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**INSTITUTIONS FOR ENSURING BENEFITS TO MOTIVATE
CIVIL SERVANTS IN VIETNAM**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the Study

Civil servants' work motivation is important to the quality of public service delivery, the effectiveness of the administrative apparatus, and national governance capacity. As Vietnam continues to reform its civil service, build a socialist rule-of-law state, advance digital transformation, and integrate internationally, civil servants need not only professional competence but also accountability, adaptability, innovation, and the ability to address complex governance issues. This requires the civil service institutional framework to be improved in ways that maintain discipline and control over power while enabling civil servants to exercise their competence, effort, and initiative.

In recent years, regulations on recruitment, employment, performance appraisal, training, remuneration, rewards, and professional development have gradually been supplemented and improved. Nevertheless, improvements in rules and policies have not always produced commensurate changes in public-service performance or work motivation. Avoidance of responsibility, passing responsibility to others, fear of making mistakes, and excessive caution indicate a gap between the demands of civil-service reform and the capacity of institutions to motivate.

From a political-economy perspective, this issue cannot be explained solely by individual characteristics or by any single policy. It is necessary to examine the relations of interest formed and regulated by civil-service institutions: how interests are defined, to whom they are allocated, which criteria govern allocation, and how interests are realised and protected. It is also necessary to examine how civil servants' interests are balanced against those of the State, organisations, and society.

The existence of an entitlement in a legal or policy document does not automatically ensure that a civil servant can enjoy that

benefit in practice or reasonably expect it to be realised in the future. If allocation mechanisms lack fairness, transparency, consistency, or predictability, institutional credibility may decline. Civil servants may then find it difficult to form sufficiently strong expectations about the relationship between effort, results, and benefits, potentially constraining initiative and willingness to innovate.

The central issue addressed by this dissertation is therefore neither the maximisation of benefits for civil servants nor simply an increase in remuneration. Rather, it is how to improve institutions so as to establish a reasonably clear, fair, and credible relationship between contributions, responsibilities, public-service performance, and legitimate benefits, while safeguarding the public interest and controlling the exercise of power.

2. Research Objectives and Questions

The overall objective is to clarify the theoretical and practical foundations of institutions for ensuring benefits that motivate civil servants in Vietnam. The specific objectives are to systematise the relevant concepts and theoretical framework; clarify the mechanisms through which institutions operate; assess the current situation against defined criteria; and propose a set of solutions specifying responsible actors, resources, implementation roadmaps, outputs, and implementation conditions.

The dissertation addresses four research questions: (1) What are institutions for ensuring benefits to motivate civil servants in Vietnam, and what are their defining features, structure, and basic components? (2) Through what mechanisms do institutions affect institutional credibility, expected benefits, and work motivation? (3) What achievements, limitations, and causes characterised the situation during 2011–2025? (4) What viewpoints and solutions are needed to improve these institutions through 2030, with a vision to 2045?

3. Research Subject and Scope

The primary subject of this study is the institutional framework for ensuring benefits that motivate civil servants, focusing on the structure and mechanisms through which benefits are established, allocated, realised, and protected. The dissertation examines three groups of benefits: material benefits; competency-based career-development benefits; and non-material benefits and public values. Remuneration, training, appraisal, recruitment, appointment, and human-resource management are examined only insofar as they constitute or operate mechanisms for ensuring benefits, rather than as independent research objects.

The study covers 2011–2025 and proposes solutions through 2030, with a vision to 2045. Its spatial scope is the state administrative sector, where civil servants directly exercise public authority and benefits are allocated mainly through civil-service institutions.

4. Research Methods and Limitations of Inference

The dissertation applies the methodologies of dialectical and historical materialism and a political-economy approach. It uses documentary research, analysis and synthesis, scientific abstraction, historical and logical analysis, comparison, and descriptive statistics. Sources include legislation, policy directions and documents, reports, and secondary data, including PAPI, SIPAS, GTCI, World Bank data, and official statistics.

The dissertation does not conduct a micro-level survey, directly measure the motivation of individual civil servants, or estimate the separate effect of each factor. The data are used as evidence of the context, conditions, and implementation gaps of institutions. Statements about expected benefits and motivation are theoretical arguments combined with secondary evidence; they are not the results of micro-level causal testing.

