



**Automating Processes in the Partnership of
ICITAP and the DNP: A Look at the Psychometric
Application's use in HR Development**

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Executive Summary

The Psychometric Project (PP) in the Dominican Republic (DR) was a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Dominican National Police (DNP), and the Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP)—an organization within the International Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. The PP is a human resources online platform used to improve the hiring and recruitment process in the Dominican National Police. This project sought to strengthen the DNP’s human resources force to sustainably improve the organizational development in the DNP.

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean country with institutional weaknesses related to their law enforcement institutions. Based on assessments made by the ICITAP, the country has problems related to corruption, public distrust, and revictimization towards vulnerable populations. Therefore, ICITAP aimed to approach the problem focusing on four key areas: 1) investigations coordination with national prosecutors, 2) human resources, 3) community relations, and 4) external oversight. This study seeks to understand the impact of the PP on the organizational development and sustainability of the DNP’s HR Department.

This study focuses on two main goals: 1) to understand the historical context, implementation, and sustainability of the PP, and 2) to provide Lessons Learned, Good Practices, and Recommendations to ICITAP and DNP leadership on the PP project. These goals will be accomplished through the use of document analysis and semi-structured interviews to staff involved in the process: executive/senior level DNP commanders responsible for the PP project implementation, police line supervisors, representatives of civil society groups, police officers hired using the Psychometric Project, ICITAP leadership, and historical leadership.

Throughout the interviews, all levels of DNP and ICITAP personnel expressed that the PP improved the efficiency, efficacy, and accuracy of the recruitment and promotional processes within the HR Department. The challenges DNP and ICITAP personnel faced regarding initial buy-in, infrastructure and disparities in technological knowledge did not deter the PP from

significantly improving the day-to-day process within the DNP HR Department. However, if the DNP is to continue to use the PP, there are gaps concerning the expansion, testing constraints, and specificity that will need to be further examined and addressed.

Based on the findings, we recommend:

- ***Infrastructure:*** ICITAP should prioritize infrastructure like broadband and equipment before continuing with the implementation. Investing in infrastructure early on in a project will increase usability and better position the Dominican Republic to sustain and expand its institutional system within the DNP. As funding infrastructure initiatives require large initial investments, the DNP should consider partnering with other federal departments to share connectivity costs.
- ***Funding:*** To address uncertainty concerns that arise when ICITAP leaves a country, a 5-10 year strategic plan should be developed early on in each project. This plan should provide detailed information regarding personnel, infrastructure, financial, and organizational needs. This action will provide continued guidance that will increase the sustainability of the project.
- ***Training and Community Partnerships:*** To address technical knowledge gaps, immediate and ongoing training should be added to the plan. This will allow HR personnel and DNP leadership to understand direct impacts of the PP. Additionally, partnerships with community organizations should be pursued to assist in training, as well as assist in restoring the public trust back into the DNP.

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Introduction

“I want to be clear with some hard truths about the enormity of the challenge that is before us today. The experience in the United States has demonstrated that police reform is not something that can happen overnight. This is a challenge that will take time, hard work, and patience” (Uzra Zeya, October 2022).

The US Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights delivered those words on October 27, 2022 at the United States–Dominican Republic High Level Dialogue on Institutional Reform in Santo Domingo. US Representative Uzra Zeya not only acknowledged the enormity of police reform challenges that face both the US and the Dominican Republic, but also emphasized the continued commitment these countries must undertake to foster such reform.

Zeya’s remarks follow years of US-DR anti-corruption and police reform efforts within the DNP. ICITAP and the USAID spearheaded such efforts by launching a police professionalization program within the DNP in 2015. Within this program, ICITAP and USAID partnered with the DNP’s Human Resources Department (HR) to develop an effective, reliable, and transparent recruitment, selection, and promotion process system in 2019. To achieve such objectives, ICITAP implemented the “Psychometric Project” (PP) in which they donated Psychometric Lab equipment and their expertise to construct a long-term, comprehensive, and sustainable psychometric web application to improve the DNP’s HR selection and promotion processes.

Since ICITAP’s involvement in the PP ended on November 11, 2022, both the DOJ and ICITAP leadership are curious about the long-term efficacy of the PP. Specifically, ICITAP officials question whether the project impacted the DNP sufficiently to inspire long-term, sustainable development within the DNP’s HR Department and whether the PP should be replicated elsewhere within Latin America. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to answer the question, “How has the psychometric project led to organizational development and sustainability within the DNP’s HR Department?” To answer this question, our team delved into

the history of the PP, its qualitative effects on the DNP's HR Department, and the probability that it will be sustainable and replicable.

Historical Overview

The PP in the Dominican Republic was a partnership between ICITAP and the DNP. ICITAP is part of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice which was formed in 1986. It was initially created simply to provide criminal investigative training to Central American countries, but it greatly expanded its mandate in 1989 to focus on sustainable institutional development. ICITAP has worked in 110 countries and continues to expand its mission into new law enforcement development topical areas.

According to Carl Risheim, a long-time ICITAP Country Attaché in Colombia who supervised ICITAP's DR program from 2012-2018, the idea to plan the PP was conceived before 2015. This means that the idea that there was a needed change in the DR was very clear. Mr. Risheim stated that the Government of the Dominican Republic wanted to move the DNP in another direction, a better direction. After the last ICITAP partnership with Colombia, he was able to gain insights from the lack of sustainability in their programs, and used those insights to identify other problems within the DNP institution.

In 2015, ICITAP, in collaboration with USAID, launched a police reform and professionalization program that sought to strengthen internal and external oversight mechanisms to modernize human resources and capabilities. This would lead to improve the criminal justice coordination, and improve community relations¹. This initial approach refers to what Mr Risheim shared.

¹ US Department of Justice. 2020. "[Western Hemisphere Programs](#)"

The same year, Mr Raymond Rivera, ICITAP Deputy Director for Colombia and DOJ Liaison to USAID Dominican Republic, traveled to the DR to discuss the DNP situation in the DR. Mr Rivera met with USAID leadership staff and DR Dominican Congress members to discuss whether a long-term ICITAP program would help the DR with the upcoming Police Reform. They decided that a longer intervention was necessary in collaboration with USAID². Later on, ICITAP conducted a preliminary assessment in 2018, which revealed a significant gap in technical knowledge in the DNP. These findings, recognized by the European Union, resulted in the EU donating strategic alignment software to the DNP. Due to these findings, in 2019, ICITAP recommended the implementation of the PP to assist in the Human Resources Department within the DNP.

