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Self-Assessment of Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: **2021 Update**



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Self-Assessment of Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: 2021 Update

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The Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA), as the inter-governmental organisation for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans, helps governments in the region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union (EU). ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo* is a beneficiary.

ReSPA improves regional cooperation, promote shared learning and support the development of public administrations within the Western Balkans, and support the integration of the countries in the region into the EU.

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*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Results of the Self-Assessments in 2021	6
Public Administration Reform Strategies	6
Civil Service Laws	6
Developing the infrastructure for better implementation.....	7
3. Challenges	8
4. Self-Assessments of Merit Recruitment: 2021 Updates	10
Albania	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17
Montenegro.....	30
North Macedonia.....	38
Serbia	46

1. Introduction

Self-assessments were completed for the first time in 2020 by ReSPA Members. The self-assessments were presented at a workshop that was held online in November 2020. In addition, the workshop provided a forum for the presentation, discussion and sharing of cases of good practice in the region. The self-assessments were subsequently harmonised, combined with the background study that derived the lessons for the development of the self-assessment framework and published by ReSPA in December 2020.¹

Given the positive reception of the self-assessment framework by ReSPA Members and external partners, ReSPA decided in 2021 to conduct an update of the self-assessments of merit recruitment and to initiate a baseline self-assessment of performance appraisals in the region. As to merit recruitment, one might argue that one year is a short time in civil service reform and that the context of COVID-19 has made it unlikely that major change has occurred. However, the updates of 2021 demonstrate incremental change and a positive trend for most ReSPA Members.

¹ Meyer-Sahling et al (2020) Making Merit Recruitment Work: Lessons *from* and *for* the Western Balkans. Danilovgrad: ReSPA Publications.
https://www.respaweb.eu/download/doc/Making+Merit+Recruitment+Work_Lessons+from+and+for+the+WBs.pdf/5ec9fdaf8ad204183903be2ef2acd1a3.pdf

2. Results of the Self-Assessments in 2021

From 2020 Baseline Self-assessments to 2021 updates, incremental progress has been made in the Western Balkan countries, despite the challenging context.

The developments are evident at three levels:

Public Administration Reform Strategies

ReSPA Members have invested in the development of new multi-year public administration reform strategies. Serbia adopted in 2021 a Public Administration Reform Strategy and an Action Plan for the period until 2030. The Action Plan includes a section on human resources management in the public sector and addresses specific issues related to improving the implementation of recruitment and career development. The preparation of a new reform strategy has been launched in North Macedonia and Montenegro. It remains ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Albania, the work on the new reform strategy will begin in the middle of 2022.

Public Administration Reform Strategies do not directly translate into changes of the regulatory framework nor changes in recruitment practices. However, they signal a commitment and provide a timetable for activities that are planned down the line. In this respect, the trend is positive for the region despite the challenges that have been posed by the pandemic since 2020.

Civil Service Laws

Since the end of 2020 relevant civil service laws have been amended in most countries. These amendments have typically introduced only minor changes and focused on adaptations to a changing context or alignment with other legislation. However, efforts to develop new civil service laws have been undertaken by several ReSPA Members. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new Civil Service Law has been drafted for Republic of Srpska. In North Macedonia, new Laws on Administrative Servants and on Employees in the Public Sector have been consulted, drafted and are about to be submitted for adoption.

In North Macedonia, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration further developed a special Law on Top Management, which will, if adopted, significantly raise the merit standards for the recruitment and selection of top managers such as State Secretaries and Directors at the top of central government ministries and non-ministerial bodies respectively.

Developing the infrastructure for better implementation

Most of the changes during the last twelve months have taken place below the level of strategic and legislative change. They have focused on strengthening the infrastructure for the implementation of merit recruitment and on building capacity in civil service management authorities, HR units and among senior civil servants and experts as members of selection and assessment commissions. Some of these initiatives required the change of secondary legislation such as decrees, regulations or rulebooks. Others merely required internal work plans, sufficient organisational resources and a healthy dose of entrepreneurialism from the staff of civil service management authorities.

To give a few examples, the Department of Public Administration in Albania went fully online with the entry examinations during 2020 and consolidated this approach during 2021, making the examinations more user-friendly and less costly for applicants. As a corollary, members of commissions received more training to manage the new examination format. Moreover, efforts were made to increase the transparency and opportunities for external scrutiny by allowing for the video recording of personal interviews.

In Serbia, the Human Resources Management Service expanded the use of online and social media channels to disseminate job advertisements, for instance, by placing jobs on the Service's Facebook page and by setting up a Viber Community. The Human Resources Management Service also invested in a blog and video material to provide better guidance for applicants. The new Public Administration Reform Strategy further commits the Human Resources Management Service to develop activities for the promotion of civil service employment. A start was made during 2021 by participation in student recruitment fairs and by establishing links with universities.

Similar initiatives have been taken by other ReSPA Members. In Montenegro, the Human Resources Management Authority developed online videos to provide information for applicants. In Bosnia and Herzegovina at the level of BiH institutions, social media activities to disseminate job vacancies have been expanded by the Civil Service Agency.

More efforts to improve the infrastructure are underway across the ReSPA Members. For example, e-recruitment systems have been successfully implemented in North Macedonia and Albania since the mid 2010s. In Bosnia and Herzegovina at the level of BiH institutions, e-recruitment has already been set up and will become operational after relevant secondary legislation will be adopted by the Council of Ministers. In both Serbia and Montenegro, initiatives to establish e-recruitment systems are in progress or planned. In the future it can therefore be expected that merit recruitment procedures and practices will be further upgraded in the region.

3. Challenges

The self-assessments also revealed several challenges for ReSPA Members that will require addressing to strengthen merit recruitment in the future. Three challenges have been particularly evident. First, the scope for the application of merit recruitment depends in most countries on the scope of civil service laws. If institutions are kept outside the scope of the law, the standard merit procedures are therefore not necessarily applied. In Serbia, for instance, several institutions such as the Ministry of Interior and the Tax Administration are not regulated by the Civil Service Law, but these institutions nonetheless follow the recruitment rules and standards of the Civil Service Law. However, some institutions such as so-called public agencies do not do so thereby presenting opportunities for non-meritocratic recruitment into administrative bodies.

Similar constellations exist in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina at the level of BiH institutions, at the level of Federation of BiH and the Republic of Srpska. In Albania, the number of institutions kept outside the Civil Service Law has traditionally been low. However, the most recent trend addressed by the update of the self-assessment suggests that the establishment of new institutions outside the scope of the Civil Service Law has become more frequent. As a consequence, the merit principle is weakened even though the Civil Service Law is not amended. Future self-assessments for ReSPA Members should therefore pay particular attention to the scope of civil service laws and the number of institutions that is kept outside the laws.

Second, merit-based recruitment of senior civil servants remains contested and subject to reform in several ReSPA Members. The preparation of the Law on Top Managers in North Macedonia serves as a prominent example to address the challenge. Similarly, in Serbia a high-level Working Group led by the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government has been formed to strengthen the meritocratic basis of senior civil service managers and to overcome the frequent appointment of 'acting managers' to top positions.

In Montenegro, an amendment of the Civil Service Law in early 2021 made it possible for the government to appoint acting manager from *outside* the civil service rather than within. From the perspective of the self-assessment framework, the change implies a weakening of the merit principle, as it has become possible to hire top managers without having to go through the standard merit recruitment procedure. Future self-assessments of merit recruitment should therefore elaborate in more detail the risks involved in under-regulating the appointment of acting managers across the region.

Third, the consistency and effectiveness of written and oral examinations remain a challenge for most ReSPA Members. The introduction of competency-based examinations in Serbia significantly strengthened the merit principle for the recruitment of non-managerial staff. The examination consists of several stages that test a mix of functional and behavioural competencies as well as digital literacy. As a result, the examination provides valuable information about candidates to enable the selection of the best candidate for a given position.

The Serbian experience has the potential to provide a case of good practice for the region. The civil service reform that has been prepared in Republic of Srpska is considering a similar approach. The written part of the examination procedure will be revised in North Macedonia when the new Law on Administrative Services will be adopted. Written examinations are also under review for the institutions at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet the Institutions at the level of Bosnia and

Herzegovina have already successfully applied competency-based interviews for a few years. For future self-assessments of merit recruitment, it will therefore be relevant to consider how informative they are and how consistently they are applied.

4. Self-Assessments of Merit Recruitment: 2021 Updates

The updates of the self-assessments were prepared by the Members of the Working Group for HRMD in the Public Sector in October/November 2021. They were subsequently presented at the ReSPA Workshop in Tirana in November 2021. The Workshop provided an opportunity for the discussion of progress, the exchange of ideas and the identification of challenges. The remainder of this report consists of the completed 2021 self-assessments. Each update makes an explicit difference to what has changed since the end of 2020 when the baseline self-assessment was completed. At the ReSPA Workshop it was agreed that the next update will be conducted in 2023.

Albania

Assessing the scope of merit recruitment		
1. All institutions or groups of institutions that exercise key functions of the public administration and public authority are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The Civil Service Law (adopted in 2013 and in force since February 2014) has a broad horizontal scope and includes all institutions from the executive sphere as well as institutions that report to the parliament (so-called independent institutions). However, in recent years the government has occasionally approved special laws that exclude certain agencies originally included in the scope of the civil service, including the National Agency for Information Society, the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services and the Agency for Openness and Dialogues. These are primarily agencies that provide services to citizens. As a result, the scope for the application of merit recruitment has been diminished in recent years.</p> <p>Since 2020, the Government has created new agencies that are not covered by the scope of the Civil Service Law. For instance, in the autumn of 2021 the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the the Agency for Media and Information excluding it from the scope of civil service. The scope for the application of merit recruitment has hence been diminished further.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>All executive agencies should be (re-)integrated into the scope of the civil service law. Alternatively, equivalent merit recruitment procedures should be applied for agencies that have been excluded from the scope of the law.</p>		
2. All positions in the public administration with responsibilities to manage civil servants are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The General Secretaries of ministries, the Directors of Directorates and the General Directors of non-ministerial bodies are members of the top management corps. These positions are within the vertical</p>		

scope of the civil service and thus subject to civil service merit recruitment procedures. Acting managers are not foreseen by civil service legislation. If a senior position is vacant, an acting manager must be nominated from inside the civil service but would not receive the salary associated with the position.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

3. Apart from lower ranks (manual and auxiliary staff), all non-managerial groups of staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The 2013 Civil Service Law includes all categories of administrative staff within its scope. Only the lowest ranks of staff such as manual and auxiliary staff are outside the Civil Service Law.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

4. All fixed-term, acting and temporary staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The 2013 Civil Service Law does not allow for temporary appointments. However, if short-term replacements of permanent staff are required, managers can request the appointment of staff from a shortlist of candidates who have previously passed through the external recruitment procedure. The principle of merit recruitment is thus observed for temporary appointments.

The Government introduced during the 2017-2021 parliamentary term the possibility of appointing 'excellent students' for up to one year who do not have to pass through the standard merit recruitment procedure. However, the Department of Public Administration manages the recruitment and selection of the 'excellent students'. It has prepared and applies an assessment framework to score the educational background and extracurricular experience of applicants. Candidates are ranked and, similar to the pool recruitment procedure for executive level civil servants, the top ranked candidate has granted the right to choose a position first. Merit criteria are hence applied, while political discretion is minimised, even if no additional testing is conducted.