5. Analytical Propositions

The dissertation advances four analytical propositions: (i) high-quality institutions provide a basis for realising benefits and strengthening institutional credibility; (ii) institutional credibility creates conditions for the formation of expected benefits; (iii) expected benefits help explain civil servants' willingness to invest competence, effort, and responsibility in public service; and (iv) when institutional credibility and expected benefits decline while occupational risks increase, proactive motivation may weaken and defensive behaviour may increase. These are theoretical propositions, not findings from micro-level causal testing.

6. Analytical Framework

The central analytical framework is: "Institutions for ensuring benefits → institutional credibility → expected benefits → work motivation." Institutions are not assumed to affect motivation directly or mechanically. Rather, the effect is explained through the process by which civil servants form and adjust expectations about whether their competence, effort, and public-service results will be recognised, protected, and translated into commensurate benefits.

CHAPTER 1.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

1. International Research

International studies are grouped into several main strands: benefits and relations of interest in political economy; work-motivation theories; public-service motivation and public value; institutional, behavioural, and public-governance theories; principal-agent theory; and research on civil-service institutions and reward management.

Political-economy approaches, notably those associated with Marx and North, clarify how interests are linked to actors' positions in socioeconomic relations and how interests, power, and institutions interact in their formation and operation. Regulatory and political-economy studies show that public policy may reflect interaction among interest groups, making it important to examine decision-making actors, allocation mechanisms, and the protection of the public interest.

Psychological and organisational-behaviour theories emphasise needs, intrinsic motivation, expectations, fairness, and rewards. Vroom's expectancy theory suggests that motivation is related to beliefs about the links between effort, performance, and benefits. Adams's equity theory highlights the influence of perceived fairness in allocation. Research on public-service motivation by Perry and Wise, together with public-value approaches, shows that civil servants may also be motivated by the social meaning of service, responsibility, and the desire to contribute to the community.

Institutional studies by North, Scott, March, and Olsen clarify the role of formal rules, norms, values, and perceptions in shaping behaviour. Principal-agent theory helps analyse information asymmetry, divergent objectives, monitoring, incentives, and accountability. Research on civil-service governance and remuneration highlights the importance of merit-based recruitment, results-oriented management, transparency, and fairness.

2. Domestic Research

Vietnamese studies have examined salaries, rewards, working environments, promotion opportunities, performance appraisal, job satisfaction, and specific motivational instruments. They provide an important basis for identifying benefits and mechanisms that affect civil servants. However, many studies focus on individual instruments or factors rather than treating institutions for ensuring benefits as an integrated system connected to relations of interest, power, and public resources.

3. Research Gaps

The dissertation identifies three principal gaps: the lack of a sufficiently integrated mechanism to explain how institutions for ensuring benefits shape expected benefits and motivation; insufficient clarification of the mediating role of institutional credibility and mechanisms for protecting civil servants; and an incomplete explanation of how formally prescribed benefits are converted into actual benefits, expected benefits, and motivation. The dissertation builds on existing theories but shifts the focus to the institutionalisation, allocation, realisation, and protection of benefits from a political-economy perspective.

4. New Contributions of the Dissertation

First, the dissertation approaches work motivation through relations of interest and the mechanisms by which interests are institutionalised, allocated, regulated, realised, and protected. This complements approaches that focus primarily on human-resource management or organisational psychology. Civil servants' interests are considered in relation to responsibility, power, contribution, and the public interest.

Second, it clarifies the mechanism through which benefits are translated into motivation via institutional credibility and expected benefits. The presence of an entitlement in regulations does not mean that it will become motivational. Its motivational potential depends on the institution's suitability, fairness, transparency, consistency, stability, and predictability.

In practical terms, the findings provide a reference for reviewing, designing, and implementing civil-service policies so that benefits are linked to responsibility and results, institutional credibility is strengthened, and the requirements of power control and the public interest are upheld.

CHAPTER 2.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INSTITUTIONS FOR ENSURING BENEFITS TO MOTIVATE CIVIL SERVANTS

1. Key Concepts

From a political-economy perspective, interests reflect actors' material, non-material, and developmental needs, are connected to their positions in socioeconomic relations, and are realised through relations of production, distribution, exchange, and resource use. In the public sector, civil servants' interests arise from relations among the State, employing organisations, civil servants, and society, and are significantly shaped by law, policy, budgets, and state power.