During 2020, USAID and ICITAP designed the program, intending to address the following issues that were brought in the 2018 assessment:

- ***Government corruption:*** Several interviewees recognize corruption as one crucial factor that affects police effectiveness. In fact, the Transparency International's 2019 Global Corruption Barometer for Latin America report revealed that 47 percent of people paid a bribe when they encountered police.
- ***Drug trafficking:*** Given its strategic location and strong economy, the Dominican Republic became an origin point for drug trafficking into the US. According to the INCR, approximately 7% of all narcotics that flow to the US transit the Dominican Republic³.
- ***Low rates of prosecution and conviction*** in the Dominican Republic are driven by⁴:
 - Limited Public Ministry capacity to absorb and expedite new cases,
 - Ineffective coordination between criminal justice institutions (prosecutors and police especially),

² PARTICIPATING AGENCY PROGRAM AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE USAID AND THE DOJ

³ 2022 INCSR–Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control.

⁴ U.S. Department of State. 2021. 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Dominican Republic.

- Limited access to institutions of justice in marginalized areas where crime rates and public demand for justice are highest.
- **Lost trust:** The DNP is an institution with low levels of public trust. According to the 2019 country report⁵ from the Latin American Public Opinion Project, almost 62% of Dominicans felt the police were involved in criminal activity.
- **Unaccountability:** The challenges mentioned above cause a case backlog and general system congestion in the DR's busiest judicial districts. Civil society representatives perceived rejection and the dismissal of criminal charges were due to faulty investigation and case preparation⁶. Additionally, there have been complaints about re-victimization of vulnerable communities by an unaccountable criminal justice system, in which police officers do not validate victim's testimonies against their perpetrators. This issue affects particularly gender-based violence survivors suffering from the consequences of re-victimization when reporting. In addition, gender-based violence survivors' limited access to justice converges to derail prosecutions and discourage victims from seeking protection.

ICITAP determined that, to successfully address these issues, ICITAP would adopt the following approach:

a. Civil society

Given the studies produced by USAID, the collaboration with the Dominican civil society organizations was a cross-cutting component of USAID rule of law programming to ensure that reforms completed in this area were transparent and participatory. Before ICITAP intervention, the USAID-DR partnership adopted—as its overarching goal—to improve citizen

⁵ Espinal, Rosario; Morgan, Jana. "Cultura política de la democracia en la República Dominicana y las Américas, 2018/19: Tomándole el pulso a la democracia." <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/dr/ABDOM2021-Executive-Summary-Spa-v4-Final-220214.pdf>.

⁶ U.S. Department of State. 2021. "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Dominican Republic."

security to promote economic growth. To achieve this goal, USAID identified one of its main development goals as "Crime Prevention Strengthened." To achieve this goal, USAID established a Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA) within ICITAP to reform the DNP. This program went into effect in July 2015.

b. Gender-based violence and other vulnerable populations

Aligned to the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Combat Gender Based Violence globally, the training included Family and Gender Violence (F/GBV) training modules to strengthen DNP training and staff development capacity on matters of F/GBV. The project also included USAID's Disability Policy Paper which describes USAID's commitment to using program funds to promote the inclusion of people who have physical and cognitive disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities into USAID programming. The project also aimed to promote the participation of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, in community crime prevention and civil society monitoring of the Dominican justice system. Additionally, there was a need to include unique needs of people with disabilities that are integrated into broader prosecutor and police capacity building efforts conducted.

Following these approaches, the program was designed ([more on Introduction to the PP](#)) In 2021, the program was officially implemented, and DNP HR department started applying the *psicoweb* to potential recruits.

Defining Key Issues

Organizational Development

As mentioned above, one of the key areas the USAID/ICITAP partnership focused on was human resources development. The overall goal of that initiative was to develop the “capacity of DNP personnel to fulfill the DNP mission and strengthen the police service through competent personnel that design, operate, and improve organizational processes.”⁷ In multiple

⁷ POLICE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY ICITAP DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

interviews with ICITAP leadership, they reiterated that part of the overall goal of the HR development program was to “develop best practices” specifically for recruitment and retention. With a stronger organizational model, the HR department will be able to find ways to ensure high quality officers are hired and retained. With this goal in mind, the PP was identified as a tool that would assist the DNP’s HR department to identify desirable candidates while improving organizational processes.

Sustainability

For each initiative, leadership wanted to ensure that the DNP had the appropriate resources and opportunity to sustain each project and produce lasting change. To assist in implementing the PP, USAID decided to fund the first two years of implementation for the PP, from 2021 to 2023. This funding allowed the DNP to implement the PP without taking on the financial risks. ICITAP leadership was informed in March 2022, that the USAID/ICITAP partnership in the DR would be terminated in November 2022.⁸ With the program terminating, ICITAP leadership desired to know if the assistance to implement the PP made a lasting impact.

Expansion

ICITAP has worked in over 110 countries to assist and consult on an array of issues impacting law enforcement agencies. Many of the issues that ICITAP deals with are pervasive throughout different organizations and countries. The HR development project addresses issues common in many HR departments, like building capacity and improving working conditions, and as such it is important to keep in mind how these initiatives could possibly be implemented elsewhere. When evaluating the PP, part of the assessment needs to examine lessons learned and good practices with the focus on how a similar project could be implemented in similar organizations to solve similar issues. This way, when ICITAP and USAID are facing similar situations in other countries, specifically in Latin America, they will have a better understanding of whether or not it would be advisable to suggest implementing a project similar to the PP.

⁸ ICITAP Monthly Meeting Notes March, 2022.

Overview of Our Research Methodology

For the present paper, we decided to use two types of research methodology to maximize our access to information regarding the benefits and challenges of the PP: document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Document analysis is a method often used for historical analysis. For the purposes of this paper, document analysis was used to systematically review different kinds of documents produced by ICITAP management within the DNP HR department, like training guides, agreement documents, etc. This method helped us gain historical context and assess the sustainability of the psychometric project.