The number of positions that can be filled by 'excellent students' is limited to one third of the annual executive level intake. However, in 2020, merely 99 positions (12.9 per cent of new executive level recruits) were taken up by excellent students. The system has not changed since the end of 2020.

Assessing the conditions for the opening of positions

5. The systematisation of jobs and positions by institutions requires the application of systematic job description methodologies, meaningful approval from third parties, and limits the frequency of amendment

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The systematisation of jobs requires approval from the Department of Public Administration and the Ministry of Finance before submission for final approval from the Prime Minister. The classification of jobs in this systematisation is based on a detailed methodology of job evaluation and designing job descriptions. Systematisation, job description methodology, job advertisements and – crucially – the contents of exams are all aligned to ensure complementarity. Systematisation acts can be amended, but any change must undergo the same procedures for approval.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

6. Staff planning determines recruitment activities and *ad hoc* mechanisms to approve the opening of positions have been eliminated

Yes	Partially	No

X		
<p>The Civil Service Law has established a systematic staff-planning procedure. Staffing plans must be submitted to the central Department of Public Administration and the national staffing plan must be approved by the Government. Staffing plans are aligned with systematisation acts, job descriptions, job advertisements and examinations. The staffing plan determines recruitment activities both centrally and individually for each institution, with no possibility allowed for the ad hoc opening of new positions not included in the staff plans. However, if unforeseen circumstances arise, such as the departure of key staff, it is not forbidden to advertise the vacancy for a replacement.</p> <p>The Department of Public Administration has continuously invested in training the staff of HR units across public administration institutions in order to increase the quality of staff planning. The Department has also moved towards an online system of planning whereby institutions complete an online form that is subsequently centrally integrated for the preparation of the national plan.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
7. The opening of positions for external recruitment requires meaningful approval by central civil service management institutions		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>Positions in the civil service may be opened for external recruitment only if these positions are defined in systematisation acts and foreseen in the national staffing plan. The opening of groups of positions follows the schedule of the plan and is implemented by the Department of Public Administration.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
Assessing public advertisements		
8. All positions to be filled from outside the civil service have to be publicly advertised		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>According to the Civil Service Law, all external recruitments to all civil service positions requires a public advertisement.</p> <p>Lower and senior management positions may only be filled from inside the civil service, following the so-called promotion procedure. Candidates must be members of the top management corps before they can be selected for a senior position. A limited proportion of management positions (max. 20 per cent) may be filled every year from outside the civil service and these require public advertisement.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
9. Job advertisements are published in a range of print, online and social media channels and these channels reach the largest possible number of potential applicants		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>According to the Civil Service Law and relevant secondary legislation, job vacancies must be advertised on the website / portal of the Department of Public Administration (www.dap.gov.al). The Department also maintains a Facebook page with nearly 19,000 followers and a Twitter account. The Department maintains close contact with a number of universities in order to advertise job vacancies. The high number of applicants suggests that the communication channels have been effective (24 applicants for each position for 2020).</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
10. Job advertisements contain relevant information to attract suitable candidates		
Yes	Partially	No

X		
<p>The contents of job advertisements are defined by relevant secondary legislation. Advertisements include information such as the main functions and duties of the job, core requirements such as education, job experience, tasks, testing modalities, languages, thematic areas for the testing of candidates, etc. The advertisements provide sufficient information for applicants to choose the (group of) positions they seek to apply for.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
11. The application process is user-friendly and the costs of application are low		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Department of Public Administration has established a system of e-recruitment to manage applications. As a result, the application process has become fully online, user-friendly and cost-efficient for applicants. After creating their profile and uploading their information and copies of official documents, applicants can apply for as many positions as they desire. Only winning candidates need to provide certified documents such as education degrees and proof of previous job experience.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
12. General outreach activities to promote civil service employment have been put in place and general measures are in place to assist applicants with the application		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Department of Public Administration has very actively promoted employment in the civil service. It is regularly represented at job fairs, gives presentations at public and private universities, and provides general information about civil service employment via social media channels. The Department also provides general guidance for applicants on its website and social media channels, including videos and PowerPoint presentations. Online videos to support applicants during the application process have been prepared with the help of ReSPA.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
Assessing Selection Commissions		
13. Do all positions or groups of positions require the formation and assessment by a selection commission?		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>According to the Civil Service Law, external and internal recruitment to all civil service positions requires the establishment of selection commissions. There are no exceptions.</p> <p>Even the recruitment of so-called 'excellent students' requires selection commissions insofar as the Department of Public Administration pre-selects and scores applicants.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
14. Representatives from central civil service management bodies are included in selection commissions		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>According to the Civil Service Law and relevant secondary legislation, selection commissions consist of five members, one of whom is always drawn from the Department of Public Administration. The Recruitment Directorate currently (Dec 2021) consists of 16 individuals who alternate in their role as chairs and referees of selection commissions.</p>		

The same applies to the selection of top civil servants, in which case the selection commission includes one member who represents the Department of Public Administration (ex officio), while an additional member is drawn from the Albanian School of Public Administration (ex officio).

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

15. External experts are included in selection commissions (e.g. from academia or civil society organisations)

Yes	Partially	No
X		

According to the Civil Service Law and relevant secondary legislation, selection commissions consist of five members, two of whom are drawn from a list of approximately 40 external experts from academia and, in a small number of cases, civil society and the private sector. Experts are selected by a commission following a call by the Department of Public Administration and must undergo training prior to their appointment to selection commissions.

For senior civil servants recruited from outside the civil service, the National Commission of Selection for Top Civil Servants has nine members, six of whom are drawn from academia and civil society. The remaining three members are the Department of Public Administration and ASPA directors and one representative of top civil servants.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

16. Members of selection commissions have professional competencies and receive regular training and guidance

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The Department of Public Administration has provided regular training for commission members since the adoption of the 2013 Civil Service Law. Training is provided by the Albanian School of Public Administration and the Department of Public Administration. In 2020, for instance, the Department trained approximately 142 members especially for the online recruitment procedures introduced by DoPA. The Department has also prepared manuals to provide guidance for commission members.

Since the onset of the pandemic the training of commission members focused on the transition to online examinations. The delivery of trainings have been essential for the successful implementation of the online examination procedure.

Assessing examinations and the final selection decision

17. All groups of staff are required to pass a written and oral examination prior to their civil service appointment

Yes	Partially	No
X		

According to the Civil Service Law, external recruitment to all civil service positions requires candidates to sit both a written and an oral examination.

The 'excellent students' differ insofar as they may be employed for one year after their backgrounds have been assessed and scored by the Department of Public Administration. They do not have to undergo a written or oral examination but are assessed based on their educational and extracurricular background (see above).

There has been no change since the end of 2020 apart from the shift towards online examination at the beginning of the pandemic.

18. Examinations generate relevant information for the selection of the best qualified candidates for a given role

Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>Civil servants at executive level who are recruited externally must pass a written and oral examination. The written examination consists of a computer-based multiple-choice test with questions related to the types of positions being applied for. The test thus generates information relevant to the position and to the candidate's subject-specific knowledge, though it cannot test skills and competencies associated with the specific position to be filled. Approximately 65 per cent of the candidates pass the test, suggesting that it is an appropriate professional filter prior to the personal interview.</p> <p>The oral interview is based on a manual that proposes types of questions relevant to types of positions. The interview component provides basic information related to skills and competencies, in addition to position-based knowledge.</p> <p>All candidates for top civil service positions have to pass a written and oral examination before becoming members of the top management corps.</p> <p>In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Public Administration has moved both the written and oral examinations online. Candidates can log on from home and complete a subject-specific test. They receive the results instantly. Oral examinations are also conducted online using video technology. The Department expects to continue this practice in the future.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. The online examination and interview have become the standard approach to assessment.</p>		
19. The examination process and scoring methods are consistent and objective		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The written examination is computer-based and randomly selects questions from a large database of questions, thereby ensuring consistency. The interview stage is based on a manual to ensure consistency for all candidates and to ensure consistency when scoring answers. All candidates are asked the same questions. The final score is the average of five evaluations of the commission members. The examination thus minimises discretion for managers and recruiting institutions.</p> <p>For top civil servants the written test is based on subject-related topics and an essay, while the interview is based on an examination of competences.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
20. The results of the examination determine the final selection of candidates		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The pool recruitment procedure in Albania means that groups of positions are advertised and examined together. The highest-scoring candidate in the pool examination is then given the right to select his or her preferred position. This examination method is effective in determining the final selection of candidates and in minimising discretion for managers and recruiting institutions.</p> <p>For top civil servants, the highest-scoring candidates are included in the pool of top civil servants (Top management corps) and can be appointed to a specific position by the minister directly from the pool.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
21. Examinations are transparent and can be subjected to external scrutiny and appeal		
Yes	Partially	No
X		

Examinations are open to scrutiny and appeal. The written element of the examination is transparent and open to external scrutiny insofar as it is computer-based and scored electronically. Results are immediately visible for applicants.

For the interview part of the exam, the commissions keep minutes of interviews. However, transparency results primarily from the option to audio-record interviews. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, candidates could ask for the interview to be recorded. Since the amendment of the recruitment procedure in the context of the pandemic, interviews are now conducted online and are generally recorded unless candidates specifically ask not to be recorded. In case of complaints (which have been filed only very rarely), the Department of Public Administration checks the interview records. These records are also usable during the appeal process. The same rules apply to interviews with senior civil servants.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. The recording of online interviews has become the standard practice to ensure the transparency and accountability of the assessments.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Assessing the Scope of Merit Recruitment			
1. All institutions or groups of institutions that exercise key functions of the public administration and public authority are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH	X		
RS	X		
<p>At the level of BiH Institutions, some institutions (less than 10 in total) remain excluded from the Civil Service Law and hence the requirement to apply merit recruitment procedures. Examples include the Agency for Postal Traffic and the State Regulatory Commission for Energy. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In FBiH, institutions are generally included in the scope of the civil service law, though exceptions are made. At canton level, administrative institutions are occasionally excluded from the scope of the civil service law and hence the requirement to apply merit recruitment procedures. However, the Canton level will not be assessed in this context. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In Republika Srpska, institutions are generally included within the scope of the civil service law and must apply the merit recruitment procedure. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>The status of institutions currently outside the scope of Civil Service Law, as well as their current recruitment procedure and practices, should be reviewed (BiH Institutions).</p> <p>Conduct a survey of the status of institutions to ensure merit recruitment procedures are applied everywhere (FBiH, RS).</p>			
All positions with managerial responsibilities are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH		X	
RS		X	
<p>Senior management positions are included in the scope of Civil Service Laws in BiH Institutions, FBiH and RS. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>The appointment of acting managers requires recruitment from within the civil service in RS. However, in exceptional cases outside recruitment is possible.</p> <p>In FBiH, acting appointments are not foreseen by the law but are occasionally made in practice. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In BiH Institutions, acting appointments are not covered by the Civil Service Law but by the Law on Administration. following the full application of the latter, acting appointments have been largely eliminated since the end of 2020.</p>			

Next steps

Ensure that acting appointments at managerial level are recruited from within the civil service and are in accordance with the civil service laws (RS, FBiH)

Apart from the lower ranks (manual and auxiliary staff), all non-managerial groups of staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS		X	

In BiH institutions, FBiH and RS, the scope of the Civil Service Laws is less encompassing. Lower ranks as well as technical and support staff without a university degree are outside their scopes. Some mid-level staff such as IT experts and accountants are also kept outside the scope of the law. In FBiH and RS, the same arrangement applies. Evidence from the BiH Institutions suggests that most employees recruited under the Labour Law following the civil service recruitment procedure even though it is not a legal requirement.