The State both establishes institutions and allocates resources and organises the employment of civil servants. It therefore plays a decisive role in defining the principles, limits, and methods governing the distribution of benefits. Ensuring benefits for civil servants does not mean maximising the interests of one group. Institutions must reconcile individual, organisational, state, and social interests while linking entitlements to responsibility for exercising public authority.

The dissertation distinguishes between: (i) benefits prescribed or guaranteed by institutions; (ii) actual benefits enjoyed by civil servants; and (iii) expected benefits, meaning benefits that civil servants have a basis for anticipating in the future. These states are related but not identical. A prescribed entitlement may not be fully realised, and current actual benefits may fail to create stable expectations if future allocation is inconsistent or difficult to predict.

“Institutions for ensuring benefits to motivate civil servants in Vietnam” are defined as the totality of rules, norms, and mechanisms for establishing, allocating, realising, and protecting civil servants' benefits.

“Institutional credibility” is an attribute reflecting the extent to which institutions operate suitably, fairly, transparently, consistently, stably, and predictably. It is an attribute of institutions and must be distinguished from “institutional trust,” which refers to actors’ perceptions of institutions. Institutional credibility is a key link between institutional design and expected benefits. When institutions operate in a suitable, fair, transparent, consistent, stable, and predictable manner, civil servants have a basis for expecting legitimate benefits to be realised.

“Defensive behaviour” refers to a tendency to choose courses of action in the performance of public duties that involve lower personal risk, potentially manifested in prioritising procedural safety, avoiding responsibility, or limiting innovation. In this dissertation, the concept is used solely to illustrate a possible behavioural response. It is not measured as an independent outcome variable, nor does its use imply that the dissertation has empirically tested a causal relationship.

2. Characteristics, Roles, Content, and Influencing Factors

The dissertation conceptualises institutions for ensuring benefits through six components: authorised actors and implementing actors; institutional forms; civil servants in state administrative agencies as the target group; types of benefits; allocation principles and mechanisms; and outcomes in the form of actual benefits, expected benefits, and motivation. Institutions establish, allocate, realise, and protect benefits. Their three core characteristics are that they orient interests, shape expectations, and depend on institutional credibility.

Influencing factors are grouped into the socioeconomic environment; political and legal conditions; the public-governance system; and cultural, organisational, and implementation-capacity conditions. These factors shape the resources available for distribution, the design of rules, the capacity to implement them, and the consistency between formal provisions and the benefits civil servants actually receive.

3. Three Main Groups of Benefits

First, material benefits include salaries, allowances, and welfare benefits. Salaries express the distribution of benefits between the State and civil servants. They should provide a livelihood foundation, reasonably reflect differences in job value, competence, and responsibility, and establish a predictable relationship between results and benefits. Allowances adjust for differences in position, working conditions, job characteristics, and complexity. Welfare benefits support social protection, reduce risk, and stabilise long-term interests.

Second, competency-based career-development benefits include opportunities for development and the use of competence, performance appraisal, training, appointment, rotation, and the effective deployment of talent. These mechanisms matter when they establish clear links among competence, results, career opportunities, and responsibility. Training should not merely satisfy formal qualification requirements; it should develop practical capability and create opportunities to apply it at work.

Third, non-material benefits and public values include recognition, honour, professional reputation, the social meaning of public service, integrity standards, and protection in the performance of duties. These benefits may strengthen intrinsic motivation and public-service motivation. Public values, however, can fulfil this role only when institutionalised through recognition, protection, and accountability mechanisms rather than remaining declarations of principle.

4. Evaluation Criteria

The dissertation uses five criteria throughout: suitability; fairness; transparency; consistency; and stability and predictability. Suitability concerns the alignment of rules with objectives, the characteristics of public service, and practical requirements. Fairness concerns the grounds and outcomes of benefit allocation. Transparency requires public criteria, procedures, and responsibilities. Consistency concerns coherence between rules and

implementation and across agencies and time. Stability reduces unnecessary uncertainty and supports long-term career planning, while predictability allows civil servants to anticipate the possible consequences of effort, results, and conduct. These criteria are interdependent: suitable rules implemented inconsistently may fail to generate credibility, while transparent procedures coupled with unfair allocation may not create positive expectations.