The second method is semi-structured interviews, a method that collects the perceptions of stakeholders for analysis. To ensure that we were able to capture diverse perspectives throughout the organization, we developed seven categories of interviewees. However, due to lack of availability, we were only able to conduct interviews in six of the categories. Each category contained a set of seven questions that pertained to their anticipated level of knowledge⁹:

- **Category I:** *Executive level Police commanders.* These interviews were focused on understanding high-level perceptions about the program and its implementation, and how well the program was perceived in the DNP.
- **Category II:** *People who have overall responsibility for the implementation of the psychometric project.* The purpose of these interviews was to provide a better understanding about the implementation process, possible resistance or acceptance. These also helped us understand the benefits/challenges of the process.

⁹ Each category has its own interview guide that is attached in the appendix of this document.

- **Category III:** *Line supervisors for psychometric applications.* These interviews provided similar information as the previous category, but also included information on direct use of the system by HR personnel.
- **Category IV:** *Civil society groups.* This category of interviews was supposed to provide expectations from the civil society, however, it was not possible to interview any civil society representatives.
- **Category V:** *Police who were hired under the new system.* These interviews provided deep insights into the benefits and challenges of the psychometric applications and how they affected its applicants.
- **Category VI:** *ICITAP leadership.* This category provided information about the previous recruiting process, development and implementation of the PP, and overall current status of the PP.
- **Category VII:** *ICITAP historical leadership.* This category was focused on gaining historical context surrounding ICITAP's overall partnership with the DNP.

Finally, the applied interviews and document analysis led to a process called triangulation¹⁰. We compiled the information from both research methods to provide robust analysis surrounding the implementation of the PP. This analysis led to our initial findings and recommendations detailed below.

Introduction of Psychometric Project (PP)

The Psychometric Project (PP) was implemented in the Dominican Republic by ICITAP, as part of a partnership with USAID and the DOJ to strengthen institutional capacity and

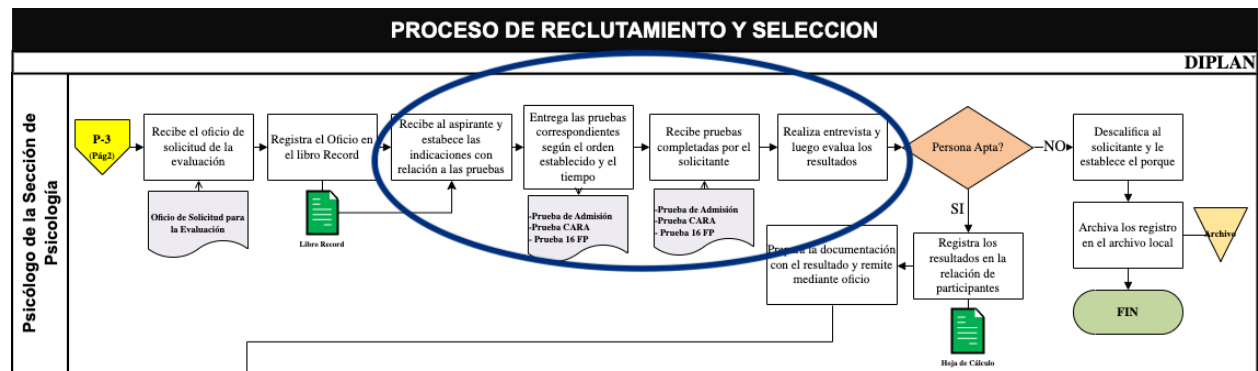
¹⁰ Olsen, W. K., Haralambos, M. (Ed.), & Holborn, M. (Ed.) (2004). Triangulation in Social Research: : Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Can Really Be Mixed. In Developments in Sociology Causeway Press Ltd.

transparency within the DNP. The goal was to strengthen police management and accountability in four key areas: 1) investigations coordination with national prosecutors, 2) human resources, 3) community relations, and 4) external oversight.

The Psychometric Project or *psicoweb* app is a human resources online platform used to improve the hiring and recruitment process in the Dominican National Police. It has 26 tests designed to measure staff's adaptation to a new environment, intelligence, interests, personality, etc. This platform has applicants answer standardized questions, which are then automatically scored by the application system, and sent to the HR department immediately. The automated processes of this system eliminates the need for manual grading of these assessments and eliminates the opportunity for someone to manipulate the answers of an assessment.

The PP addresses one step within the current standard operating procedures. When someone is applying to the DNP, they initially need to present identifying documentation which is then verified. After their identity is verified, they then are evaluated by a medical doctor who assesses their physical ability to work in the department. Next they are asked to complete a psychological evaluation. This is where the *psicoweb* applications take place. Under former operating procedures, applicants took this assessment with pencil and paper, which was then evaluated by a psychologist by hand. However, under the PP, applicants take this assessment through the platform, which then sends the scored results to the psychologist. Once the assessment has been scored and reviewed by a psychologist in the HR, the applicant is brought in for an interview. These steps take place inside the blue circle in Figure 1.

Figure 1: DNP hiring flowchart



Findings

Organizational Development

In targeting organizational development, the PP led to perceived procedural and substantive improvements. Specifically, the interviews revealed various good implementation practices and subsequent improvements regarding efficiency, efficacy, and accuracy within the HR Department. In this paper, the following terms are defined as:

- *Efficiency*: the capacity of the DNP's HR Department to provide psychological evaluations to applicants and to subsequently assess those evaluations
- *Efficacy*: the ability of the DNP's HR Department to conduct recruitment processes without introducing bias
- *Accuracy*: the capability of the DNP's HR Department to produce the desired result of recruiting cadets who are ethical and effective in their roles

Original Standard Operating Procedures

Before the implementation of the PP, the standard operating procedures for applicants were as follows:

- 1) Applicants arrived at the DNP office where the receptionist received them;

- 2) The receptionist verified the applicants' documents and confirmed their identities;
- 3) Applicants go to the medical examiner and receive a physical examination;
- 4) If applicants passed the physical examination, applicants took a manual psychological evaluation;
- 5) If applicants passed the manual psychological evaluation, HR personnel contacted the applicants to finalize employment.

The implementation of the PP mainly affected steps four and five. Specifically, the PP changed the psychological evaluation from a manual test to an automated exam with immediate grading. In reference to these grades, HR psychologists further assessed each applicant's dispositions and characteristics as well as compared and contrasted applicants with one another. After, HR personnel contacted applicants to discuss further action regarding training and to finalize employment.