Since the end of 2020 there has been on change. However, the draft Civil Service Law prepared by RS is aiming to include the mid-level in its scope.

Next steps:

Review the scope of Civil Service Laws and consider the inclusion of technical and support staff. Alternatively, consider raising the merit requirements for staff regulated by the law on state employees. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS)

All fixed-term, acting and temporary staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH	X		
RS			X

In BiH Institutions the Civil Service Law authorises senior managers to fill civil service positions through temporary employment when internal competitions cannot be carried out. Temporary employees can be hired for up to nine months (and up to two years in exceptional circumstances). Temporary employees are recruited in accordance with the law on labour in state institutions and are subsequently classified as employees (not as civil servants), which requires a less rigorous recruitment procedure. Although temporary employment is rare, the current arrangement undermines the effectiveness of merit recruitment. This has also been recognised by the State Audit Office. Yet there have been no changes since the end of 2020.

Political advisors do not have to pass through merit recruitment procedure. This arrangement is compatible with merit requirements, since political advisors are formally *not* civil servants and formally do *not* have management authority over ministerial departments and their staff.

In FBiH, the Civil Service Law allows temporary employment. Candidates must be drawn from the reserve list of redundant civil servants, which is currently not in operation. If no candidates are found, temporary vacancies must be advertised and candidates must be assessed in accordance with the civil service recruitment procedures. Temporary employment is only possible in exceptional circumstances. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, temporary non-competitive employment is possible for up to 6 months and in some cases may be extended by up to 60 months. It is not required to follow the standard merit recruitment procedure for civil servants and ministries do not have to share the information with the central civil service agency. There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the draft Civil Service Law seeks to abolish temporary recruitment without prior advertisement and testing.

Next steps:

Review the procedure for the recruitment of temporary contract staff requiring that temporary staff have to pass through merit recruitment procedures, while ensuring that temporary staff are not indirectly employed on less transparent 'service contracts' outside the Civil Service Laws. (BiH Institutions, RS)

Assessing the conditions for the opening of positions

The systematisation of jobs and positions by institutions requires the application of systematic job description methodologies, meaningful approval from third parties, and limits the frequency of amendment

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS		X	

BiH Institutions do not base systematisation on systematic job description methodologies. Some institutions refer to the competency framework, but there is no consistent practice. Approvals are required from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Legislative Office and the Government. The Civil Service Agency is not involved in the approval of systematisation acts even though it later manages the recruitment procedure. Changes can be made at any time, subject to approval, but changes have been rare due to political constraints (cf. coalition government). There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

FBiH does not base systematisation on systematic job description methodologies. There is no competency framework in place, though competences were applied for a short period of time in 2015. Approvals are required from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice and the Legislative Office before they are adopted by the Government. The Civil Service Agency is not involved in the approval of systematisation acts. Changes can be made at any time, subject to approval, but have been rare due to political constraints (cf. coalition government). There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

RS does not base systematisation on systematic job description methodologies. There is still no competency framework in place to inform systematisation acts. Approvals are required from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance before they are adopted by the Government. The Civil Service Agency is not involved in the approval of systematisation acts. Changes can be made at any time, subject to approval, though in practice the frequency of changes varies from institution to institution.

There have been no changes since the end of 2020. However, in the context of the preparation of the new Civil Service, RS will introduce a competency framework and align it with a systematic methodology for job descriptions.

Next steps:

Review the job description methodology and require Civil Service Agencies to approve systematisation acts. This could involve a simplified procedure that relies on the exclusive approval of Civil Service Agencies if minor changes are proposed. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS)

Staff planning determines recruitment activities and *ad hoc* mechanisms for the approval of job openings have been eliminated

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS		X	
<p>BiH Institutions are required to submit annual staffing plans in the context of medium-term expenditure planning. However, these plans merely require raw staffing numbers and planned recruitment, and in practice not all institutions send their staffing plans as required. Staffing plans do not have to be approved by the Civil Service Agency. They primarily serve the purpose of budgetary planning. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In FBiH, institutions are required to submit annual staffing plans in the context of medium-term expenditure planning. Plans merely require raw staffing numbers and planned recruitment for the purpose of budgetary planning. Staffing plans do not have to be approved by Civil Service Agency. A new planning methodology is currently under development in the context of an EU-funded project. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>RS requires the submission of annual staffing plans. These plans are approved by the Ministry of Finance only. The general plan has to be confirmed by the Government. The opening of positions may be refused if positions are not already included in the annual Personnel Plan. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Review staff-planning methods and procedures and strengthen the role of Civil Service Agencies in the approval process and strengthen the strategic aspect of staff planning. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS).</p>			
The opening of positions for external recruitment requires meaningful approval by central institutions			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS		X	
<p>BiH Institutions can open positions and advertise them if they are included in the systematisation act and the staff plan and are in accordance with budgetary needs and if the internal recruitment procedure has been unsuccessful. If these conditions are met, the Ministry of Finance must still approve the opening of positions for external recruitment. Institutions then send the request to the Civil Service Agency to advertise a job vacancy. Institutions are therefore largely autonomous in deciding when and whether to recruit new staff. The same procedure applies in the Federation of BiH. There have been no changes in BiH Institutions and FBiH since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In RS, similarly, positions can be opened if they are foreseen in the systematisation act and the staff plan. Their opening then has to be approved by the head of the institution. The Civil Service Agency merely administers the recruitment procedure but does not need to formally approve the opening of positions. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider strengthening the role of the Civil Service Agencies in approving the opening of positions. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS).</p>			

Assessing public advertisements			
All positions to be filled from outside the civil service have to be publicly advertised			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH	X		
RS		X	
<p>In BiH Institutions, public advertisement is always required for external recruitment. This also applies to the appointment of temporary staff. Only if temporary employment lasts for three months or less, it is possible to employ staff without prior advertisement. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In FBiH, public advertisement is required for external recruitment. Temporary employees are drawn from the reserve list of redundant civil servants, which is currently not in use. If internal recruitment is unsuccessful, any position must be advertised publicly. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In RS, public advertisement is required for external recruitment into civil service positions. However, the recruitment of temporary contract staff does not require prior advertisement. There have been no changes since the end of 2020. However, the draft Civil Service Law seeks to establish a general requirement for the public advertisement of job vacancies that also includes temporary staff.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Ensure that the employment of <i>all</i> types of temporary contract staff requires prior advertisement. (BiH Institutions, RS)</p>			
Job advertisements are published in a range of both prints, online and social media channels and these channels reach the largest possible number of potential applicants.			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH	X		
RS		X	
<p>In BiH Institutions, job vacancies must be advertised on the web page of the Civil Service Agency and in at least three daily newspapers with countrywide circulation. The Civil Service Agency also sends out a regular newsletter to its subscribers with information about job vacancies. Job vacancies are further advertised via social media channels, including the Facebook and Twitter accounts of the Civil Service Agency.</p> <p>Since the end of 2020, advertisement options have been reviewed. It has been concluded that the requirement to advertise in newspapers and in the official gazette shall be abolished, as it is less effective (but more costly) than advertisements online and via social media. Changes are expected for 2022.</p> <p>In FBiH, job vacancies must be advertised on the web page of the Civil Service Agency, in the official gazette, and in at least two daily newspapers with countrywide circulation. The Civil Service Agency also uses social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In RS, job vacancies must be advertised on the web page of the Civil Service Agency and in at least one daily newspaper with countrywide circulation. Since the end of 2020, the Civil Service Agency started to use social media channels to disseminate job advertisements but discontinued the practice</p>			

due to lack of uptake. However, the use of online and social media channels will be reviewed again in the context of the adoption of the new Civil Service Law.

Next steps:

Re-consider the advertisement of vacancies in social networks and specialised online recruitment portals. (RS)

Job advertisements contain relevant information to attract suitable candidates

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH	X		
RS	X		

For BiH Institutions, the content of advertisements is prescribed by law. Public advertisements for civil service positions contain a range of relevant information, including job descriptions and conditions. However, there are usually no references to competencies in job advertisements. The same applies to FBiH and RS.

There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

The application process is user-friendly and the costs of application are low

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH			X
RS			X

For BiH Institutions there is still no online portal to register and upload applications. Instead, applications have to be sent as hard copies or email to the Civil Service Agency. All applicants must submit certified copies of documents such as university diplomas, certification of citizenship and proof of work experience, all of which raise the costs of the application. A health certificate, which is more costly, is only required by successful applicants.

Since the end of 2020, the Civil Service Agencies has decided to introduce an e-recruitment system. It is expected that the new system will become operational in 2022 following the approval of the relevant regulation by the Council of Ministers. In the meanwhile, hard copies of applications are scanned after receipt to digitise them for subsequent use.

In FBiH, as in BiH Institutions, there is no system of e-recruitment in place as yet, though discussions are being held in the context of ReSPA's peer-to-peer support mechanism and plans to establish a human resources management information system are underway. The new system will include a recruitment module and hence create the basis for e-recruitment in the future. Regarding the submission of relevant documents, applicants initially only need to complete a form and certified copies are only required from those who pass the exam. This number varies and can include a considerable number of candidates, creating costs also for those who are not selected for the position.

Since the end of 2020 FBiH have continued the preparatory work on the introduction of an e-recruitment system in the future.

In RS, as in BiH Institutions, there is no system of e-recruitment yet and a similarly large number of copies of official documents need to be submitted with applications (only winners of the competitions must submit certified copies). In addition, applicants must pass a professional state examination *before* they can apply for a vacant position. The costs of this examination amount to €125 for positions that require university education and €75 for positions that require secondary education, generating

additional costs for applicants (only certain categories of applicants are exempt from paying for the exam). However, discussions have begun for the introduction of e-recruitment.

Since the end of 2020 there have been no changes. However, the introduction of an e-recruitment system is under way. For instance, categories of applicants such as unemployed persons will no longer be required to pay a fee for taking the professional state examination.

Next steps:

Continue the work on the establishment of an e-recruitment system to increase the efficiency and user-friendliness of the application process (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS).

Consider reducing the costs of application by requiring only the winners of competitions to submit certified copies of relevant documents. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS)

RS should further significantly reduce or scrap the fee for passing the professional state examination in order to lower the costs of an application.

General outreach activities to promote civil service employment have been put in place and general measures are in place to assist applicants with the application

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH			X
RS		X	

Since the end of 2020, the Civil Service Agency of BiH Institutions has expanded its activities to promote civil service employment and to assist applicants. Earlier the Civil Service Agency had prepared a video in collaboration with GIZ on how to prepare an application and how to avoid mistakes. This video is available on the Agency's website. During the last year the Agency re-designed the text for public advertisements in order to achieve a better understanding of the process and to include links with access to further information. The Agency also developed a manual "Stop greškama u prijavama" (*Stop to mistakes in Applications*) which is currently under review before publication at the beginning of 2022.

FBiH has not yet engaged in outreach activities. Online material for applicants is not yet available, though plans to prepare guidelines are in progress. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

RS has not yet engaged in outreach activities. Basic instructions on how to apply are provided on the website of the Civil Service Agency. Online videos and further material are under preparation as part of an implementation strategy and will be made available in the future. The work on the support material has continued since the end of 2020 but has not yet been published on the web site of the Agency.