5. Institutional Trade-offs

Institutional design must address potentially conflicting requirements: distribution based on competence and results versus career-service stability; performance incentives versus fairness; competency-based development versus equality of opportunity; individual interests versus the public interest; power control versus protection for those who properly perform their duties; and authority versus responsibility and risk. No single instrument can generate sustainable motivation. Effectiveness depends on the coherence of the overall mechanisms for establishing, allocating, realising, and protecting benefits.

6. International Experience

The dissertation examines Singapore, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and China. These cases are used to identify principles for institutional design and operation, not to copy foreign models unchanged. The comparison focuses on how material benefits, career development, recognition, power control, accountability, and public values are combined.

International experience suggests that motivational institutions should combine professional standards, competency-based career opportunities, credible appraisal mechanisms, and remuneration commensurate with responsibility. Linking benefits to results can strengthen incentives, but only when appraisal criteria are clear, procedures transparent, and mechanisms exist to address unfairness or distortion. Incentives based solely on numerical targets, without considering job characteristics and factors beyond a civil servant's

control, may encourage behaviour aimed primarily at meeting formal targets rather than achieving substantive results.

Attracting and retaining public-sector personnel depends on more than salary. Career opportunities, the quality of the working environment, stability, professional dignity, capability development, and the social meaning of service all contribute to the overall benefit package. For positions involving substantial responsibility or special working conditions, allocation mechanisms should reflect justified differences while avoiding opaque privileges.

7. Lessons for Vietnam

The dissertation draws six lessons: (1) connect recruitment, job positions, competency frameworks, appraisal, training, appointment, and remuneration; (2) strengthen the link between contribution and benefits without equating performance with simplistic quantitative indicators; work quality, complexity, responsibility, and the conditions under which duties are performed must also be considered; (3) make allocation criteria clear, public, consistent, and predictable; (4) protect those who act properly, on a sound basis, and in the public interest while maintaining accountability and sanctioning self-serving conduct; (5) combine material benefits with career opportunities, recognition, and public values; and (6) adapt international experience to Vietnam's institutional, budgetary, public-service cultural, and implementation conditions.

CHAPTER 3.

THE CURRENT STATE OF INSTITUTIONS FOR ENSURING BENEFITS TO MOTIVATE CIVIL SERVANTS IN VIETNAM

3.1. Institutions for Ensuring Material Benefits

During 2011–2025, institutions for ensuring material benefits for civil servants were gradually improved. The salary system maintained a relatively stable framework and provided a basis for

income distribution according to rank, grade, and position in the civil service. Salary-policy adjustments reflected efforts to improve income and remuneration. Allowances began to recognise differences in office, responsibility, working conditions, and job characteristics. Welfare schemes provided support for living standards and a certain degree of stability.

These achievements helped maintain continuity in the civil service and provided a relatively defined distribution framework. From a political-economy perspective, salaries, allowances, and welfare benefits are mechanisms for distributing public resources and express how the State reconciles the interests of public servants, organisations, and society.

Nevertheless, the salary system does not fully reflect the relationship between job value, competence, results, and benefits. Distribution remains significantly influenced by rank, grade, and seniority, while differences in complexity, responsibility, and contribution are not fully translated into income differences. This may weaken the expectation that greater effort or superior results will yield commensurate benefits.

Allowances do not consistently or clearly reflect differences in job value and working conditions. Where the grounds for allowances fail to capture differences in responsibility, intensity, or occupational risk, their compensatory and incentive functions are constrained. Welfare arrangements also do not fully strengthen long-term expected benefits, particularly given the different needs and risks faced by different groups of civil servants.

The issue is not only the amount spent or received, but also how beneficiaries, allocation grounds, benefit levels, and predictability are determined. A scheme may exist in regulations but still fail to motivate if civil servants cannot discern the relationship between responsibility, contribution, and actual benefits.

The causes include socioeconomic conditions, the political and legal framework, the public-governance system, and implementation arrangements. Budgetary resources and the income gap between the public and private sectors constrain income adjustments. The salary framework and distribution mechanisms have evolved historically; shifting towards a model more strongly linked to job positions and results therefore requires coordinated changes in law, data, appraisal, and accountability. At the governance level, appraisal systems do not always provide a sufficiently credible basis for differentiating benefits. At the implementation level, differences in organisational capacity, working conditions, and consistency across agencies may widen the gap between formal provisions and actual benefits received. Reforming material benefits must therefore be linked to job-position reform, competency development, results measurement, public financial management, and oversight.