Good Practices

During her interview, Noemi Germosen—an ICITAP psychologist who assisted in the DNP implementation process—introduced three good practices for the successful implementation of the PP.

- (1) *Involving DNP Personnel.* Noemi Germosen first mentioned that involving the HR Department personnel, specifically psychologists, is “imperative for the success of the system.” She explained that it is important for DNP personnel to not view the PP as an “imposition,” but as a project that is “spearheaded” by DNP HR personnel. Noemi explained that “you have to bring them [the psychologists and DNP personnel] along during this implementation process” as they are knowledgeable about the DNP HR system and will provide essential input.¹¹

¹¹ Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

- (2) *Constant Mentoring*. For the first two to three months, Noemi emphasized the importance of consistent mentoring to “course correct immediately” as errors are inevitable. Throughout the early stages of the implementation process, Noemi said “the best thing” for ICITAP leadership and corresponding DNP HR personnel to do is to “constantly be there mentoring” to regulate organizational development procedures and adapt accordingly.¹²
- (3) *Back-Up Strategy*. Lastly, Noemi mentioned that the ICITAP team and DNP HR personnel developed a “back-up strategy” when technology failed. Specifically, the HR Department produced a paper version of the web-based application that could be administered manually and later uploaded to the PP system. While not preferred, this back-up strategy safeguarded HR personnel from technological challenges that could have overwhelmed the system.¹³

Efficiency

In every interview, ICITAP leadership and DNP personnel mention the significant improvement in efficiency due to the implementation of the PP. Before PP implementation, steps four and five of the recruitment process necessitated manual and meticulous grading to assess psychological examinations. Evelyn Marte—a line supervisor for the DNP’s HR Department—commented that the PP is an “excellent tool that has helped give more psychological exams quicker.”¹⁴ Geury Castro—a police officer hired during the PP—described the speed and ease of the recruitment process stating “I definitely see it as a great advantage for the police” as it has removed a variety of “unnecessary steps” within the process, including intensive

¹² Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

¹³ Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

¹⁴ Marte, Evelyn. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 26 October, 2022.

manual grading and extensive waiting periods between the applicant taking the assessment and receiving their results.¹⁵

Carlos Maldonado—the Senior Mission Advisor for ICITAP—explained that such grading and assessment periods usually lasted between three to six months with an additional three to six months to assess and compare potential cadets. Now, Carlos estimates that the grading period takes approximately 15 minutes and the subsequent assessment period takes 50% less time than before as psychologists can focus on assessing applicants based on defined criteria instead of manually grading applicants and subjectively assessing their strengths and weaknesses. Overall, ICITAP and HR personnel experienced significant savings in time and the simplification of recruitment processes. Such an increase in efficiency will most likely aid HR personnel in finding the most qualified cadets for each position.¹⁶

Efficacy

In addition to improving efficiency, the PP better protects against biases that could be introduced during the recruitment processes by HR personnel. Before the implementation of the PP, Manuelica Segura—a member of the Department of Management and Development in the DNP’s HR Department—explains that HR personnel were “prone” to forgetting or correcting information in a subjective manner, often due to the influx of applications. She stated that the manual system allowed for graders to “rationalize a person’s failings” as HR personnel could modify the responses and analyses, causing a type of “selection bias.”¹⁷ Such “selection bias” refers to the accidental or purposeful alterations that HR personnel make to applicant’s psychological examinations based on HR personnel’s own subjective opinions. These opinions introduce a kind of selection bias within the recruitment process as the applicants previously accepted may not adequately represent the most qualified of the applicants and could be accepted

¹⁵ Castro, Geury. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

¹⁶ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

¹⁷ Segura, Manuelica. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 26 October, 2022.

due to HR personnel’s common or persistent biases.¹⁸ In recognition of the previous selection bias, Geury Castro remarked that he was satisfied with the PP as it removes “any type of alteration that humans could do to the questions or answers,” providing more objective and reliable results.¹⁹ With this increase in efficacy, HR personnel will more easily discern which applicants are most qualified for certain positions as the grading process will no longer differ between HR personnel. Instead, the PP provides applicants an opportunity to be assessed more consistently and fairly throughout the selection process.

Accuracy

The last reported success of the PP is an overall increase in accuracy as interviewees now expect more qualified cadets due to a more holistic assessment process. Before the PP, Marilenia Ureña—a Lieutenant Colonel in the DNP—explained that the HR Department did not originally know what characteristics were important for successful policing as there was “no defined profile.” Instead, HR personnel only identified applicant profiles based on age and education, specifically if the cadets were of an age between 18 and 24 and held a high school diploma. Now, the PP standards are “more comprehensive” as they look at “hard and soft skills” that reflect DNP desired cadet qualities.²⁰ Hard skills refer to job-related abilities that are often more easily assessed whereas soft skills refer to personal qualities, traits, or dispositions that are difficult to assess. The PP evaluates both competencies to understand applicants’ experiences and skills that directly relate to DNP roles and applicants’ characteristics that relate to multiple roles but can affect the overall culture of the organization.

ICITAP’s Program Officer described the PP web-application as having “strict evaluation” methods regarding competencies needed for different levels of police positions. Different positions require different levels of training, with the lowest level requiring only two to

¹⁸ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

¹⁹ Castro, Geury. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

²⁰ Ureña, Marilenia. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

three weeks, the next level requiring at least six months, and the highest level requiring four years.²¹ Noemi Germosen—the ICITAP psychologist who assisted in the DNP implementation process—further explained that applicants are evaluated based on 16 personality factors which determine “psychological pathologies.” The PP uses standardized metrics to gauge an applicant’s disposition and identify ideal candidates. With the implementation of this system, the goal is to conduct a “vast and extensive” screening process that ensures candidates match the desired profile developed according to ICITAP.²² Specifically, Carlos Maldonado—the Senior Advisor for ICITAP—detailed that the PP web-application immediately totals the number of applicants, gender of applicants, and whether applicants match core competencies or should be disqualified from further recruitment consideration.²³ As a member of the DNP’s HR Department, Manuelica Segura explained that this system builds more “holistic, accurate profiles” that not only identify applicants’ qualifications but also reveal what additional developmental skills and courses are needed for the applicant to achieve the required criteria of their desired position. In addition, Manuelica mentioned that HR personnel can now either suggest a different position for an applicant based on demonstrated skills or HR personnel can make recommendations on how applicants can gain the required competencies through training and development courses.²⁴ As a Lieutenant Colonel, Marilenia Ureña stated that this holistic approach benefits the DNP community at large, fosters more empathy, and aids psychologists in tailoring their assessments and interviews as they are no longer burdened by the lengthy manual process.²⁵ In addition, the ICITAP Program Officer stated that “one of the major successes of the HR component of the PP is...identifying people that have been deemed unqualified to be on the streets as police officers.”