Next steps:

Expand outreach activities to promote employment in the civil service, for example, by collaborating with higher education institutions. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS)

Continue with the development of accessible guidelines for the application process. (FBiH, RS)

Assessing Selection Commissions

All positions or groups of positions require the formation of and assessment by a selection commission

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	

FBiH	X		
RS		X	
<p>In BiH Institutions, selection commissions are required to oversee recruitment procedures for all positions in the state administration except certain types of temporary contract staff and staff linked to ministerial cabinets (i.e. advisers). The employment of staff not covered by the Civil Service Law but by the Law on Labour in State Institutions also requires the formation of selection commissions except in cases of limited-duration temporary employment (i.e. up to 3 months). There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In FBiH, selection commissions are required for external recruitment into all senior and expert-level positions in the state administration. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In RS, selection commissions are required for external recruitment into all senior and expert-level positions in the state administration except temporary staff. There have been no changes since the end of 2020. Yet the draft of the Civil Service Law will also require the formation of selection commissions for temporary staff.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Ensure the requirement to form selection commissions for the employment of temporary contract staff. (BiH Institutions, RS)</p>			
Representatives from central civil service management bodies are included in selection commissions			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH			X
RS			X
<p>For BiH Institutions, selection commissions consist of five members. Three members are appointed by the Civil Service Agency from a list of experts. An Instruction by the Civil Service Agency of BiH Institutions issued in 2018 prescribes that the Agency's civil servants can be appointed to selection commissions. This provision was not applied systematically before 2020. Since the end of 2020 the Agency has appointed its employees as experts to approximately 60 per cent of the selection commissions.</p> <p>In FBiH, selection commissions consist of three members: one member is appointed by the Civil Service Agency from a list of experts and two are nominated by the recruiting institution, one of whom is the superior. At least one of the two members from the recruiting institution should be from a civil service union. The list of experts comprises some 200 civil servants, academics and other relevant specialist members of the public. The experts are selected by open competition. In future, experts will receive training before they can be appointed to a selection panel. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In RS, selection commissions consist of five members, two of whom are appointed by the Civil Service Agency from a list of experts. The same applies for the recruitment of senior civil servants. The Civil Service Agency is thus <i>not</i> directly represented on the commissions. However, a new civil service law is currently under preparation that will address this issue and include one member from the Agency on selection panels. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider the inclusion of delegates from the respective Civil Service Agencies with full voting rights to increase the consistency of assessment and selection processes. (FBiH, RS).</p> <p>Increase the proportion of commissions that include delegates from the Civil Service Agency to 100 per cent (BiH Institutions).</p>			

External experts are included in selection commissions (e.g. from academia or civil society organisations)			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH	X		
RS	X		
<p>In BiH Institutions, experts are drawn from within the civil service, from academia and from civil society. However, the list was last updated in 2012/2013. Moreover, certain areas of expertise are poorly represented on the list.</p> <p>In FBiH, the role of external experts is the same as at the level of BiH Institutions. However, the list is considerably longer in FBiH. The Agency regularly publishes a call for the selection of experts. Experts receive basic instructions from the Agency. Training for experts is planned for the future.</p> <p>In RS, the role of external experts is similar to the BiH Institutions. However, their selection and allocation is regulated by a rulebook.</p> <p>There have been no changes since the end of 2020 in BiH Institutions, FBiH and RS.</p>			
Members of selection commissions have professional competencies and receive regular training and guidance			
	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH	X		
RS		X	
<p>In BiH Institutions, the Civil Service Agency has conducted training for senior civil servants but requires training for members on the list of experts designated for selection commissions. The training is listed on the catalogue of training courses offered by the Agency. The first wave of training was funded by GIZ, but training is now part of the Agency's budget. All experts have to undergo training on the competency framework and recruitment procedure before they can be allocated to selection panels. Trainings have continued since the end of 2020.</p> <p>In FBiH, the Civil Service Agency has started to provide training for the members of selection commissions, including training on competencies and the structure of the examination. This training has been moved online during the COVID-19 crisis and hence continued during 2020/2021.</p> <p>In RS, the Civil Service Agency provides instructions for experts on competencies and interviewing skills. These trainings are not regulated but are a basic practise provided by the Agency. Plans to professionalise the training provision for selection commission members have been prepared and will be part of the implementation of the new Civil Service Law.</p> <p>Next steps: Implement the formal institutionalisation of training for commission members (RS).</p>			
Assessing examinations and the final selection decision			
External recruitment into all senior and expert-level positions requires candidates to pass a written and oral examination			
	Yes	Partially	No

BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS			X

In BiH Institutions, all externally recruited senior and expert staff in civil service positions must pass both written and oral examinations. However, temporary contract staff in non-managerial positions do not have to sit examinations. For managerial positions, temporary employment is not possible. For lower and mid-level ranking staff not covered by the Civil Service Law, merit recruitment is not required but in practice the civil service recruitment procedure is routinely applied.

In FBiH, examination requirements are similar to BiH Institutions, meaning staff outside the scope of the civil service law are exempt from the need to undergo examination. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, candidates for senior and expert level civil service positions only need to have a personal interview when applying for a given position. Written examinations are not yet required. Moreover, temporary contract staff are exempt from the requirement to pass an oral examination.

Since the end of 2020, RS has prepared a draft Civil Service Law that seeks to introduce compulsory written entry examinations. Moreover, both the written part and the interview are planned to be competency based.

Next steps:

Consider the establishment of (basic) oral and written examination requirements for all types of temporary contract staff and staff not covered by the civil service law. (BiH Institutions, FBiH, RS).

Adopt and implement mandatory written examinations for civil servants at the point of entry (RS).

Examinations generate relevant information for the selection of the best qualified candidates for a given role

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH			X
RS			X

In BiH Institutions, candidates have to pass the following exams:

- A general written exam administered as a multiple-choice test that asks general knowledge questions. It provides little information about candidates and is passed by the majority of candidates, suggesting that it does not act as an effective filter to narrow down the candidate pool. Plans to revise the general examination are underway.
- A professional, job-specific exam with essay-type questions that usually provides more comprehensive information about the skills and competencies of candidates. The contents are decided by the commission before the exam and are connected to the job description; however, there is no pool of questions and no clear guidance on how to design them. Moreover, they are prepared on the day of the examination and hence on an ad hoc basis.
- An oral examination that is administered as a competency-based interview and provides comprehensive information regarding candidates' competencies for a given role. The competency framework provides guidance for commission members. Moreover, commission members have received training on how to design Interview questions and how to ask them.
- There have been no changes since the end of 2020. In particular, the competency-based interviews have been evaluated positively by internal reviews.

In FBiH, candidates have to pass the following exams:

- A general written exam administered as a multiple-choice test that asks general knowledge questions. It is run as a pencil and paper test. It provides little information about candidates and is passed by the majority of candidates.
- A professional, job-specific exam that is also administered as a multiple-choice test and asks questions about the job, mostly referring to laws and regulations related for the position. The test is hence primarily a knowledge test that provides little insight into the candidates' skills and competencies. The exam questions are set on an ad hoc basis, with commission members meeting two hours before the exam to select and submit their questions before the Agency randomly selects the questions to be asked during the exam. There is still no guidance for commission members on how to design and mark exam questions.
- An oral examination administered as a personal interview. There are no guidelines for the interview part yet, and the informational content is uncertain. In 2015, the Agency used competency-based interviews for a short period of time.
- There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, candidates have to pass the following exams:

- An oral examination administered as a personal interview. There are no guidelines for the interview yet. The informational content is uncertain.
- There have been no changes since the end of 2020. However, the draft Civil Service Law envisages the introduction of competency-based examinations. This will significantly strengthen the informational basis of the examination process.

Next steps:

BiH Institutions and FBiH should review the contents of the general examination.

FBiH should further review the job-specific examination and the oral examination. For the job-specific examination part, both Serbia and Albania provide examples of good practice to consider. For the interview part, Serbia and BiH Institutions provide examples of good practice to consider.

RS should follow through with the adoption and implementation of the new Civil Service Law in order to introduce written competency-based examinations.

The examination process and scoring methods are consistent and objective

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions		X	
FBiH		X	
RS			X

In BiH Institutions, multiple-choice examinations are consistent and systematically scored. Competency-based interviews provide a structure for the oral examination, but scoring criteria need improvement. In particular, there is still no guidance for the scoring of essay-type practical examinations, which undermines the consistency of the examination process. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In FBiH, multiple-choice examinations are consistent and systematically scored. By contrast, interviews lack guidance and systematic scoring criteria. A further challenge arises from the ad hoc formulation of job-specific examination questions. Even if questions are randomly selected by the Agency, there is a risk of their being partially leaked to candidates in advance. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, interviews still lack guidance and systematic scoring criteria. The consistency of the examination process therefore cannot be guaranteed. There have been no changes since the end of 2020. Yet the draft Civil Service Law is addressing the need for consistency and objectivity.

Next steps:

BiH Institutions should consider strengthening the scoring method for the job-specific examination.

FBiH and RS should develop a systematic scoring method for the interview part of the examination.

The results of the examination determine the final selection of candidates

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH			X
RS	X		

In BiH Institutions, the Civil Service Agency appoints the winner of the examination process for expert level positions. For management positions, the minister chooses from a shortlist of three successful candidates. The candidates are ranked by examination score. The examination process thus does not fully determine the selection of managers. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In FBiH, the minister chooses from a long list of successful candidates. These lists can consist of up to 20 candidates. The candidates are alphabetically sorted and the examination score is not provided on the list, meaning the minister cannot know who performed best during the examination. However, the head of the institution may organise an additional interview with candidates who have passed the examination. The possibility of conducting such an interview is regulated by a rulebook, but there is no guidance for the interview itself, making it a source of major discretion. The selection method is the same for expert and senior civil servants. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, ministers receive a list of successful candidates ranked by examination score and are required to choose the highest-ranking one. However, there is no pre-determined number of people on the list. If the minister declines the selection of the highest-ranking candidate there is a possibility to annul the selection process and commence a new process. In principle, the winner of the examination process is hence still selected for a given job. The selection procedure is the same for expert level and senior level civil servants. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

FBiH should abandon the current ranking and selection method. For expert positions the highest-scoring candidates from the examination should be selected. For senior civil service positions, candidates should be selected from a shortlist of two (or a maximum of three) successful candidates, ranked by score. The minister should then make the final selection.

Examinations are transparent and can be subjected to external scrutiny and appeal

	Yes	Partially	No
BiH Institutions	X		
FBiH		X	
RS		X	

In BiH Institutions, examinations are open to appeal on procedural grounds. The general written examination is transparent insofar as it is computer-based. The secretary of the panel keeps minutes of all interviews and these can be submitted to the appeal board. Interviews are not audio-recorded, though recording was discussed during 2021 in order to increase the transparency of the interviews. Instead a new regulation was adopted in 2021 that requires additional minutes (collected in pre-set form) for every commission member to add remarks and comment on key competencies. These minutes can be consulted by the Appeal Board if necessary.

