

Call for Papers

Gestion et Management Public

Special issue

“Attracting and retaining: a dual challenge for public management”

Guest Editor:

Arnaud Scailherez, University of Moncton (Canada)

Other coordinators of this issue:

Hélène Muscat, University of Rennes-IPAG (France)

Aurélien Ragainne, University of Rennes-IGR-IAE (France)

Deadline for submitting papers: March 31, 2026

The public sector is currently undergoing profound changes that affect both its employees and its overall functioning. Between increasing demands for efficiency (Hood, 1991), changing societal expectations (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2007), and tighter budget constraints (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011), public service professionals are operating in an uncertain and often contradictory environment. This instability can lead to institutional and individual confusion, giving rise to conflicts of identity and values among employees, but also to a decline in attractiveness for new generations of workers (Brunsson, 2006). Attractiveness and loyalty thus become recurring problems in public organizations that deserve to be studied in depth.

Frequent reorganizations, changes in working hours, and transformations in the way work is carried out—whether hybrid work, telework, or task intensification—exacerbate these challenges. These dynamics raise the question of the public sector's ability to attract new talent, recruit effectively, and retain its employees in a context of increased competition with other sectors of activity. By crossing disciplinary perspectives (public management, innovation / organization management, political science, geography, sociology, etc.), this special issue aims to shed light on the evolving relationships between innovation, territory, and public action in healthcare.

Career management, discrepancies between what is prescribed and what is actual, and constraints perceived as overly rigid can have a paradoxical and counterproductive effect on commitment and the attractiveness of the sector (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Ragainne et al., 2019). The status of civil service, which is both protective and secure, can also play an ambivalent role: a factor of recognition for some, it can be a deterrent for others, due to its rigidity or lack of clarity for younger generations. The coexistence of permanent and contract employees further complicates issues of fairness, motivation, and recognition within teams.

In this context, attracting, recruiting, and retaining public sector professionals is a strategic challenge for ensuring the continuity and quality of public service missions. The design of workspaces, quality of life at work,

initial and continuing training programs, and the role of academic institutions in professional socialization are all potential levers that can be mobilized.

This special issue explores these issues by focusing on strategies and practices that can enhance attractiveness, improve recruitment processes, and develop employee loyalty in the public sector. The aim is to understand how public management can meet these challenges and help build a work environment that fosters engagement and talent retention. How are governance arrangements reconfigured at the territorial level to better support dependent and vulnerable populations? What new policies and services emerge in this context?

Below are various possible angles as suggestions for topics of study:

- Attractiveness of the public sector: How can the employer image of public organizations be improved? What are the expectations of the younger generations in terms of work, recognition, values, and meaning? What symbolic, organizational, and material levers can increase the attractiveness of the public sector?
- Recruitment and integration: What innovations are there in the recruitment and selection processes for public servants? How can administrative efficiency be reconciled with openness to diversity? What measures promote the successful and sustainable integration of new entrants?
- Retention and commitment: What are the determinants of motivation and retention in the public sector? What roles do career management, continuing education, workspaces, and quality of life at work play? How can tensions between different statuses (tenured/contractual) be managed to strengthen cohesion and organizational equity?
- Comparisons and perspectives: What international experiences can inspire human resource management practices in the public sector? What experiments or innovative approaches can enhance attractiveness and retention?

Contributions may be theoretical, empirical, or comparative. This issue is open to a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary community of researchers in public management and administration who use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies and adopt comparative approaches in particular. This issue is also open to proposals related to history, law, sociology of work, and political science in particular.

Submission guidelines:

- This issue is edited by:

Guest editor: **Arnaud Scaillez**, University of Moncton, HEP Graduate School, CR2NB Lab

Coordinator: **Hélène Muscat**, University of Rennes, Faculty of Law and Political Science - IPAG, IDPSP

Coordinator: **Aurélien Ragainé**, University of Rennes, IGR-IAE Graduate School, CREM Lab

- Manuscripts should be written in French and follow the journal's formatting guidelines: <http://www.airmap.fr/fr/gmp-review/consignes-de-redaction/>.
- Submitted papers will undergo a rigorous peer-review process.

- To submit your manuscript, please refer to the following link: <https://gmp-revue.org/soumettre-un-article>
- You must indicate in an attached message on the platform that your submission is part of the NS2026 call.
- Provisional schedule:

October 6, 2025	Call for paper
March 31, 2026	Submission of articles
March, 2027	Publication of the special issue

- For inquiries or further information, please contact Arnaud.scaillerez@umoncton.ca cc: gmp_auteurs@airmap.fr

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