²¹ Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

²² Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

²³ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

²⁴ Segura, Manuelica. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 26 October, 2022.

²⁵ Ureña, Marilenia. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

²⁶ Specifically, Carlos stated that there have been “a greater number of applicants being disqualified,” which suggests that “in the past, there were a number of people who were hired [to be police officers] that maybe shouldn’t have been.” ²⁷

Despite the successes of the PP implementation, DNP and ICITAP personnel shared various implementation challenges and potential gaps within the PP.

Challenges

Selling the Idea. Carlos Maldonado stated that “selling the idea was difficult at first” because DNP HR personnel already had a set of standard operating procedures.²⁸ Similarly, Noemi mentioned that in order to get “buy-in” the ICITAP team needed to engage with people working on the manual system to change their mentalities and expectations about the new automated system. The ICITAP team needed to find a way to change “the way an entire department” worked in “an effective and efficient manner.” This “buy-in” proved to be a difficult task.²⁹ However, Carlos recalls that despite a “rocky implementation” for the first few months, the “quick data analysis” spoke for itself and began to change minds of DNP and Dominican Republic government personnel. Such DR government personnel included the current DR President who noted that the implementation of the PP encourages the use of data to develop mitigation and strategic plans.³⁰

Infrastructure. Noemi Germosen stated ICITAP and DNP HR personnel found challenges with the country’s limited “broadband connection” and “lack of IT equipment.” Furthermore, Leandro Martínez—a Captain of the DNP in the Psychology Department—expressed how

²⁶ Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

²⁷ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

²⁸ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

²⁹ Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

³⁰ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

frustrating it was to see applicants travel great distances to take the psychological exam only to fail during the exam due to internet connectivity issues.³¹ In fact, Guery Castro stated that during his test, the computer stopped working and it did “disturb his experience” and overall ability to complete the exam.³²

Disparities in Technological Knowledge. Leandro, Evelyn Marte—a line supervisor in the HR Department—Carlos, and Noemi all described the disparity in applicants’ technological knowledge. While some applicants’ had previous experience utilizing computers and web-based applications, others had no prior experience. Noemi explains that many applicants from “low-income families who lack experience using technology” had a difficult time taking the psychological examination at first. In turn, ICITAP and DNP HR personnel had the added challenge of guiding applicants through the web-based system daily.³³

Potential Gaps & Recommendations

Expansion of the PP. Interviewees provided two main avenues for expanding the PP: expanding geographically and operationally. Specifically, Marilenia and Leandro were concerned that implementation of the PP only occurred at the DNP headquarters, requiring applicants to commute a long distance to take the exam.³⁴ In addition, Vierca Perdomo—an HR Department analyst hired during PP implementation—mentioned that the PP should be expanded to include all staff annually as part of a performance review process. Such expansion assists bosses in tracking individual improvements and departmental changes as well as aid high level leadership in changing department-wide strategies.³⁵

³¹ Martínez, Leandro. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra . 28 October, 2022.

³² Castro, Geury. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

³³ Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

³⁴ Ureña, Marilenia. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022; Martínez, Leandro. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra . 28 October, 2022.

³⁵ Perdomo, Vierca. Interview. Conducted by Eleni Daughters and Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra . 2 November, 2022.

More Time and Space. As a cadet hired through the PP web-application, Guery Castro explained that there was too much of a time constraint on applicants taking the psychological exam and that the physical space was cramped and led to applicants feeling rushed. Guery recommended that more time be given to applicants as they should “answer sincerely” and “take more time to understand the reality of the situation being presented.” He stated that “some people just answer randomly, because they think they are going to run out of time,” leading to wrong answers and an overall decrease in HR’s ability to discern the most qualified applicants. In addition, Guery voiced his concern for the physical space where the psychological examinations took place, as he felt there was not enough space to fit all the applicants comfortably, which he felt further decreased the accuracy of the results.³⁶

Increased Specificity. Lastly, Manuelica Segura expressed that while she found the PP to be helpful, she thought it was “very generic” and “doesn’t respond to the nature of the DNP.” Instead, Manuelica recommends that the PP be “more aligned with DNP interests” so that it is specific to the culture of the DNP.³⁷

Sustainability

Our interviews demonstrated that new programs are well situated to create lasting change with sufficient initial funding, buy-in from all levels of the organization, and continued expansion. However, uncertainty with funding and leadership can disrupt the sustainability of the project.

Good Practices

Initial Funding

While ICITAP provided oversight and guidance for the implementation of the PP, USAID donated the needed funding to start the project. As stated in an interview with someone in

³⁶ Castro, Geury. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

³⁷ Segura, Manuelica. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 26 October, 2022.

ICITAP leadership, starting a new program takes a lot of initial monetary investment, especially when implementing a brand new computer automated system.³⁸ Implementing a new system requires funds for training, technical assistance, mentoring, building a testing site, initial software licensing costs, costs for new computers and tablets, desks, chairs, chargers, and additional equipment to administer the test. With USAID donating the equipment and funding, the DNP was able to implement the PP and see the benefits of the system without worrying about the initial funding needed. The financial amount needed for a project like this can be very daunting for leadership to back without any evidence of potential benefit. Having assistance with the initial funding for this project mitigated the risk to leadership, allowing them to see the beneficial potential of the PP, increasing the potential buy-in from leadership.

Initial Buy-in

When looking at the sustainability of a new system, user buy-in is a major determinant. It is well known that even the best system can fail if no one uses it. Gaining buy-in from the majority of those using the system is essential to ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the system will be sustainable. Since executive leadership changes frequently, ICITAP decided that to best create systemic change would be to focus on “personnel deeper within the organization.” In an interview with ICITAP leadership, they mentioned that there needs to be individuals throughout the organization, identified early on in the process, that can be trained on the usage and promotion of the psychometric lab.³⁹ There need to be employees who work within the department whose full-time responsibility is to learn the process, analyze the data, and promote the use of the system.