In FBiH, the practice is similar to the BiH Institutions. Written examinations are transparent insofar as they are computer-based. Moreover, appeal is possible and the minutes taken in interviews can be used in the case of an appeal. Audio-recording is not yet practised. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

In RS, the practice is similar to the BiH Institutions insofar as the interview component is concerned. Appeal is thus possible, but the transparency of the interview process is limited. There have been no changes since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

Consider adopting better methods of recording to enable more effective external scrutiny, including comprehensive minutes of individual interviews and audio-recording interviews. (FBiH and RS)

Montenegro

Assessing the scope of merit recruitment		
1. All institutions or groups of institutions that exercise key functions of the public administration and public authority are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The Law on Civil Servants and State Employees (2017, in force since July 2018) includes the central state administration within its scope. However, a significant number of agencies and funds that exercise public authority are excluded from the scope of the Law and, by implication, the scope of merit-based recruitment. As a consequence, almost half of all central level agencies and funds do not follow the recruitment rules prescribed by the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees.</p> <p>While the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees has been amended in January 2021, the scope of the Law has not changed and, by implication, the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures has not changed either.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Review the scope of the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees to ensure that all central state administrative institutions are required to apply merit recruitment procedures coordinated by HRMA.</p>		
2. All positions in the public administration with responsibilities to manage civil servants are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>Secretaries and Directors General of Directorates of central government ministries and Directors of non-ministerial bodies represent the senior management level of the civil service. These positions have been fully included in the vertical scope of civil service law since the adoption of the 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees.</p> <p>The appointment of acting managers remains ambivalent. The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees stipulated that acting managers meet the criteria of senior civil servants, which implied that they have to be recruited from inside the civil service.</p> <p>Since the end of 2020, the merit requirements for the appointment of acting managers have been lowered, in that recruitment from within the civil service is no longer a condition for selection. Moreover, the need for prior managerial working experience has been lowered for heads of authorities and other senior civil servants.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Re-review the procedure for the appointment of acting managers to ensure it is fully compatible with merit recruitment principles. Acting managers should be appointed in exceptional circumstances only and, if so, they should be recruited from within the civil service.</p>		
3. Apart from lower ranks (manual and auxiliary staff), all non-managerial groups of staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees excludes the lowest ranks of the administrative staff from the scope of the civil service. All other groups of staff are included within the scope of the Law. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		

4. All fixed-term, acting and temporary staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees regulates the employment of temporary staff, allowing them to be recruited without prior advertisement under certain urgent circumstances for up to six months. However, such appointees have to be selected from a pool of candidates previously shortlisted for civil service jobs after successfully passing the civil service examination. The principle of merit recruitment is thus safeguarded, and the new arrangement has had positive effects on the willingness of candidates to become members of the pool of potential temporary employees. There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
Assessing the conditions for the opening of positions		
5. The systematisation of jobs and positions by institutions requires the application of systematic job description methodologies, meaningful approval from third parties, and limits the frequency of amendment		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The systematisation of jobs does not fully support merit-based recruitment in public administration. Although administrative institutions must prepare systematisation acts, the decree on criteria of internal organization and systematization of work in state administration authorities only generally prescribes the type of organizational unit (e.g. directorates, departments, cabinets) and classifies the core tasks of state administration authorities. It also specifies which job titles correspond to core tasks but does not determine the competencies that are required by the holders of these positions. A competency framework exists for senior civil servants but is not applied in the context of systematisation.</p> <p>Systematization acts are adopted by the Government following approval by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Administration and the issuing of an opinion by the Human Resources Management Authority. The role of the HRMA is therefore limited, even though it subsequently manages the recruitment procedure. The frequency of amending the systematization acts is not constrained, though changes do require a justification.</p> <p>Since the end of 2020 and following the change of government after the 2020 parliamentary elections, re-organizations have been frequent. There have been seven amendments of the Decree on the organization and manner of work of the state administration between December 2020 and August 2021.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Re-review the practice of systematisation and, in particular, strengthen the role of the HRMA during the process of improving and adopting systematisation acts.</p>		
6. Staff planning determines recruitment activities and <i>ad hoc</i> mechanisms to approve the opening of positions have been eliminated		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees formalised the need to adopt annual workforce plans and the opening of a position for recruitment now requires the prior inclusion of the position in the workforce plan. All institutions adopted staff plans in 2020, though they had not necessarily done so in previous years.</p> <p>The ad hoc opening of positions is possible if an unforeseen vacancy emerges. Moreover, if there is an urgent need the head of an institution can ask the Government for the ad hoc approval of the</p>		

opening of positions. The latter occurs only in exceptional cases, but it weakens the capacity of staffing plans to shape recruitment activities.

HRMA approves staff plans and provides comments in response to justifications given for the change of staffing plans. In practice, however, these justifications are not always convincing.

Since the end of 2020, there have been no formal changes related to workforce planning. New guidelines for workforce planning are planned to be included in the new 2022 – 2026 Public Administration Reform Strategy. In practice, an interim workforce plan was adopted in July 2021 but did not encompass all the ministries and state administration authorities. The workforce plan was amended twice in the second half of 2021. However, efforts to optimise public administration have been made by the Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media. Moreover, a new module on workforce planning was introduced for the first time into the general HRM Information System, improving the access to information when opening new positions and monitoring the implementation of workforce plans.

Next steps:

Continue the work on the full implementation of workforce planning, invest in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and provide training for HR units to improve workforce planning practices.

7. The opening of positions for external recruitment requires meaningful approval by central civil service management institutions

Yes	Partially	No
X		

According to the 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, a position may be opened if it is included in the systematisation act and foreseen in the workforce plan or if the Government provides ad hoc consent. When a position is opened, further approval is required from the Ministry of Finance to ensure funds are available.

The central Human Resources Management Authority does not have to provide explicit approval, even though it subsequently manages most of the recruitment and examination process.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, while the formal role of HRMA could be strengthened, in practice HRMA is involved insofar it would not allow the commencement of the subsequent examination without prior completion of the process of opening positions.

Assessing public advertisements

8. All positions to be filled from outside the civil service have to be publicly advertised

Yes	Partially	No
X		

External recruitment to all senior and expert level positions in the civil service always requires the public advertisement of job vacancies. This also applies to the employment of temporary staff. This also applied to acting managers until the end of 2020.

Since the end of 2020, entry requirements have been lowered for acting managers, in that they can be recruited from outside the civil service without prior advertisement.

Next steps:

Ensure that acting managers are recruited from within the civil service or require the public advertisement of acting (i.e. temporary) manager positions.

9. Job advertisements are published in a range of print, online and social media channels and these channels reach the largest possible number of potential applicants

Yes	Partially	No
X		

Print and online channels of communication are used for advertising jobs. The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, and the Rulebooks on the content, withdrawal and correction of announcements for filling vacancies in the state authority and on access to the documents of the announcement, require that job vacancies be publicly advertised on the website of the Human Resource Management Authority, the portal of the National Employment Agency and in daily print media with national coverage.

There is no specific requirement to publish in the print media with the largest circulation in the country. Moreover, while the Human Resources Management Authority maintains a Facebook page to advertise job vacancies, this page still has very few followers. The reach of job advertisements therefore remains limited.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

Increase the use of online and social media channels in order to widen the reach of job advertisements to a larger pool of potential applicants.

10. Job advertisements contain relevant information to attract suitable candidates

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The Rulebooks on the content, withdrawal and correction of announcements for filling vacancies in the state authority and on access to the documents of the announcement specify that job advertisements must contain basic information such as educational and professional qualifications. More specifically, they must include the name of the recruiting body, the job position and the name of the organizational unit, the eligibility criteria, the list of required documentation, the list of regulations required by the candidate to prepare the written examination; the address and deadline for submitting the application, the name, surname and contact telephone number of the official who provides information regarding the advertisement, and a note that candidates with a CV must submit proof of previous work experience. The style of job advertisements is generalist and formal.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

11. The application process is user-friendly and the costs of application are low

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

Before the end of 2020, Montenegro had not established an online application system for the civil service. Candidates were required to submit hard copies of their applications, which reduced the user-friendliness of the application process. According to the 2017 Law, candidates are no longer required to obtain a health certificate before applying for a job and only selected candidates now need to submit health certificates, lowering the costs of application. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, HRMA introduced the possibility of submitting applications by email as a first step towards e-recruitment.

Since the end of 2020, plans have been developed to establish a fully-fledged e-recruitment system.

Next steps:

Develop and work towards the implementation of a fully-fledged e-recruitment system to facilitate the application process.

12. General outreach activities to promote civil service employment have been put in place and general measures are in place to assist applicants with the application

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The Human Resources Management Authority has not yet pursued specific outreach activities to promote civil service employment. However, HRMA recently launched an initiative to provide

guidance for applicants during the application process, whereby applicants can call a helpdesk for consultation during a designated slot of the week.

Since the end of 2020, HRMA prepared a range of support material, including online videos to explain the essential steps of the recruitment procedure and the design of flyers (online and as hard copies) with information about the recruitment process for applicants. The helpdesk and the offer of HRMA staff to be available for zoom calls to answer questions has been initiated during the pandemic but uptake has reportedly been low.

Next steps:

Consider further outreach activities, for example, towards universities and job fairs in order to promote civil service employment.

Assessing Selection Commissions

13. All positions or groups of positions require the formation of and assessment by a selection commission

Yes	Partially	No
X		

External recruitment into all senior and expert positions of the civil service requires assessment by a selection commission. Temporary appointees must also have passed through a procedure that involves a selection commission. The only minor exception to this rule is the appointment of acting managers as a result of the lowering of entry requirements for all managers in early 2021.

Next steps:

Ensure that acting managers are recruited from within the civil service or require the formation of selection commission prior to the appointment of acting (i.e. temporary) managers.

14. Representatives from central civil service management bodies are included in selection commissions

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees requires the inclusion of one delegate from the Human Resources Management Authority on the selection commission. However, the influence of the central representative is limited and efforts should be considered to strengthen the role during assessment and selection. Preferably, the role of HRMA should be increased in relation to the design of the practical exam and the interview (in addition to the general knowledge exam which is already set by HRMA). This would enable HRMA to monitor the exam more effectively and to ensure that recruitment standards are fully upheld.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, plans have been prepared by HRMA to review the composition of selection commissions.

Next steps:

Consider a stronger role for the Human Resources Management Authority In the design of the practical examination and the interview.

15. External experts are included in selection commissions (e.g. from academia or civil society organisations)

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, as well as the Decree on the criteria and detailed method of assessment of knowledge, abilities, competencies and skills for work in state authorities, require the inclusion of external experts on selection commissions. External experts may include public sector employees, including civil servants, as well as academics and members of civil society organisations. External experts apply for their role following a public call by the Human

Resources Management Authority and are selected by a commission set up by HRMA. The list of external experts is not publicly available, though publication is considered for the future.

There has been minor change since the end of 2020, in that the list of external experts has been made publicly available.

16. Members of selection commissions have professional competencies and receive regular training and guidance

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The training of commission members was prepared and rollout had commenced. The Decree on the criteria and detailed method of assessment of knowledge, abilities, competencies and skills for work in state authorities prescribes the required professional competencies of commission members, including external experts. Moreover, an initiative to train the members of selection commissions was launched in 2018 in the context of a twinning project. The training is coordinated by the Human Resources Management Authority, which sought to train 200 senior civil servants from across the state administration in the first wave. Moreover, many external experts (approximately 70) underwent training prior to assuming their roles on selection commissions.

Since the end of 2020, the training of commissions members has been a major challenge. As a result of the change of government and the subsequent turnover (55 per cent in senior ranks during the first six months after government formation), many newly appointed senior civil servants required training and coaching for the administration of the recruitment procedure. Trainings for this group are currently under preparation and planned for the end of 2021.

Next steps:

Expand training provision for senior civil servants as potential members of selection commissions.

Assessing examinations and the final selection decision

17. All groups of staff are required to pass a written and oral examination prior to their civil service appointment

Yes	Partially	No
X		

The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees stipulates that external recruitment to all senior and expert positions of the civil service requires a written and oral examination. Temporary appointees must also have passed an examination during an earlier competition. The only exception applies to the appointment of acting managers.

