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by

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on

“Improvement plan in administrative processes and procedures: the case of the Chilean Senate”

Manama Session
March 2023

In mid-2019, Improvement Plan for the Senate of Chile was launched in response to an urgent need to adapt its processes to the growing and changing needs, challenges, trends and aspirations of Chilean society. In order to systematize and put improvements into practice, the Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023 was designed in a participatory manner, with dynamic contributions from all departments, and which prioritized the optimization of processes. In this context, we proposed the implementation of 22 projects. In this communication I will address one of the most outstanding.

The project "Implementation of the Process Improvement Plan" includes 5 initiatives:

1. Organizational and technological redesign of the Finances Area.
2. Design of a plan to strengthen the management of parliamentary appropriations.
3. Updating of processes and procedures in human resources management.
4. Updating in management process of purchases.
5. Updating of the organizational structure and functions of departments and units.

With regard to the first initiative, **Organizational and technological redesign of the Finances Area**, we began by strengthening financial management through the restructuring of the Finances Department, based on three actions: the recruitment of highly qualified human resources, which has improved response times and a better service to the requirements of Senators; a change in internal workflows, in order to improve controls and the quality of information. Moreover, it has been certified under ISO 9001:2015 five processes of the Finances Department have been certified under ISO 9001:2015, reflected in 24 working procedures.

Similarly, in terms of **Budget Management**, priority has been given to Digital Transactions. To date, electronic transfers have reached 100% of all transactions of the Senate Finances Department, equivalent to some 12,000 operations per year.

We have also promoted a **Participatory Budget Process**, so that since 2020, the design of the institutional budget was designed together with the Planning and Management Control Unit, with a new methodology, which allows to align resources with the strategic planning, considering the needs of all areas. Thus, from 2021 on, the Senate has a 100% funded budget, especially with regard to Parliamentary Appropriations. As a result of this new way of dealing with the budget process, the Senate is able to meet three fundamental objectives: a) Maintain the level of permanent operational expenses; b) Have funding for a staff of 370 people (staff and contract); and c) Have funding for all Parliamentary Allowances for 50 Senators.

Likewise, since 2020, we established the practice of reviewing and presenting the Senate's budget execution to the Accounts Review Commission on a quarterly basis which allows to get updated information on the matter and permanent monitoring of budget execution.

In relation to the second point, **Design of a plan to strengthen the management of parliamentary appropriations**, we have focused on new IT developments and a renewed operating model for Parliamentary Appropriations. One of the most important management challenges of the Finances Department has been to improve controls and better methods to assist Senators. Therefore, we put into practice three activities to comply these objectives: - the appointment of specialized employees to attend to Senators and their requirements in a personalized manner; - the development of IT applications to improve reportability of information systems. In this regard, it should be noted that in 2021 we put into practice the report on Senators' telephone expenses, and in 2022 the report on travel expenses also became operational. Also, the Handbook on Parliamentary Expenses, will be fully available soon. It's a useful tool for parliamentarians and employees.

Let us now focus on the third point: **Updating of processes and procedures in human resources management**. We have implemented internal selection processes to encourage mobility and new challenges for employees, together with a plan for promotion, improvement and appointment of employees, with better salaries and rights. We have also been working on the design of job profiles based on the identification and strengthening of competences; the strengthening of public selecting processes, with a gender perspective; projects and programs to strengthen the skills of the Senate's personnel, to improve institutional processes and administrative probity; training in risk management; integrity systems and code of conduct; gender equality, among others. Likewise, we implemented a Plan for Support Personnel in Times of Pandemics.

Regarding the fourth point, **Updating in management process of purchases** a new Procurement and Contracting Regulation was adopted and a Procedures Manual for Senate Service Procurement and Contracting requests is currently being drafted, containing the essential notions so that departments or administrative units can request purchasing and contracting processes in a clear and uniform manner.

Finally, with regard to the fifth aspect, **Updating of the organizational structure and functions of departments and units**, new components have been established to strengthen the institutional organization, such as: Internal Audit; Planning and Management Control; Liaison and Citizen Participation. In addition, the Communications Unit, the Department of People and Organizational Development and the Office of Information, Analysis and Budgetary Advice of the Senate were strengthened.

To conclude my communication, there are some other areas where progress has been made, basically to improve processes. For example, during the year 2020, the Advanced Electronic Signature was implemented for Senators and administrative authorities. Likewise, the Senate's document management platform was launched and is now 100% operational.

In other matters, in 2021 the new Transparency Regulations were approved; its main objective was to raise the standards of the Chilean Senate in this area.

In addition to what has already been said about the Finances Department, the Senate of Chile accredited its administration, human resources management, internal audit, planning and management control, and citizen liaison processes with the ISO 9001:2015 quality standard.

I trust that this summary of the process improvement project in the Chilean Senate has been illustrative and will allow us all to enrich ourselves with new experiences in the modernization of legislatures.

Thank you very much