3.2. Institutions for Ensuring Competency-Based Career Development Benefits

Institutions for competency-based career development have received increasing attention. Competence has become a criterion in some mechanisms for recruiting, employing, and developing civil servants. Job-position-based management has been promoted to clarify the requirements of each position and the competencies needed. Appraisal has gradually been expected to inform development opportunities, appointments have increasingly been expected to take competence and results into account, training has begun to shift from formal standardisation towards capability development, and policies for attracting talent have provided an initial framework for recognising outstanding competence.

These changes create a basis for moving from management focused primarily on processes towards greater attention to competence, results, and development needs. If the mechanisms are substantively connected, civil servants may see a pathway through

which investment in competence leads to career opportunities, appropriate responsibilities, and recognition.

However, job-position management is not yet fully connected to responsibility and benefits. Job descriptions and competency standards are unlikely to motivate if they do not operate as a unified basis for recruitment, placement, appraisal, training, appointment, and remuneration. Appraisal does not always differentiate benefits in line with contribution, and results may not clearly reflect work quality and effectiveness.

Appointment mechanisms do not fully translate competence and achievement into promotion opportunities. Procedures, standards, and the use of appraisal results may leave the relationship between actual competence and career development unclear. Training has not fully established an integrated chain from identifying competency gaps to selecting learning content, applying learning after training, and recognising outcomes. Talent policies likewise do not always generate career benefits commensurate with outstanding competence.

These limitations reflect insufficient integration among institutional components. When job positions, competency frameworks, appraisal, training, appointment, and remuneration operate separately, civil servants find it difficult to predict career development based on effort and results. Appraisal cannot become a credible incentive if it lacks transparency or produces no concrete consequences. Career development should therefore be treated as a mechanism for allocating benefits, opportunities, and responsibilities, not merely as a human-resource management activity. Job-position and competency data should be connected; standards, procedures, and decision grounds should be disclosed; appraisal results should inform training, deployment, planning, and appointment; and feedback, review, and accountability mechanisms should strengthen the credibility of career decisions.

3.3. Institutions for Ensuring Non-material Benefits and Public Values

Regulations on rewards, honours, and recognition have been established as motivational instruments. Rules for protecting civil servants in the performance of their duties have gradually emerged, while standards of ethics, public-service culture, and public values have been reinforced through policy directions, regulations, and administrative-reform requirements. In principle, institutions protecting public values emphasise integrity, responsibility, and service to the common good.

These factors extend beyond material benefits. Recognition can strengthen professional reputation; public-service standards provide a framework for conduct; and public values help civil servants understand the social meaning of their work. Appropriate protection can reduce uncertainty when carrying out complex or high-risk duties.

However, rewards and honours are not yet closely tied to actual results and contributions. If recognition criteria are unclear or rewards fail to reflect justified differences, their ability to generate non-material benefits and positive expectations is limited. Protection for civil servants performing their duties is not yet fully integrated, so formal safeguards may not provide sufficient certainty that those acting properly will be protected in practice.

Public values are not always clearly embedded in benefit allocation and motivational mechanisms. Integrity, service, responsibility, and innovation may be emphasised as standards without being fully connected to appraisal, recognition, career development, and work organisation. Institutional protection must balance power control with safeguards for those who properly perform their duties. Without clear boundaries, civil servants may struggle to distinguish acceptable risk from misconduct.

The causes include cultural and social norms, economic conditions and resources, the political and legal framework, public

governance, and the capacity to design and implement institutions. Control rules that are not accompanied by guidance, risk classification, and objective review may intensify fear of being held accountable. Conversely, protection without control and accountability may create opportunities for opportunistic conduct. Institutions should therefore distinguish self-serving conduct and violations from good-faith mistakes made while performing authorised duties for the public interest.

Across the three groups of benefits, the dissertation concludes that institutions in Vietnam have gradually improved, but the gap between design and implementation remains a major bottleneck. Six structural tensions stand out: distribution according to contribution, competence, and results versus distribution by career status and seniority; performance incentives versus civil-service stability; competency-based development versus equality and stability; individual interests versus the public interest; power control versus protection for public servants; and authority versus responsibility and risk.

CHAPTER 4.