Similarly, Lenardo stated that HR staff and directors within the DNP were more preferential to the PP when educated about the benefits of the system.⁴⁰ HR personnel and DNP leadership saw the ease, reliability, and instant readiness that this automated process offered the

³⁸ Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

³⁹ Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

⁴⁰ Martínez, Leandro. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra . 28 October, 2022.

department. Through educational practices, they were able to see the “revolutionary” change moving from manual to automated processes made on the whole HR department. An example given in one of our interviews detailed how if a document management building burned down, all the historical documentation of police employees would have been lost. But now with the digitized process, this information and historical context can be electronically saved.

Everyone we interviewed highlighted the significant benefits of the PP, and so on each level of the DNP, gaining the user buy-in was influential. With those we interviewed on lower levels, they all stated how significantly positive the impact of the PP was, and given the power to decide, they would all recommend the system continue to be used by the HR department. Additionally, both the Director General and the Dominican Republic President have acknowledged the value of the PP.

Expansion

As the PP currently stands, it only operates within Santo Domingo. As Marilenia stated, 31 provinces in 18 different regions are not using the PP, meaning that DNP applicants need to travel to the capital to take the Psychometric evaluation.⁴¹ This can be costly for applicants, as noted by Vierca, therefore deterring possible applicants from applying. Additionally, we learned that many potential applicants get referrals and gain advice on applying from DNP personnel they know from their communities. This decreases the potential applicant pool, as it will be difficult for those without connections and financial resources to apply. Expanding the PP into each of the regions will create a diverse and robust applicant pool, which will ensure the sustained use of the platform.

Barriers to Sustainability

Funding

⁴¹ Ureña, Marilenia. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

USAID funding for the PP runs out at the end of 2023, and after that the DNP leadership will have to decide if they want to continue funding the project as is, expand the project, or cut funding all together. Currently this project is not part of the DNP budget, and so adding a budget for this project could deter the continued use of the PP. Most interviewees stated that while this automated process would be difficult to reverse back to manual, the ability for funds would determine the maintenance, expansion, and sustainability of the PP. One interviewee stated that it was “implausible” for the department to go back to a manual process, but that the budget would likely only maintain what was already implemented, and expansion would not be added into the budget.⁴² The funding of the PP will be entirely dependent on the department’s priorities in the upcoming years.

Leadership

The Director General and executive leadership changes every two years and with that, “the DNP’s priorities, focus, and personnel, leadership style all change.”⁴³ The decision to continue funding the project lies with executive leadership, and with leadership changing frequently, it is hard to determine if the project will continue. So, even though the current Director General has bought-in to the PP, there is no guarantee that a future Director will understand and see the benefits. This consistent turnover can create many challenges for making strategic plans and gauging the sustainability of this project.

Expansion

From the interviews we conducted with various groups of people included in the PP, we summarize the following findings.

Supporting its expansion

⁴² Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

⁴³ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

As mentioned earlier in our report, the benefits of the PP have been significantly reported throughout each of our interviews. With the assistance of pre-set portfolios which clearly state the criteria of admissions, and the auto-check testing system, the recruitment process has proved to be more objective and stable. A psychologist helping the DNP to become familiar with PP highly valued its use in the HR departments other than the police cadets, for the system is designated to transform the ways of the recruitment and hiring process and is effective in improving the stability and the efficiency.⁴⁴ Because the PP is useful and versatile, it is expected to expand to other regions geographically and organizationally including but not limited to the police in the near future.

The executive level police leadership also foresees benefits in bringing convenience to the organization from the project's expansion. The executive level police leadership, Marilenia Ureña, explained the need to deploy PP to townships other than the capital so that each candidate can avoid coming to headquarters during the recruitment process.⁴⁵ The police officer, Geury Castro, who was hired under PP recalled coming to the headquarters to complete the tests, and emphasized that police office branches should follow headquarters to install this system.⁴⁶ While the effects of PP are beneficial, both the executive level police leadership and the rank and file police officers support it being replicated in other regions of the Dominican Republic and to other Latin American countries.

The initial success of the Psychometric Project in the Dominican Republic has already raised interest in other Latin American countries. The Human Resources Consultant in ICITAP, Noemi Germosen, mentioned that they gave a presentation to the International Association of Women Police (IAWP), and Panama was very interested in the system. In fact, Panama has

⁴⁴ Martínez, Leandro. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra . 28 October, 2022.

⁴⁵ Ureña, Marilenia. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

⁴⁶ Castro, Geury. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 2 November, 2022.

decided it wants to use the Psychometric Project for a personnel screening process.⁴⁷ This is an exciting development and demonstrates that “other agencies want to replicate this process” and that the “benefits are worth the investment.”

Obstacles to expansion

The technology and infrastructure gaps in different countries can be the most fundamental limitation to PP’s expansion since it relies heavily on technology. Before the new process can enter another country, the improvement executive team should make sure of the technological infrastructure availability and draft advancing plans for the infrastructure when appropriate. Followed by technical training on using digital devices and the psichoweb system to current police officers and candidates of that country can further ensure the ability of the country to independently operate the PP and eliminate one of the project sustainable obstacles.

Another obstacle to the expansion of PP is the willingness of the police department to allow ICITAP to provide mentoring, technical assistance and training that will allow the host country’s police department to reconfigure the recruitment and advancement process. The need for commitment and buy-in from the host country was repeatedly noted by ICITAP leadership throughout our interviews and they are concerned about ways they can obtain buy-in. Future governments need to be committed to transparent objective processes in hiring, recruiting, and promoting police officers.⁴⁸ “As long as there is a consensus for that, and there is no political dissonance that prevents the country from advanced changes, there’s absolutely no reason that every country should not be using the psychometric platform.”⁴⁹

Recommendations

Although additional qualitative evaluation is needed to provide statistical benefits, based

⁴⁷ Germosen, Noemi. Interview. Conducted by Maria Alejandra Fuentes Diestra and Margaret Walthall . 11 October, 2022.

⁴⁸ Segura, Manuelica. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 26 October, 2022.

