

Managing the public sector as the private is often suggested. Mainly, this is associated with the purpose of increasing the efficiency of spending.

We all know that public and private have different “institutional” missions and objectives. This means that also the approach, the structure and the management of activities could or sometimes better be different. So, maybe it would be better first to point out the best aspects of the two sectors.

The private sector: delivers.

Even if the idea of private is often associated to that one of competition, and this is also right, what industry has as a focal point of its vision is the product. That is, a clear vision of what to provide and how to do it in terms of timescales, procedures, costs etc.

The public sector: may take the risk.

This mainly requires labour stability, or let's say relax in terms of long term contracts for employers. Often the private sector, and especially small and medium enterprises, does not adopt actions requiring very long timescales, huge investments, high risk. The public sector indeed can pave the way for breakthroughing innovation, visionary evolutions towards wellbeing of the whole community

So, it is not flexibility the added value of the private sector, but care of results. A permanent position, or at least a long-term perspective for the employers, is mandatory to fulfill the challenging and complex objectives of the public sector.

Long-term objectives and measurable intermediate results. This is the recipe.

And this opens the floor to what are some of the driving aspects for maintaining effectiveness and efficiency: motivation and evaluation, which should also embed selection, planning and management of any action. Motivation and evaluation are in fact the main characteristics of an intelligent system, ready to adapt to achieve the objectives. Sometimes, we forget the reason why we are doing something. Sometimes, we do not focus on the real target, forgetting to analyse mistakes and change behavior accordingly. So, the process can become more important than the product, transforming in bureaucracy. Or we concentrate on hierarchy, mainly perceived as carrier and not responsibility and organization.

How then to tackle these possible distortions?

Identify objectives, estimate feasibility and impacts of actions, define indicators of success, introduce incentives and, very important, evaluate and adapt if necessary. As an instrument to facilitate this kind of approach, the public procurement is something that can help.

This means to be ready to change, and faster than the evolution of the system itself. That is, anticipating, forward looking, simulating different options. Then act, but with a knowledge-based support and not by trials.