

# Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of a city district office: The case study of Czechia

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## Abstract

The research is focused on the organizational changes that have occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic at the municipal level (in state administration) in Czechia. We want to cover changes in five areas: technology, people, processes, structure, and culture. We are interested not only in the nature but also in the depth of these changes (limited/reversible vs. deeper/more stable) and thus identify innovative trends within public organizations in the post-pandemic period. The aims of the wider research project are to identify the organizational changes, to estimate the depth of these changes and to compare our findings from different levels of the state administration. This paper summarizes findings from the case study of one organization – the city district office.

The key data gathering method is a set of semi-structured interviews conducted on the basis of a predefined questionnaire. Precisely, the analysis relies on anonymous interviews conducted, in the period from October to December 2022, with five employees: one top level manager, two mid-level managers, one line manager and one public servant. The data

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gathered is analyzed and presented based on a predefined case study report template, which aims to secure solid grounds for the future analyses of different types of state administration organizations. The interviews are the first step, it will be followed by survey.

Research to date has confirmed that several changes have taken place in the surveyed organisation during the pandemic. However, the big question is to what extent the changes were triggered or accelerated by the pandemic. However, changes were happening both at the level of the organisation and at the level of individual workplaces (first and second level changes) and some of these were permanent.

We identified the most changes in People - it was mainly the use of new communication channels and the related acquisition of new skills. The least changes affected the organizational structure. Technology was not confirmed to be the main driver of change. While use of ICT was a prerequisite for the smooth functioning of the organisation during the crisis, it was not the decisive driver of change.

## **Keywords**

COVID-19; public administration; city district office; organizational changes