Next steps:

Ensure that acting managers are recruited from within the civil service or require the administration of a suitable assessment as a professional filter prior to the appointment of acting (i.e. temporary) managers.

18. Examinations generate relevant information for the selection of the best qualified candidates for a given role

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

Expert and senior civil servants have to pass a general test, a multiple-choice text, a job-specific practical examination, and a personal interview. Before selection, shortlisted candidates further have to undergo a 'conversation' with a senior manager.

The general examination element is passed by most candidates and provides limited information about the skills and competencies of candidates.

The job-specific practical examination can be multiple-choice or essay-based, but - except for senior civil servants – it is not based on particular competencies associated with the position to be filled. The quality of the practical examination largely depends on the quality of the questions prepared by the recruiting institutions.

The personal interview component is based on guidelines on how to ask questions and on how to create a suitable interview atmosphere. However, interviews do not necessarily test particular skills and competencies - except for senior civil servants – to generate relevant information about the candidates.

The ‘conversation’ at the end of the recruitment process remains informal and unregulated with no role for HRMA, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the merit recruitment procedure.

While the scope of the minutes after the ‘conversation’ at the end of the recruitment procedure has been widened after the end of 2020, minutes do not yet include the answers provided by candidates.

Next steps:

Consider a review of the practical examination contents, for instance by basing the exam on a competency framework for all civil servants.

Review the personal interview component by providing competency-based criteria for assessment.

Consider abandoning the practice of holding a ‘conversation’ at the end of the recruitment process.

19. The examination process and scoring methods are consistent and objective

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The multiple-choice part of the examination is computer-based and has been scored electronically since 2018.

The practical examinations and interviews are not based on clear scoring criteria, which thus poses a threat to the consistency and objectivity of the assessment process.

Interview guidelines, including references to competencies and scoring criteria, have only been adopted for the assessment of senior civil servants.

The ‘conversation’ at the end of the recruitment process is unregulated and may undermine the consistency of the assessment process.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

Consider the adoption of systematic scoring criteria for the practical element of the examination and for the interview part for all civil service positions.

Consider scrapping the conversation part at the end of the process or develop guidelines that ensures consistency of the process.

20. The results of the examination determine the final selection of candidates

Yes	Partially	No
		X

The results of the examination determine a shortlist of three candidates but not the final selection of the candidate. Moreover, the final selection is preceded by an additional conversation with the shortlisted candidates. The senior manager may then select one candidate from the list of three.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

Ensure that the winner of the examination process is automatically selected for expert-level civil service positions. For senior civil servants, selection by the minister from a shortlist of three candidates may be retained.

Consider scrapping the conversation part at the end of the recruitment process.

21. Examinations are transparent and can be subjected to external scrutiny and appeal

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The 2017 Law on Civil Servants and State Employees allows for appeals against recruitment and selection outcomes. However, the testing reports do not provide systematic information about the practical examination and the interview parts of the examination. Moreover, there are no comprehensive minutes of the interviews and interviews are not audio-recorded. Until the end of 2020, there were no records of the additional 'conversation' at the end of the process.

Since the end of 2020, the scope of reports on public competitions has been expanded to include the questions posed during the interview. However, answers are still not recorded (see also above), implying that minutes do not yet allow for comprehensive review. Audio recording of interviews may be considered in the context of the new Public Administration Reform Strategy.

Next steps:

Consider expanding the scope of minutes / reports of practical examinations and personal interviews, in order to allow for more effective external scrutiny.

Consider future audio-recording of interviews.

Scrap the conversation at the end of the examination process.

North Macedonia

Assessing the Scope of Merit Recruitment		
1. All institutions or groups of institutions that exercise key functions of the public administration and public authority are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The Law on Administrative Servants (adopted in 2014 and in force since February 2015) determines the scope of the civil service. It excludes civilian personnel in the service of the Army, authorized officers in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior and certain bodies under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior such as the Bureau of Public Security, the National Security Agency and the Intelligence Agency, as well as officers in the Financial Police Office under the Ministry of Finance. These institutions do not have to apply the standard merit recruitment procedures. As a consequence, the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures remains incomplete.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. A revision of the Law on Administrative Servants is underway but is not expected to change the scope of the civil service and, by implication, the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>In the context of the adoption of the new Law on Administrative Servants, review the scope of the Law and ensure that all public servants are subject to merit recruitment procedures.</p>		
2. All positions in the public administration with responsibilities to manage civil servants are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The highest management position with authority to lead ministerial departments and their civil service staff is that of State Secretary and this position is within the scope of the Law on Administrative Servants.</p> <p>Directors are the highest management positions in non-ministerial bodies. These positions are currently outside the scope of the civil service law. Deputy Ministers and political advisors are also political appointees outside the scope of the civil service. They have no authority to manage ministerial departments and their civil service staff.</p> <p>Parliament is currently reviewing a new Law on Top Managers. If adopted, the new law will exclude senior civil servants such as State Secretaries and Directors from the scope of the Law on Administrative Servants and will regulate the recruitment and selection of managers, including the formation of selection panels and the examination of candidates.</p> <p>There has been no formal change since the end of 2020. However, the preparation of the Law on Top Managers has continued. The design has been supported by SIGMA/OECD and has been widely consulted inside and outside government. Adoption is planned for 2022. The new Law aims to ensure the merit-based recruitment of the most senior civil servants and heads of state bodies.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Adopt the new Law on Top Managers to ensure that all managers are subject to merit recruitment procedures and ensure the consistent implementation across public administration.</p>		
3. Apart from the lower ranks (manual and auxiliary staff), all non-managerial groups of staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No

X		
<p>The 2014 Law on Administrative Servants includes all categories of administrative staff within its scope. Only the lowest ranks of staff such as manual and auxiliary staff are outside the Law.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020.</p>		
<p>4. All fixed-term, acting and temporary staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures</p>		
Yes	Partially	No
		X
<p>The Labour Code regulates temporary employment in the state administration. It defines the conditions under which temporary employment is possible, including to cover for unforeseen short-term activities or to hire replacements for staff who are temporarily absent. The employment of temporary staff does not require the application of merit recruitment defined by the Law on Administrative Servants, though these positions must be advertised in accordance with labour legislation. Successful applicants for temporary posts are formally 'contracted in' by the Agency for Temporary Employment and are not required to pass any form of written and oral examinations. The Administration Agency (AA) is not involved in the hiring of temporary staff.</p> <p>Temporary staff are usually appointed for no longer than one year. However, in the case of replacements temporary staff can be made permanent after two years without passing through the recruitment procedure administered by the AA.</p> <p>The appointment of acting managers to State Secretary positions requires recruitment from inside the civil service. This ensures that candidates will have passed through merit recruitment at an earlier stage.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020 and the draft of the new Law on Administrative Servants does not intend to change the status quo. The exception will be top management positions which will be regulated by the new Law on Top Managers.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Review the procedure for the recruitment of temporary staff in the context of the adoption of the new Law on Administrative Servants and a potential revision of the Law on Employees in the Public Sector. Such staff should pass through basic merit recruitment procedures managed by the Administration Agency to ensure consistency as foreseen by the Law on Administrative Servants.</p>		
<p>Assessing the conditions for the opening of positions</p>		
<p>5. The systematisation of jobs and positions by institutions requires the application of systematic job description methodologies, meaningful approval from third parties, and limits the frequency of amendment</p>		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>Systematisation is an obstacle to effective merit recruitment in North Macedonia. Administrative bodies must prepare systematisation acts of jobs and positions according to a basic template prepared by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA). They must also conduct regular functional reviews, referring to the competency framework of the civil service.</p> <p>Systematisation acts must be approved by MISA. However, they do not require approval by the AA (which subsequently manages the recruitment process) or the Ministry of Finance and are not adopted by the Government.</p> <p>Systematisation acts determine the contents of job advertisements, but have only been aligned with examination contents to a limited extent. Systematisation acts can be amended at any time and are regularly changed in practice.</p>		

A relevant change since the end of 2020 has been the limit on changing systematisation acts no more than once per quarter. As a result, it will no longer be possible to change systematisation acts whenever efforts are underway to hire an individual civil servant.

Next steps:

Consider a more active role for MISA in the approval process and the explicit approval by the Administration Agency and, in particular, the need for Government – or Prime Ministerial – approval of systematisation acts in order to reduce opportunities for discretionary amendments and subsequent hiring.

6. Staff planning determines recruitment activities and *ad hoc* mechanisms to approve the opening of positions have been eliminated

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The Law on Employees in the Public Sector requires institutions to prepare annual workforce plans. Although these plans are approved by MISA and the Ministry of Finance, they do not require the approval of the AA. There is no national workforce plan that requires subsequent approval by the Government.

Workforce plans provide general information regarding the number of positions that are expected to be filled at each level. These plans are aligned with systematisation acts and job advertisements but only partially aligned with examination contents. Workforce plans can be changed as systematisation acts are amended. As a result, workforce plans have only limited influence on recruitment activities.

Since the end of 2020, MIS prepared and sent an annual workforce plan to the AA. The plan was consulted with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry for the Political System and Relations with the Communities. The workforce planning regulations are not expected to change in the context of the revision of the Law on Administrative Servants.

Next steps:

The workforce planning methodology should be reviewed in the context of adopting the new Law on Administrative Servants. Consider also the need for further approval of plans by the AA as well as the need for government approval of the national workforce plan.

7. The opening of positions for external recruitment requires meaningful approval by central civil service management institutions

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The AA and MISA are not required to approve the opening of a position prior to its advertisement. The opening of positions for external recruitment into the civil service requires that a position be foreseen in the systematisation act and in the workforce plan (see above). If these conditions are met, the Ministry of Finance must approve the opening of each position. Further approval is needed from the Ministry for the Political System and Relations with the Communities to ensure equitable representation of ethnic communities in the civil service.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the new draft Law on Employees in the Public Sector stipulates that the AA will have to consult the internal transfer (reserve) list for suitable candidates prior to externally advertising a job vacancy. The transfer list is administered by MISA.

Next steps:

Strengthen the role of the AA and MISA prior to the opening of positions for recruitment.