VIEWPOINTS AND SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVING INSTITUTIONS FOR ENSURING BENEFITS TO MOTIVATE CIVIL SERVANTS IN VIETNAM

4.1. International and Domestic Context

International and domestic developments increase demands on the quality, speed, and adaptability of public administration. Digital transformation, new governance models, more effective use of public resources, and competition for talent require changes in work organisation, capability development, and benefit allocation. At the same time, the rule of law, power control, anti-corruption, and accountability require motivational mechanisms to uphold integrity and protect the public interest.

Adding regulations or increasing a single component of remuneration is insufficient. Institutions must be treated as an integrated system of mechanisms for establishing, allocating, realising, and protecting benefits. Solutions must take account of resource constraints, differences among public-service positions, the measurability of results, and agencies' implementation capacity.

Vietnam's state apparatus combines unified state power with assignment, coordination, control, and decentralisation. Civil servants work across levels, sectors, fields, and positions with different competency and responsibility requirements. This context calls for a gradual shift from management dominated by rank, grade, and seniority towards management based on job positions, competence, results, and performance.

4.2. Viewpoints for Institutional Improvement

The dissertation identifies five principal viewpoints. First, the principle of distribution according to work should be upheld, linking benefits to job positions, responsibilities, and the extent of contributions. Second, legitimate benefits must be ensured while privileges and illegitimate interests are controlled. Third, authority must be accompanied by accountability and a reasonable allocation of occupational risk, distinguishing good-faith risk from violations and self-serving conduct. Fourth, the competitiveness of public-sector benefits must be maintained within resource constraints and fiscal capacity. Fifth, individual benefits, public-service performance, and the public interest must be aligned.

These viewpoints seek to narrow the gap between prescribed benefits, actual benefits, and expected benefits. The objective is not to create a mechanical reward-and-punishment system, but to establish a sufficiently fair and credible distribution order so that civil servants understand job requirements, the grounds for recognition, and the likelihood that proper performance will be treated proportionately.

4.3. Solutions for Institutional Improvement

4.3.1. Improving Institutions for Material Benefits

Salary and allowance mechanisms should strengthen the links among job position, competence, public-service results, and institutional credibility. Reform should gradually move away from a system based mainly on rank, grade, and seniority towards one that better reflects job value, complexity, responsibility, and contribution, while retaining the stability needed in the civil service.

Performance-related pay should not be implemented through a simplistic formula or rely entirely on quantitative indicators. It requires a job-position system and clear job descriptions; verifiable appraisal criteria; reliable data; procedures for explanation and review; and safeguards against target-chasing. For work that is difficult to quantify, multiple sources of evidence should be combined with quality assessment and consideration of implementation context.

Allowance criteria should be reviewed to reflect justified differences in responsibility, conditions, and the nature of public service. Rules should avoid overlap, remain transparent, and be explainable. Adjustments should be stable enough to enable prediction while allowing updates when job value and working conditions change.

Welfare institutions should improve access to benefits, reduce uncertainty, and respond to civil servants' actual needs and risks. Welfare should be treated as a component of long-term benefit assurance rather than merely an addition to income. Existing schemes should be assessed for suitability, accessibility, coverage, and resource sustainability. Allocation grounds should be clear, public, and consistent, avoiding excessive dependence on discretionary decisions or unexplained differences among agencies. Social-protection needs must be balanced against budget capacity and fairness across civil-servant groups. Clear information about eligibility, benefit levels, and access procedures is essential to institutional credibility.

Salary, allowance, and welfare reforms can operate effectively only when connected to public financial management, job-position and performance data, appraisal procedures, accountability, and oversight. Implementation should be phased, with impact assessment and pilots in areas where outputs are relatively identifiable before wider expansion, avoiding unjustified benefit disparities and unsustainable budget pressure.

4.3.2. Improving Institutions for Ensuring Competency-Based Career Development Benefits

Job-position management and competency frameworks should be improved so that each position is defined by duties, required competencies, responsibility, and expected results. Job positions should become an integrated operational basis for recruitment, placement, appraisal, training, development, and remuneration, rather than merely a list or administrative formality.

Performance appraisal should reflect the substantive requirements of each position and use public criteria. Results should be applied consistently to training, placement, career planning, appointment, and recognition. Feedback, explanation, and review procedures are also needed to limit bias, ensure fairness, and strengthen confidence in appraisal results.

