sufficiently clear? (by personnel group, n=939)**

1 = regulation is unclear 5 = regulation is clear

	Management	Supervisor	Expert	Support staff	Total	DK %
Processing of confidential and secret information	4.36	4.28	4.16	4.23	4.23	0.7
Gifts and other benefits offered to personnel	4.09	4.12	4.01	3.88	4.03	5.3
Procedures concerning secondary occupations	4.22	4.24	3.95	3.68	4.02	7.3
Participating in trips offered by outside parties	4.25	4.03	3.87	3.53	3.96	11.0
Using equipment used at work (such as phone and email) for the management of private affairs	3.97	4.09	3.87	3.64	3.90	2.4
Practices concerning public procurement	3.86	3.77	3.67	3.61	3.72	8.3
Management of conflict-of-interest situations	3.90	3.75	3.60	3.54	3.69	8.5
Participation in events offered by outside parties (concerts, sports events, etc.)	3.89	3.85	3.59	3.39	3.68	8.7
Conduct in social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	3.27	3.31	3.32	3.46	3.32	4.9
Political activities of employees	3.54	3.21	3.02	2.89	3.17	19.0
Fixed-term restriction on a new job upon leaving the employ of the State to prevent conflicts-of-interest (waiting period of 6-12 months)	3.00	2.86	2.77	2.91	2.85	28.9
Fixed-term restriction on working duties when entering the employ of the State from other sectors to prevent conflicts-of-interest	2.84	2.79	2.63	2.91	2.73	31.2

**Table 24. Civil service ethics can be influenced in many different ways. To what extent in your view would the following measures make an impact? (by personnel group, n=939)**

1=hardly any impact 2=minor impact 3=major impact

	Management (n=229)	Supervisor (n=93)	Expert (n=531)	Support staff (n=86)	Total (n=939)
An example set by management through its own conduct	2.94	2.94	2.87	2.85	2.89
Personnel training	2.68	2.68	2.57	2.62	2.61
Keeping civil service ethics in focus through discussion	2.58	2.52	2.54	2.52	2.54
Measures related to civil service law (caution, warning, dismissal)	2.46	2.43	2.51	2.57	2.49
Highlighting values in communications	2.52	2.57	2.30	2.43	2.40
Legislative measures	2.45	2.35	2.29	2.62	2.37
Appropriate employment conditions (pay)	2.20	2.22	2.40	2.49	2.34
Protecting whistle-blowers against inappropriate consequences (such as deterioration of career possibilities, dismissal)	2.16	2.27	2.40	2.56	2.34
Supervision by outside parties (such as the National Audit Office, the police)	2.25	2.27	2.28	2.35	2.28
Supervision by the agency's own internal audit unit	2.34	2.33	2.23	2.35	2.28
Preparation of agency-specific codes of conduct	2.31	2.16	2.16	2.47	2.23
Discussion events concerning ethics (the agency's ethics day)	2.18	2.26	2.09	2.28	2.15
Recommendations issued by the Committee on Ethics of State Civil Servants	1.99	1.95	1.90	2.13	1.95
Assigning responsibility for ethics work (an advisor in charge of ethics at the agency)	1.80	1.77	1.89	2.06	1.87

**Table 25. Do you agree that civil servants present their personal views, which differ from Government's or agency's views, in public? (by personnel group, n=939)**

	Never	Only in quite exceptional situations	Whenever personal view is based on objective grounds	Always when the person herself or himself feels that it is necessary	Total
Management	6	40	50	3	100
Supervisor	16	42	40	2	100
Expert	9	33	52	5	100
Support staff	9	33	55	3	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 26. Do you agree that civil servants present their personal views, which differ from Government's or agency's views, in public? (by level of administration, n=939)**

	Never	Only in quite exceptional situations	Whenever personal view is based on objective grounds	Always when the person herself or himself feels that it is necessary	Total
Ministries	7	39	50	4	100
Agencies	10	34	51	5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 27. If you are offered an opportunity to work elsewhere, which of the following sectors would you be interested in? (% of those who responded to this question)**

	Management	Supervisor	Expert	Support staff	Total
Public sector	81	88	85	90	85
Private sector	62	55	64	56	62
Third sector	39	31	40	29	38
Politics	10	11	13	10	12

**Table 28. How do you find the following statements concerning civil service ethics? (n=939)**

1 = fully disagree 5 = fully agree

	Management	Supervisor	Expert	Support staff	Total
I can tell of unethical conduct when I see it	4.5	4.2	3.7	3.6	3.9
my agency always takes seriously unethical behaviour	4.3	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.7
civil service ethics extends to the leisure-time of staff	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6
agency's practices are consistent with the principles of civil service ethics	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.6
in my agency staff can recognise ethical point of views	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5
staff does not hesitate to bring out news to the superiors	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.4
civil servants should not participate in political activities	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.9
management is more interested in achieving the desired outcome rather than ethics	2.3	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.8
superiors do not pay attention to civil service ethics	2.0	2.2	2.6	2.6	2.4
it is acceptable to turn to press to redress the unfair practices of one's agency	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.3



**Table 29.** Are you familiar with the Values in the daily job - civil servant's ethics handbook (MoF 2005)? (by level of administration, n=939)

	I have not heard about it	I have heard about it	I have read it	I have utilised it	Total
Ministries	45	33	18	4	100
Agencies	48	32	15	5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>





Writer:  
Timo Moilanen



MINISTRY OF FINANCE  
Snellmaninkatu 1 A  
PO BOX 28, 00023 Government  
Tel. +358 295 160 01  
Fax 09 160 33123  
[www.financeministry.fi](http://www.financeministry.fi)

ISSN 1797-9714 (pdf)  
ISBN 978-952-251-882-8 (pdf)

August 2017