Assessing public advertisements

8. All positions to be filled from outside the civil service have to be publicly advertised

Yes	Partially	No

X		
<p>According to the Law on Administrative Servants, external recruitment to all civil service positions requires public advertisement. The appointment of temporary contract staff also requires a public advertisement if no candidate can be drawn from the so-called transfer list of civil servants. Note also that Secretary positions may only be filled from inside the civil service.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the new draft Law on Employees in the Public Sector will require the consultation of the internal transfer list (see above) prior to the external advertisement of job vacancies.</p>		
<p>9. Job advertisements are published in a range of print, online and social media channels and these channels reach the largest possible number of potential applicants</p>		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>According to the Law on Administrative Servants and the Regulation on the implementation of the employment procedure for administrative servants, job vacancies must be advertised on the website / portal of the AA and in at least three newspapers, one of which must be a newspaper in the language spoken by a non-majority community. The selection of these newspapers must be made in accordance with public procurement rules, taking into account both circulation and costs.</p> <p>However, the AA does not (yet) use additional social media channels such as its own Facebook page or a Twitter account to disseminate vacancies. No efforts are currently made to post civil service job vacancies on private job portals, though such efforts are planned for the future.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the draft Law on Administrative Servants will require the advertisement of job vacancies by the National Employment Service Agency and the recruiting institution in addition to the AA.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider exploring the use of additional channels of online communication to increase the reach of job advertisements.</p>		
<p>10. Job advertisements contain relevant information to attract suitable candidates</p>		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The contents of job advertisements are defined by the regulation on the implementation of the employment procedure and are largely determined by the contents of systematisation acts. Advertisements must include information such as formal education, work experience, job title and category and starting salary. However, the advertisements provide few details about the tasks and the competencies required for the position.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. The draft Law on Employees in the Public Sector will specify the contents of job advertisements</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Review the contents of advertisements to provide more relevant information for potential applicants, including the nature of the tasks and competencies required for the post.</p>		
<p>11. The application process is user-friendly and the costs of application are low</p>		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>North Macedonia's system of e-recruitment provides a case of good practice for the Western Balkans. This system was introduced in 2005 and later formally established and regulated by the Law on Administrative Servants and the Regulation on the implementation of the employment procedure. The entire application process is administered online. The procedure is user-friendly and has recently become more cost-efficient for applicants. Applicants create a profile and upload copies of official documents. Only candidates who are selected for interview need to provide certified documents such</p>		

as proof of education, proof of previous work experience and a medical certificate as part of the verification procedure.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the system of e-recruitment will be upgraded in the context of the adoption of the new Law on Administrative Servants.

12. General outreach activities to promote civil service employment have been put in place and general measures are in place to assist applicants with the application

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The AA has not yet pursued specific outreach activities to promote civil service employment. The AA has developed guidance for applicants to learn about the application and examination process and to avoid mistakes. This guidance includes PowerPoint presentations available on the AA website.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.

Next steps:

Consider developing outreach activities to increase the attractiveness of civil service employment.

Consider upgrading guidance for applicants, including the use of online videos to support the application process.

Assessing Selection Commissions

13. All positions or groups of positions require the formation of and assessment by a selection commission

Yes	Partially	No
X		

External recruitment into all senior and expert positions of the civil service requires assessment by a selection commission. The employment of temporary contract staff also requires the prior formation of selection committees in accordance with labour legislation. Note that senior management positions require recruitment from within the civil service.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the new Law on Top Managers will change the composition of selection commission for the most senior level appointments.

14. Representatives from central civil service management bodies are included in selection commission

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The 2014 Law on Administrative Servants requires the inclusion of one delegate from the AA on selection commissions. However, the influence of the central representative on commissions is widely perceived as minimal minor and thus requires review. Selection commissions for state administrative bodies must also include one delegate from the Ministry of the Political System and Inter-Community Relations. However, their role is limited to ensuring appropriate representation of different ethnic communities. As a consequence, the two members delegated by the recruiting institution largely determine the outcomes of the selection process.

MISA is preparing a reform proposal whereby the AA would conduct a written examination for applicants to join a pool of potential candidates. Membership of the pool would then be a condition for any application for a vacant position and further assessment by the selection commission. Such an arrangement would strengthen the role of the AA in the examination process.

Since the end of 2020, the reform efforts have continued and will be put in place after the adoption of the new Law on Administrative Servants.

Next steps:

Consider measures to strengthen the role of the AA on selection commissions in the context of the revision of the Law on Administrative Servants, for instance by giving AA delegates a majority in the commissions or by strengthening its role in the examination process as currently proposed. Consider further a role on selection commissions for other central actors such as the Ministry of Political System and Community Relations.

15. External experts are included in selection commissions (e.g. from academia or civil society organisations)

Yes	Partially	No
		X

The inclusion of experts on selection commissions is not yet foreseen by legislation. The lack of external experts limits access to external expertise on selection commissions and reduces the transparency and accountability of selection processes.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. However, the new Law on Top Managers will introduce a role for external experts for the recruitment and selection of the most senior civil servants.

Next steps:

Consider including external experts on selection commissions. Strengthen the efforts to train HR Departments of institutions in order to enhance the consistency of recruitment practices.

16. Members of selection commissions have professional competencies and receive regular training and guidance

Yes	Partially	No
		X

The Law on Administrative Servants and the regulation on the implementation of the employment procedure do not foresee specific training for commission members. The AA has not yet provided training for commission members and has no budget available to develop such training. The Training Academy also does not provide training for commission members. The lack of professional competence of commission members diminishes the effectiveness of merit recruitment.

The AA has prepared guidelines for the interview part of the examination and the OSCE has provided pilot training in using these guidelines.

There has been no change since the end of 2020. No trainings were provided for senior civil servants and members of selection commissions.

Next steps:

Develop and deliver specific training for members of selection commissions, in particular, the staff HR units of the administrative institutions.

Assessing examinations and the final selection decision

17. All groups of staff are required to pass a written and oral examination prior to their civil service appointment

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The 2014 Law on Administrative Servants stipulates that external recruitment to all civil service positions requires an examination. Note that the State Secretary at the top of the civil service may only be recruited from inside the civil service.

However, the employment of temporary contract staff is regulated by labour legislation and does not require the administration of an examination. In practice, institutions occasionally conduct interviews of candidates for temporary employment positions.

There has been no change since the end of 2020.		
18. Examinations generate relevant information for the selection of the best qualified candidates for a given role		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>Candidates for civil service positions must pass a general multiple-choice test and a foreign language test in the first phase of the exam. In the second phase, they must pass a personal interview. The examination also involves an assessment of the candidates' CVs.</p> <p>The general knowledge part of the examination was passed by 60 per cent of the candidates in 2019 and 79 per cent during the first four months of 2020. The contents of the test provide limited information about the skills and competencies of candidates regarding their future jobs in the civil service.</p> <p>The personal interview is not based on a systematic framework, though the AA has prepared a manual to guide the preparation of interviews. At present, the interview component does not necessarily test particular skills and competencies to generate relevant information about candidates. It is primarily shaped by the recruiting institution and allows for an evaluation of the fitness of the candidate for the position to be filled.</p> <p>Since the end of 2020 there has been no change. However, the new Law on Administrative Servants seeks to change the examination component. Applicants will take one general, computer-based examination (assessed on a pass/fail basis) that will qualify them for pool eligible candidates. Members of the pool will then be entitled to apply for vacant positions. The second stage of the examination will merely involve a personal interview. The new examination and interview components are planned to be competency-based, bearing in mind that the details of the examination will later be regulated by secondary legislation. It remains to be seen whether the new examination will provide sufficient information for the effective selection of candidates.</p> <p>Next step:</p> <p>In the context of the revision of the Law on Administrative Servants, consider including a test component in the recruitment procedure that provides more information about job-specific knowledge, skills and competencies, for instance by basing tests on a competency framework.</p> <p>Review the personal interview component, for instance by introducing competency-based interviews and ensuring that the manual provided by the AA is consistently applied in practice.</p>		
19. The examination process and scoring methods are consistent and objective		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The multiple-choice part of the examination is computer-based and scored electronically. The Interview is not based on systematic guidance and clear scoring criteria, which poses a threat to the consistency and objectivity of the assessment process.</p> <p>There has been no change since the end of 2020. The digital format of the planned change of the examination procedure will ensure consistency across candidates. However, the lack of structured interviews will undermine the consistency of the oral part of the examination.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider adopting systematic criteria for the scoring of interviews and ensuring the application of the manual prepared by the AA.</p>		
20. The results of the examination determine the final selection of candidates		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
The Law on Administrative Servants stipulates that the winner of the examination process must be selected for the advertised position. The candidate is formally appointed by the recruiting institution.		

There has been no change since the end of 2020 and no changes are planned either.

21. Examinations are transparent and can be subjected to external scrutiny and appeal

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

The 2014 Law on Administrative Servants allows for the appeal of recruitment and selection outcomes on procedural grounds. The outcome of the general knowledge test is transparent and can be externally scrutinised.

However, there are no minutes of the interviews that could be subjected to external scrutiny. The audio-recording of interviews has not yet been considered. Given the lack of external experts on selection commissions, moreover, examinations are thus subject to limited accountability.

The audio-recording of interviews was considered but rejected during the revision of the Law on Administrative servants. However, it is planned that interviews will be comprehensively minuted in order to allow for meaningful scrutiny and appeal.

Next steps:

Ensure that a more systematic records, including detailed minutes of personal interviews, are kept in order to allow for external scrutiny and appeal.

Serbia

Assessing the scope of merit recruitment		
1. All institutions or groups of institutions that exercise key functions of the public administration and public authority are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment		
Yes	Partially	No
To be discussed		
<p>The Civil Service Law introduced in 2005 defines a clear scope of the civil service. Special laws exempt the employees of several institutions from the application of civil service recruitment procedures. These include, among others, civil servants working in the Ministry of Interior, the Customs and the Tax Administration, and the Administration for Execution of Criminal Sanctions. However, the Ministry of Interior routinely follows the civil service recruitment procedure, but with no direct role for the Human Resources Management Service (HRMS). Other institutions such as the Tax Administration apply a modified procedure with partial involvement of the HRMS.</p> <p>So-called 'public agencies' are not included in the scope of the civil service law but are regulated instead by the Law on Public Agencies, which is not fully aligned with the civil service recruitment procedure and foresees no role for the HRMS. As a consequence, the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures is diminished in Serbia.</p> <p>Since 2020, the scope of the Civil Service Law and, by implication, the scope for the application of merit-based recruitment has not changed. However, with the exception of public agencies, merit-based recruitment is consistently applied across institutions.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider the application of merit-based recruitment procedures to public agencies either by widening the scope of the Civil Service Law or by requiring public agencies to follow the regulations of the Civil Service Law.</p>		
2. All positions in the public administration with responsibilities to manage civil servants are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>Secretaries of Ministries and Assistant Ministers of government ministries and General Directors of non-ministerial bodies represent the senior management level of the civil service. They are included in the scope of the civil service law and their selection requires the application of merit recruitment procedures for senior civil servants.</p> <p>However, the Civil Service Law allows for the appointment of 'acting managers' by Ministers without prior advertisement, examination or the formation of commissions by the Higher Civil Service Council. Appointments may be for up to six months and may not be renewed. In practice, however, renewals are frequent.</p> <p>Since 2020 senior civil service management has not changed. However, the revision of senior civil service management is part of the Public Administration Reform Strategy adopted in 2021. A high-level Working Group to develop a reform concept has been formed.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Continue the work of the reform working group to strengthen merit-based recruitment of senior civil servants. In this context, review the status of acting managers by either requiring their recruitment from inside the civil service or by requiring them to pass through a merit recruitment procedure if recruited from outside.</p>		

3. Apart from lower ranks (manual and auxiliary staff), all non-managerial groups of staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The 2005 Civil Service Law excludes the lowest ranks of administrative staff (manual and auxiliary staff) from the scope of the civil service. All other groups of staff are included in the scope of the Law. There has been no change since 2020.</p>		
4. All fixed-term, acting and temporary staff are included in the scope for the application of merit recruitment procedures		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The 2005 Civil Service Law allows for the employment of temporary staff, but only some categories of temporary staff have to pass the merit recruitment procedure. Trainees and staff appointed for up to six months to address a larger than usual workload must pass through open competition or must be drawn from the list of candidates who previously passed through an open competition. This arrangement will come into force on 1st of January 2023. However, the specific group of temporary appointments who replace temporarily absent staff will not require the application of merit recruitment procedures.</p> <p>Since 2020 the date for the enforcement of merit-based recruitment for temporary staff has been postponed by two years to 2023 given the large number of staff involved.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Ensure that <i>all</i> categories of temporary appointments must first pass through merit recruitment procedures.</p>		
Assessing the conditions for the opening of positions		
5. The systematisation of jobs and positions by institutions requires the application of systematic job description methodologies, meaningful approval from third parties, and limits the frequency of amendment		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>State administrative institutions must prepare systematisation acts. Institutions are required to follow a methodology for job analysis. The systematisation acts have been aligned with the competency framework and the examination process. Almost all institutions have now adapted their systematisation acts to align with the competency framework.</p> <p>Systematization acts are approved by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Finance and the Human Resources Management Service, and are subsequently formally adopted by the Government. There is no limit on the frequency of amending the systematization acts, thus opening the door to the tailoring or ad hoc amendments of systematisation acts. In practice, some institutions change systematisation acts frequently while others do not.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p>		
6. Staff planning determines recruitment activities, while <i>ad hoc</i> mechanisms to approve the opening of positions have been eliminated		
Yes	Partially	No
		X

The Civil Service Law establishes the need to adopt annual staffing plans. In practice, however, staff plans have not been adopted since 2014.