Training and development should begin with competency gaps linked to job requirements and the development direction of the civil service. Training effectiveness should not be judged solely by course completion; it should also consider the application of knowledge and skills to public duties and subsequent career opportunities. This helps translate investment in competence into recognisable career benefits.

Appointment and rotation should strengthen the links among competence, results, job requirements, and development opportunities. Standards, procedures, selection grounds, and the responsibilities of decision-makers should be disclosed to an appropriate extent. Talent policies should connect outstanding competence with suitable assignments, an environment in which competence can be used, development opportunities, and

commensurate recognition, while maintaining fair competition and accountability.

4.3.3. Improving Data Infrastructure and Performance Measurement

The dissertation identifies infrastructure and implementation methods as a breakthrough area for improving interconnectedness, verifiability, and institutional credibility. Priorities include developing data infrastructure on job positions, competencies, and performance results; digitising and connecting appraisal, training, reward, and appointment procedures; and establishing mechanisms for verification, oversight, and feedback on benefit allocation.

Data should follow common standards, with clear responsibilities for updating and rules governing access, confidentiality, and quality. Digitisation should do more than convert paper procedures into electronic ones: it should reduce data fragmentation, improve traceability, and ensure that decisions rest on clear grounds. Feedback mechanisms should identify gaps between rules and implementation, explain decisions, and correct deviations.

Implementation requires clear identification of lead agencies, financial and human resources, a roadmap, deliverables, and risks. Feasibility should be prioritised to avoid formalistic data systems or additional reporting burdens that do not improve decision quality.

4.3.4. Improving Reward and Protection Institutions to Encourage Conduct in the Public Interest

Rewards and honours should be tied to actual contributions, result quality, and professional reputation. Criteria should be clear, evidence-based, public, and consistent, avoiding equalisation or excessive reliance on formality and seniority. Recognition should combine non-material benefits with career-development opportunities, making clear that meaningful contributions to public duties will be recognised institutionally.

Protection should be strengthened for civil servants who act within their duties, on a sound basis, and in the public interest, particularly in innovation and areas involving significant

accountability risks. Authority, decision-making procedures, supporting records, advisory mechanisms, and risk-review methods should be clarified. Protection should depend on good faith, compliance with authority, professional grounds, and the public-interest objective; it should not constitute immunity from accountability.

Occupational risks arising from objective circumstances in the lawful performance of public duties should be distinguished from culpable violations, deliberate misconduct, and self-serving conduct. Handling mechanisms should include risk classification, professional guidance, independent review, and the right to explain. This balance is intended both to prevent impunity and to avoid an environment in which civil servants evade every decision involving risk.

Power control and protection for public servants are not mutually exclusive. Control prevents abuse and safeguards the public interest; protection ensures that those who properly perform their duties do not bear arbitrary or disproportionate risks. Both functions should be designed together through clear rules, accountability, transparent review, and differentiated responses.

Public values should be institutionalised through integrity, service quality, responsibility, and results that benefit society. These values should be integrated into behavioural standards, appraisal, recognition, and conflict-of-interest resolution. Accountability, conflict-of-interest controls, and public-value measurement should be strengthened so that personal benefits remain connected to public responsibilities.

Incentive mechanisms should limit target-chasing, manipulation of indicators, and the prioritisation of personal interests. Quantitative results should therefore be combined with quality, integrity, social impact, and contextual assessment. This is necessary for public values to become substantive principles of benefit allocation and civil-service organisation rather than merely ethical messages.

4.4. Implementation Conditions, Barriers, and Mitigation Measures

Implementation requires consistent strategic direction, a coherent legal framework, sustainable financial resources, reliable data, and organisational capacity. Risks include target-chasing when results-based benefits rely on unsuitable criteria; unjustified disparities when competition lacks transparency; abuse when autonomy is not accompanied by accountability; and reduced motivation when control is excessive. Other barriers include budget constraints, uneven data, difficulty measuring results, resistance to change, and inconsistent application across agencies.

The dissertation emphasises four groups of conditions: (i) completing the job-position system and results-based appraisal as a basis for benefit allocation; (ii) advancing digital transformation, improving data, and strengthening public human-resource management capacity; (iii) sustaining political commitment and financial resources for reform; and (iv) ensuring consistency, fairness, and transparency in implementation. Reforms should be phased, piloted in suitable fields, and impact-assessed before expansion. Criteria should be disclosed, oversight strengthened, feedback channels established, and coordination among relevant agencies ensured.