⁴⁹ Anonymous. Interview. Conducted by Chia Wen Cheng and Margaret Walthall . 10 October, 2022.

on our qualitative analysis, an automated psychometric evaluation system should be implemented in any HR department that is seeking to improve their organizational processes. The DR case study provides lessons that can be learned in three main areas that will improve the sustainability of the project. The recommendations outlined below are intended to provide policy guidance in regards to each area when implementing a similar system in other countries or organizations.

1. Infrastructure

Since many developing countries, like the DR, often lack the needed infrastructure, like broadband and equipment, for a new technology system, ICITAP should prioritize understanding and strengthening the needed infrastructure first. Investing in infrastructure early on in a project will increase usability and better position countries to sustain and expand the system. As funding infrastructure initiatives require large initial investments, the DNP should consider partnering with other federal departments to share connectivity costs.

2. Funding

To address uncertainty concerns that arise when ICITAP leaves a country, a 5-10 year strategic plan should be developed early on in each project. A plan that provides detailed information regarding personnel, infrastructure, financial, and organizational needs, will provide continued guidance that will increase the sustainability of the project. To reduce the needed financial strains of the new system on the department, the DNP should connect with private funding sources and consider offering incentives like subsidies or grants to private sector providers.

3. Training and Community Partnerships

Through immediate and ongoing training on the use and benefits of the system, technical knowledge gaps will lessen, HR personnel will better understand the direct impacts, and

applicants and the community will learn about additional career development opportunities from the system, which will increase overall trust with the DNP. Partnerships with community organizations should be pursued to assist in training, as well as assist in restoring the public trust back into the DNP.

Conclusion

Summary

In efforts to promote police reform through building personnel capacity and developing best practices, ICITAP partnered with the DNP to implement the PP. This project was initiated with the goal of promoting organizational development, sustainability, and expansion. We conclude that the HR Department has become more efficient, efficacious, and accurate in the recruitment and hiring processes. The initial investments were highly praised and expansion to other regions is possible if gaps are identified and overcome. Moving forward, the DNP should (1) look for resources to contribute to advanced infrastructure building, (2) develop long-term strategic plans and connect with private funding sources to stabilize their financial needs of the project, and (3) invest in staff and applicant training programs to increase knowledge of use and improve police-civilians relationship.

Going Forward...

In his interview, Carlos Maldonado stated:

“If you develop a robust recruiting initiative and you interview those people after they graduate, they will be optimistic, idealistic,...and want to be involved in change greater than themselves. However, if these officer’s are not properly equipped to handle the traumatic nature of their job, after two years in an interview, the same officers would be cynical, defensive, and not wanting to engage with their communities. Such a disparity in

mindsets demonstrates how critical it is to establish an environment that fosters positivity and the core competencies of successful, community-oriented officers.”⁵⁰

The issue of burn-out mentioned above—as well as the issues mentioned throughout our paper—are not unique to the security sector or to police reform specifically. Instead, these cases of burn-out or of organizational dysfunction occur in all public service sectors, including education, foster care, healthcare, etc. Our team believes that the PP should be further explored as a government-wide system. The project’s benefits have the potential to reduce burnout by ensuring applicants have the dispositions, traits, skills, and experience necessary to not only be effective and ethical employees, but happy and fulfilled individuals. Overall, our team believes that the PP could introduce a multitude of sectors, governments, and countries to sustainable, psychometric applications that have the potential to institute remarkable change in how governments care and provide for their people.

⁵⁰ Maldonado, Carlos. Interview. Conducted by Margaret Walthall and Eleni Daughters . 10 October, 2022.

Appendix

a. Interview Guides

Cat 1: Marilenia Ureña, the Executive Senior level Police Commander Lt. Col.

1. Please describe the overall goals of the HR development project?
2. What were the challenges tied to the DNP's HR division?
3. How do you view the Psychometric Project as building upon prior ICITAP activities to respond to these challenges?
4. What are some good lessons and lessons learned about your experience with the implementation of this psychometric web application?
5. How do you see the use of this system continuing as ICITAP leaves the Dominican Republic?
6. Have you seen any changes in new cadets coming into the force since the implementation of this new system? If so, what disadvantages and/or improvements did you observe?
7. Would you recommend implementing this Psychometric Project in other police department HR divisions within Latin America? Why or why not?

Cat 2: Manuelica Segura and Leandro Martínez, people who has overall responsibility of the implementation of the psychometric project

1. Can you describe the hiring and recruiting process prior to implementing the Psychometric Project, including the benefits and challenges?
2. Can you describe the events that initiated the process to adopt the Psychometric Project?
3. What were the criteria you explored when identifying solutions to the recruitment and hiring process?
4. How did the psychometric project build upon earlier organization development initiatives such as the development of SOPs?
5. What are some lessons learned about your experience with the implementation of this psychometric web application?
6. Do you see any gaps in the current implementation of the Psychometric Project?
7. What could be done to strengthen the current Psychometric Project?
8. What do you see as the benefits and challenges of implementing a project similar to this one in other Latin American countries or HR divisions?

Cat 3: Evelyn Marte, the Line supervisors for Psychometric app

1. What do you believe are the challenges the DNP faces in regards to police-community relations, especially with regards to vulnerable and marginalized populations? (in the context of problems with the public because the DNP was recruiting and hiring sub-par officers)
2. What are your thoughts about the recruiting and hiring process in the DNP? Do you think it is a fair process? Have you identified challenges within it? If so, how do you deal with them?
3. Please describe how the Psychometric system was applied to the DNP HR divisions and how the organization has changed after the implementation of PP.
4. Generally, what do you think about the DNP system? What are some good lessons and lessons learned about your experience with the implementation of this psychometric web application?
5. Do you believe this system can have a positive and durable impact on the DNP's ?
6. Do you think this system is sustainable?
7. Would you recommend implementing this Psychometric Project in other police department HR divisions within Latin America? Why or why not?

Cat 4: Civil Society Groups (vota jóvenes) community of police reform

1. What do you believe are the challenges the DNP faces in regards to police community relations, especially with regards to vulnerable and marginalized populations?
2. What do you think about the hiring and recruiting process in the DNP? Do you think it is a fair process? Have you identified challenges within it?
3. *After explaining the project:* generally, what do you think of the Psychometric Project?
 - a. Do you think it will have benefits for the system?
4. What do you think about the use of technology in government systems?
5. Do you foresee benefits in it?
6. Do you think this will have an impact on the quality of the service? Do you think it is a good initiative that should be implemented in other Latinamerican countries?