Since 2020, a new methodology for staff planning has been developed and a new Regulation has been drafted but not yet passed. The adoption of the new Regulation is planned for 2022. Implementation of the new methodology is expected to start in 2022.

Next steps

Complete the work on the new staff planning methodology, adopt the new Regulation and further develop an implementation plan.

7. The opening of positions for external recruitment requires meaningful approval by central civil service management institutions

Yes	Partially	No
X		

According to the Civil Service Law, a position may be opened if it is included in the systematisation act and the personnel plan. When a position is opened, it requires further approval from the Human Resources Management Service. In practice, approvals are always granted.

There has been no change since 2020.

Assessing public advertisements

8. All positions to be filled from outside the civil service have to be publicly advertised

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

According to the Civil Service Law, external recruitment to positions in the civil service requires a public advertisement. However, it is still possible to recruit certain types of temporary civil servants without prior advertisement. Moreover, acting managers can be appointed at the discretion of the Minister without prior advertisement. Both exceptions undermine the effectiveness of merit recruitment.

Next steps:

Ensure the effective implementation of public advertisements for *all* types of temporary staff after the regulation comes into force in 2023.

In the context of the working group on senior civil service reform, ensure that acting managers must be recruited from inside the civil service. If acting managers are recruited from outside, ensure that a public advertisement is mandatory.

9. Job advertisements are published in a range of print, online and social media channels and these channels reach the largest possible number of potential applicants

Yes	Partially	No
X		

According to the Civil Service Law and relevant regulations, job vacancies must be advertised on the website of the Human Resources Management Service, in the bulletin of the institution that is seeking to fill the vacancy, as well as on the e-government portal of the government and the website of the National Employment Service. Publication in newspapers is not obligatory. The Human Resources Management Service also publishes all job adverts on social media such as Facebook, Viber and LinkedIn.

Since the end of 2020, significant efforts have been made to increase the reach of job advertisements, in particular, by using a range of social media channels. For example, a Viber Community that has been set up attracted 1,300 members within a very short period time. Moreover, efforts have been made to encourage institutions to be proactive when it comes to the dissemination of job advertisement.

10. Job advertisements contain relevant information to attract suitable candidates		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Rulebooks on the content, withdrawal and correction of announcements for filling vacancies in the state authority specify that job advertisements must contain basic information such as educational and professional qualifications. In addition, advertisements must include the following details: the name of the recruiting body; the job position; the name of the organizational unit; the eligibility criteria; the list of required documentation; the list of regulations required by the candidate to prepare the written examination; the address and deadline for submitting the application; the name, surname and contact telephone number of the official who provides information regarding the advertisement; and a note that candidates must submit proof of previous work experience. The style of job advertisements is generalist and formal.</p> <p>The style and contents of advertisements has not changed since 2020. However, discussions to make job advertisements look more attractive are part of the Public Administration Reform Action Plan.</p>		
11. The application process is user-friendly and the costs of application are low		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>Serbia has not yet established an online application system for the civil service. Candidates submit hard copies of their applications to the institution they apply to or send them by post or email. This practice reduces the user-friendliness of the recruitment process. Certified copies of official documents are only required later in the recruitment and selection process, which has increased the efficiency of the application process.</p> <p>Since 2020 efforts have been to establish a new human resources management information system. It is expected to be operational by 2022. The information system includes an e-recruitment portal to allow for online registration of applicants and the online submission of applications.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Complete the work on the introduction of an e-recruitment system to increase the user-friendliness and efficiency of the application process.</p>		
12. General outreach activities to promote civil service employment have been put in place and general measures are in place to assist applicants with the application		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>Since the end of 2020, the Human Resources Management Service has started to invest in outreach activities to promote civil service employment. Efforts have so far focused on promotional activities in higher education institutions such participation in a Student Practice Fair. Promoting civil service employment is also a key objective of the Public Administration Reform Strategy that was adopted in 2021. Further initiatives are thus planned, for instance, in the context of an IPA project and with the support from GIZ and/or ReSPA.</p> <p>The HRMS has also developed new guidance for applicants including a blog, which provides information jobs as well as the application and examination procedure. HRMS has also invested in the preparation of short, animated videos to provide guidance for applicants.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Expand the development of outreach activities to increase the attractiveness of civil service employment in accordance with the Public Administration Reform Strategy.</p>		
Assessing Selection Commissions		

13. All positions or groups of positions require the formation of and assessment by a selection commission		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>External recruitment into civil service positions requires assessment by a selection commission. However, two exceptions remain. First, particular types of temporary appointments can still be made without the need for the formation of a selection commission. Second, 'acting managers' can be appointed for up to six months at the discretion of the minister without assessment by a selection commission. Both exceptions undermine the effectiveness of merit recruitment.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Ensure the formation of selection commissions for <i>all</i> forms of temporary employment from 2023.</p>		
14. Representatives from central civil service management bodies are included in selection commissions		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Civil Service Law and the regulation on internal and public competition for filling jobs in state authorities require the inclusion on the selection commission of one member from the Human Resources Management Service.</p> <p>For the appointment of senior civil servants, members of selection commissions are drawn from the Higher Civil Service Council.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p>		
15. External experts are included in selection commissions (e.g. from academia or civil society organisations)		
Yes	Partially	No
	X	
<p>The relevant regulations allow for the appointment of external experts or civil servants from other public administration institutions to selection commissions. However, the selection of external experts and their allocation to individual commissions is not required. In practice, external experts are called upon when specific functional competencies need to be examined but remains relatively rare. The Higher Civil Service Council includes a list of external experts, primarily from academia, for the selection of senior civil servants.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Consider institutionalising the participation of external experts such as academics and representatives of civil society organisations on selection commissions.</p>		
16. Members of selection commissions have professional competencies and receive regular training and guidance		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>According to the Civil Service Law, administrative bodies are required to refer the staff of their HRM units and their managers to training courses on how to apply the new competency-based examination procedure. This training is carried out by the staff of the Human Resources Management Service and coordinated by the National Academy of Public Administration. More than 600 civil servants were trained in the course of 2019.</p>		

In 2020/2021, trainings continued to be offered by the Academy as part of the General Training Programme for Civil Servants. Due to the pandemic, trainings were delivered online.

Since 2020, the Human Resources Management Service has further prepared, in collaboration with GIZ, manuals on recruitment and competency-based assessments, online videos and an online course to provide guidance for members of selection commissions are also under preparation. Course participants will be issued a certificate of completion.

Assessing examinations and the final selection decision

17. All groups of staff are required to pass a written and oral examination prior to their civil service appointment

Yes	Partially	No
	X	

According to the Civil Service Law, external recruitment into civil service positions at expert and senior level requires an examination. However, there are two relevant exceptions. First, certain types of temporary appointments still do not have to pass any examination. Second, acting managers are appointed at the discretion of the minister and do not have to sit any written or oral examination. These exceptions undermine the effectiveness of merit recruitment in Serbia.

There has been no change since 2020.

Next steps:

Ensure that the examination procedure will be applied to *all* types of temporary appointments from 2023.

18. Examinations generate relevant information for the selection of the best qualified candidates for a given role

Yes	Partially	No
X		

Since 2019, candidates at expert level must pass a competency-based written examination followed by a personal interview that focuses on their motivation. The examination takes into account sets of different competencies depending on the position to be filled. Both the written and the oral part of the examination provide systematic information about the suitability of a candidate for a given position. An evaluation of the new examination procedure was due at the end of 2020.

Senior civil servants are assessed by the Higher Civil Service Council. They also have to sit a written and an oral examination.

Since the end of 2020, efforts to improve the implementation of the competency-based examination have continued. An internal evaluation was conducted and shared with the European Commission and SIGMA/OECD during the latest assessment. Evaluations are becoming a routine exercise in that institutions are regularly asked to provide information that is subsequently collected by HRMS.

In 2020 (given the 2021 evaluation of the previous calendar year), 402 competitions were announced. They attracted 2767 applications, of which 1975 were eligible to participate in the examination procedure. Bearing in mind that individuals can apply for more than one job at the same time, 1127 candidates entered the examinations, of which 337 passed successfully. This indicates that a pass rate of 29.9 per cent and hence significantly lower than reported in the latest Report on Serbia's Progress towards EU Accession. Among the stages of the examination procedure, the digital literacy test has the lowest pass rate. Pass rates are higher for behavioural and functional competency test, but efforts are underway to increase capacity of these tests to filter candidates during the examination process.

The examination procedure has the potential to become a case of good practice in the Western Balkan region, as the competency-based examination provides more information about candidates than the examinations conducted by the other ReSPA members.

19. The examination process and scoring methods are consistent and objective		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The competency-based examinations are mostly but not always computer-based multiple-choice tests. They are scored electronically, which ensures consistency. Interviews are based on guidelines to test the motivation of candidates and include detailed scoring methods. Consistency across candidates is therefore enhanced.</p> <p>The procedure for the examination of senior civil servants follows the same approach.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p>		
20. The results of the examination determine the final selection of candidates		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Civil Service Law stipulates that commissions must prepare a ranking of candidates based on their examination results. For expert level positions, employing institutions must select the highest-scoring candidate of the competition since the new examination procedure has been in force. The candidate is then appointed by the employing institution.</p> <p>At senior civil service level, the commission formed by the Higher Civil Service Council prepares a shortlist of three candidates in rank-order. The Minister then chooses and appoints the candidate from the shortlist.</p> <p>There has been no change since 2020.</p>		
21. Examinations are transparent and can be subjected to external scrutiny and appeal		
Yes	Partially	No
X		
<p>The Civil Service Law allows for appeals against recruitment and selection outcomes. The competency-based examinations are mostly computer-based and hence both transparent and open to external scrutiny. For the interview part, commissions prepare summary reports of the recruitment process and attach the minutes of the personal interviews. The summary reports and interview minutes can be made subject to external scrutiny and can be referenced during appeal processes.</p> <p>Audio-recording of interviews has been considered in the context of the COVID-19 crisis when interviewing moved online. However, it was concluded that these interviews should not be recorded, as interview minutes are sufficiently detailed to allow for meaningful scrutiny and appeal.</p> <p>Minutes and reports are taken for each of the four phases of the procedure. If an appeal is filed, the tribunal reviews all papers of the procedure and thus also the contents of the minutes. All elements of the process are open to scrutiny except for the psychometric test.</p> <p>Since 2020 there has been no change. Options to introduce audio-recoding have been explored but will not be pursued further.</p>		

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