4.5. Recommendations

First, to the Party and the State: establish consistent directions and principles for institutionalising the relationship among contribution, responsibility, authority, and benefits; ensure that benefits are distributed according to job position, contribution, responsibility, and results; and strengthen power control, fairness, transparency, and consistency.

Second, to the National Assembly and the Government: improve the legal and policy framework directly governing civil servants' benefits, particularly salaries, allowances, rewards, welfare, and related entitlements; increase policy stability, transparency, and predictability; and link benefits to job positions and results.

Third, to personnel-management bodies and agencies employing civil servants: ensure that benefit-related rules are implemented substantively through job-position definition, appraisal, placement and deployment, training and development, appointment, recognition, and protection in the performance of duties. Benefit allocation based on seniority or title without adequate grounds should be limited.

Fourth, to research institutions: continue research and empirical testing of the relationships among the quality of institutions for ensuring benefits, expected benefits, work motivation, behaviour, and public-service outcomes. Greater attention should be paid to data development and measurement methods capable of assessing the effects of different groups of benefit-related institutions.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation, entitled “Institutions for Ensuring Benefits to Motivate Civil Servants in Vietnam,” examines motivation from a political-economy perspective, treating interests as relations established and regulated within the civil-service institutional framework. Building on Marxist–Leninist political economy, new institutional economics, and modern theories of motivation, it develops the analytical sequence: institutions for ensuring benefits → institutional credibility → expected benefits → work motivation.

The analysis of 2011–2025 indicates that institutions for ensuring benefits in Vietnam have gradually improved in three areas: material benefits; competency-based career development; and non-material benefits and public values. The main limitation, however, lies not only in the completeness of formal provisions but in the gap between institutional design and implementation, and between prescribed benefits, actual benefits, and benefits that civil servants have a basis to expect.

This gap may arise when benefit allocation is not sufficiently suitable, fair, transparent, consistent, or predictable; when appraisal, training, appointment, and remuneration are not integrated; or when protection for civil servants who properly perform their duties does not provide the necessary certainty. Under such conditions, civil

servants may find it difficult to expect their effort, competence, and results to be recognised, protected, and converted into commensurate benefits. Proactive motivation may consequently weaken, while defensive behaviour may increase.

The central task of institutional improvement is therefore to strengthen credibility and narrow the gap between prescribed, actual, and expected benefits. The dissertation proposes a coordinated set of solutions: improve salaries, allowances, and welfare; connect job positions, competence, appraisal, training, appointment, and talent development; build data infrastructure and performance-measurement systems; improve reward and protection mechanisms and encourage conduct in the public interest; and strengthen accountability, conflict-of-interest controls, and public-value measurement.

The dissertation does not claim to have empirically tested causal relationships at the individual level. Its conclusions identify institutional mechanisms and conditions that may create or constrain motivation, based on theoretical reasoning, institutional analysis, and secondary data. Future research should empirically test the relationships among the quality of institutions for ensuring benefits, expected benefits, work motivation, behaviour, and performance. Further topics include protection mechanisms for civil servants in high-risk fields; the relationship between remuneration and public finance; the relationship between power control and innovation; differences across levels, sectors, and groups of civil servants; and the roles of public-service culture and informal institutions.

In conclusion, ensuring benefits to motivate civil servants does not mean increasing benefits unilaterally. Its essence is to establish a distribution and protection mechanism that is sufficiently fair, transparent, consistent, and predictable, linking civil servants' benefits to competence, contribution, responsibility, and public-service results while respecting public-resource constraints and the requirement to serve the common good.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

1. Nguyen Thi Kim Hue (2025), “Competency-Based Civil-Service Management: Current Situation and Solutions,” *Journal of Political Theory*, February issue.

2. Nguyen Thi Kim Hue (2025), “Singapore’s Experience in Building the Civil Service,” *Journal of Political Theory*, April 2025 issue.

3. Nguyen Thi Kim Hue (2025), “Singapore’s Experience in Motivating Civil Servants and Implications for Vietnam,” *Journal of Political Theory*, May 2025 issue.

4. Nguyen Thi Kim Hue (2025), “Performance-Related Pay in the Public Sector: Experience and Implications for Vietnam,” *Labour and Social Affairs Journal*, Issue 735, March 2025.