Cat 5: Geury Castro and Vierca Perdomo, Police who were hired under the new system

1. Can you describe your experience throughout the entire process of starting the application to receiving your job offer?
2. What were some of the benefits and challenges you experienced throughout your hiring process?

3. Do you feel like the way you were evaluated (either in the manual process or this new automated process) was accurate and fair to your ability to carry out your position as a police officer?
4. *After explaining the project:* what do you think about this initiative? Do you think it will improve the recruiting system in the DNP? If yes, how so?
5. What do you see as the benefits and challenges of implementing a project similar to this one in other Latin American countries or HR divisions?
6. Do you see any gaps in the current evaluation process conducted by the Psychometric Project? What could be done to strengthen those areas?
7. What advice would you give to other police officers applying through this system? What advice would you give to those in HR using this or a similar system to evaluate police candidates?

Cat 6: Carlos, Noemi etc. (ICITAP Leadership)—Carlos Maldonado was the senior ICITAP (contractor) official in the DR. One ICITAP's DR program officer in ICITAP HQ is also included.

1. What do you believe are the challenges the DNP faces in regards to police community relations, especially with regards to vulnerable and marginalized populations?
2. How did the Psychometric Project build upon earlier activities of ICITAP's HR development to respond to these challenges? What was the date of the PP implementation? When did it conclude?
3. What are some good lessons and lessons learned about your experience with the implementation of this psychometric web application?
4. Do you foresee the DNP maintaining its use of the psychometric web application? Why or why not?
5. Although at its beginning stages, have you witnessed any changes in cadets or within the human resources department that could be attributed to the implementation of the psychometric web application?
6. Would you recommend implementing this Psychometric Project in other police department HR divisions in other Latin American countries? Why or why not?

Cat 7: Carl Risheim, Former ICITAP Country Attache to Colombia who supervised the DR program from 2012-2018

1. Can you please describe how the USAID/ICITAP partnership in DR started back in 2015?

2. How were the 5 key project areas (*Planning and Management, Administration and Finances, Strategic Communications, Human Resources Development, and Police Relations with the community, especially with vulnerable and marginalized populations*) initially developed?
3. Focusing on Human Resources Development, what significant progress was made in the early years of this project, specifically in building the foundation for development of the Human Development Model?
4. Can you please describe the Human Development Model and its implementation?
5. How was the Human Resources organizational structure modified in 2018?
6. At the time of your departure, what did you identify as challenges facing the DNP's HR Division?
7. How viable do you see the sustainability of this implementation in the DR? Would you recommend this partnership for other Latin American countries?

b. Pictures of Manual Process

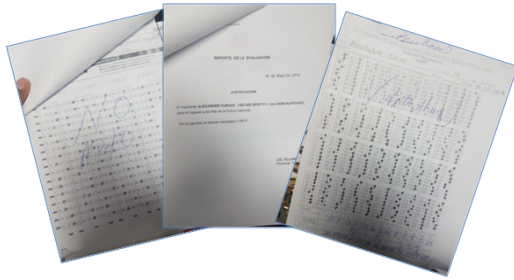
Image 1: Candidates leaving their identification documents



Image 2: Candidates taking the test manually



Image 3: Manual tests



c. Pictures of the system

Image 4: Test assignment by DNP HR staff

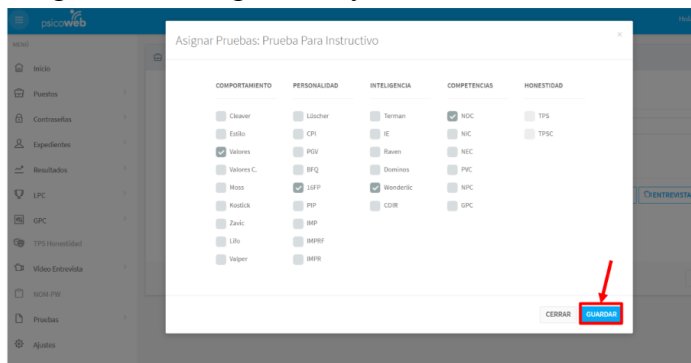


Image 5: Test creation by DNP HR staff

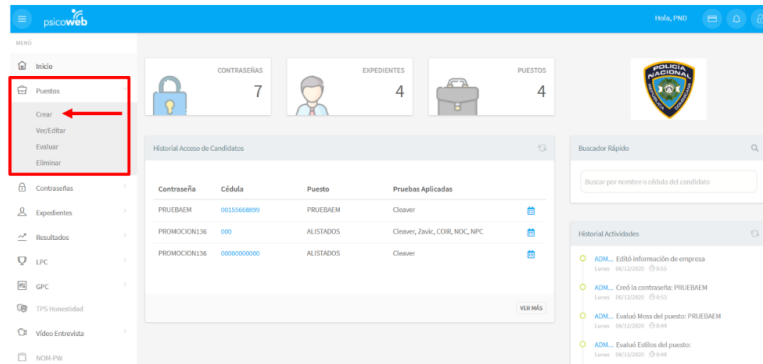


Image 6: DNP HR staff choosing which type of candidate they are evaluating

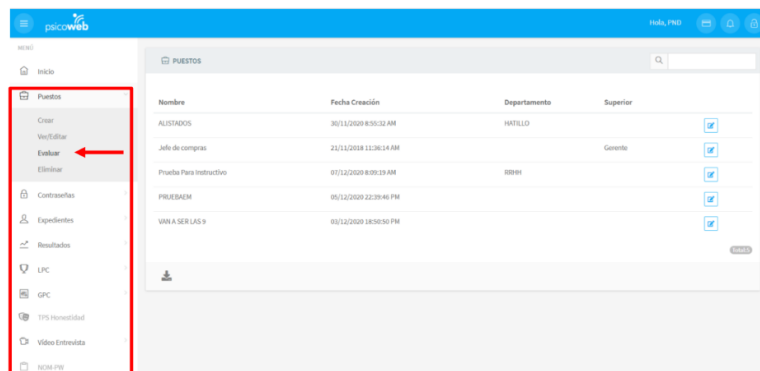


Image 7: Welcome page before candidates take the test

