



ReSPA Staff Satisfaction Survey in the Western Balkans

REPORT FOR SERBIA



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Introduction

This report presents the results of the staff satisfaction survey that was conducted at the central-level institutions of the Government of Serbia. The survey was initiated by the Human Resources Management Service of the Government of Serbia. ReSPA supported its implementation.

The **objective of the survey** was to measure public servants' key attitudes and how they experience human resources management on a day-to-day basis. The survey aimed to generate evidence for the Human Resources Management Service based on the bottom-up perspective of public servants. The implementation of the survey also provided an opportunity for public servants to give a 'voice' and share feedback on management practices in their institutions.

Following an Executive Summary of key results, the report is divided into three parts. **Part 1 measures the key staff attitudes in public administration.** They include job satisfaction, work motivation, job engagement, organisational commitment, and the motivation to serve the public. The survey further measures the intention to remain in public administration, which resonates with the concept of turnover intention and the well-being and work-life balance of public servants, including perceived stress at work, the risk of burnout, and the ability to balance demands in their professional and private lives.

The report presents composite indices that combine several survey items into individual scores, and the distribution of responses for individual survey items. The report presents the average scores for staff attitudes towards public administration and the range between the highest and lowest-scoring institutions. As will become evident, the differences between average staff attitudes in the lowest scoring institution and the highest-scoring institutions are often very large, indicating the importance of tailoring interventions for individual institutions in addition to addressing public administration in its entirety.

Staff attitudes are based on the individual perceptions and experiences of public servants. Academic research has demonstrated for both the public and the private sector that **high levels of staff attitudes are closely associated with individual and organisational performance.** In other words, more satisfied and more motivated public servants can be expected to perform better and thus contribute to the overall performance of public administration.

Part 2 measures management practices in public administration. It asks public servants to indicate their experience with fourteen areas of management, in particular, human resources management. They include the 1) recruitment of public servants into public administration, 2) induction and onboarding processes, 3) prospects of career advancement



within institutions, other public institutions, and outside public administration, 4) experience with performance appraisal processes, 5) experience with salary management, 6) perceived protection from unwanted transfers and dismissal from the public service, and 7) their evaluation of training opportunities and participation in training activities.

In addition, the survey measures 8) public servants' experience with teamwork and conflict management at work, 9) satisfaction with communication practices inside organisations, 10) the quality of the office environment, 11) aspects of job design such as perceived job autonomy, 12) well-being support provided by their organisation, and 13) the effectiveness and responsiveness of personnel management units.

Finally, the survey addresses 14) the quality of the leadership in public administration. Public servants evaluate the extent to which their superiors communicate a vision and mission for their organisation (cf. transformational leadership), the extent to which they communicate ethical standards and behave as ethical role models (cf. ethical leadership), and the extent to which they demonstrate empathy for their staff, listen, provide effective feedback, and support the professional growth of their subordinates.

Evidence of management practices is particularly important for developing administrative reforms and tailored interventions in administrative institutions. Academic research has shown that **the quality of management practices is closely associated with key staff attitudes**, as measured in Part 1. For reformers, this is important information, as they can take action to improve management practices based on survey evidence, for instance, by providing training for public managers to improve leadership practices, which, in turn, influences public servants' attitudes and behaviour.

Part 3 presents a series of Recommendations. It starts with Areas of Strengths, as evidenced by the staff satisfaction and management survey, before turning to general Areas for Improvement that target specific areas of human resources management. Finally, the **Appendices** provide an overview of the demographic features of the sample. They close with a table that presents the results of linear regression models on the relationship between management practices and staff attitudes.

Survey methodology and implementation strategy

The **development of the survey** was based on the insights of academic research in public administration and global public management, staff satisfaction surveys conducted in selected OECD countries, and the



experience of the Global Survey of Public Servants, which has been tested and validated in more than 20 countries around the world.[†]

The survey scales and item formulations were adapted to the local context and legal terminology to ensure the **validity** of the measures in context. The survey project underwent a research ethics review to confirm compliance with research ethics principles and General Data Protection Regulations, in particular, principles of **anonymity and confidentiality**.

The questionnaire was translated into Serbian and uploaded to the Qualtrics platform for online survey administration. The survey was **pre-tested** with 8 – 10 public servants of the Human Resources Management Service and other public institutions such as line ministries to ensure the reliability and validity of the questions, high quality of the translation, technical reliability and a user-friendly experience for participants. Prior to the launch of the survey, the Human Resources Management Service scheduled an online meeting with directors of human resources management units and HR contact points to introduce the survey project and explain the logistics of implementation.

The survey was distributed as a single anonymous access link circulated by email by the Human Resources Management Service to the directors of human resources management units, who then disseminated the invitation to the employees of their institution. At the beginning of the survey, public servants were given information about the project and asked to provide **informed consent** before proceeding to the completion of the survey. The first survey question then asked public servants to indicate the institution in which they work. The response would later allow for comparisons of responses across institutions. However, **survey participation was voluntary** and public servants were free to leave questions unanswered or stop completing the survey at anytime.

Following the initial invitation, the Human Resources Management Service sent reminders after one, three, and five weeks to maximise the number of responses from each institution. The progress was monitored by the team of experts, and weekly progress reports were sent to the Human Resources Management Service indicating the number of responses in total and by institution. The survey was closed after six weeks in **March 2024**, following the circulation of the first invitation in the last week of **January 2024**.

The survey was conducted as a **population survey** of public servants employed by central-level institutions of the Government of Serbia. The survey did not include the staff of the regional and local administration. It

[†] Schuster, C. et al (2023) The Global Survey of Public Servants: Evidence from 1,300,000 Public Servants in 1,300 Government Institutions in 23 Countries. *Public Administration Review* 83(4): 982-993. Access at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/puar.13611>



thus targeted more than 22,419 public servants and generated **5,228 responses**. The sample included at least one response from 78 institutions. Thirty-five institutions returned 10 or more responses. Thirty-two institutions returned 10 or more 'completed' responses. The overall **response rate is estimated at 23%**.

Administrative data from the **civil service registry** provided by the Human Resources Management Service was used to estimate the representativeness of the survey sample. Demographic features of the sample are reported in the Appendix. The share of female public servants is larger in the sample than in the population of public servants. However, gender representativeness is very high when considering the share of male and female respondents at the level of individual institutions that participated in the survey. Given also the size and, for an online survey, satisfactory response rate, the survey data was therefore not weighted for the presentation of results.

The **survey data** was cleaned, recoded when necessary, and analysed for the preparation of survey reports. Results for staff attitudes and management practices are presented at **composite indices**, combining survey items on the same theme and considering the experience from public employee surveys conducted in OECD and non-OECD countries. Indices are based on mean results across their components. Scaling methods were not applied. It is thus essential to consider the evidence for both the aggregate results and the individual survey items when drawing conclusions for action. The indices were used to calculate a sample mean and means for institutions. The range between the highest and lowest-scoring institutions is shown in this report.

The results of linear **regression models** are presented in the report Appendix. They examine the relationship between management practices and key staff attitudes at the level of composite indices. The models control for the main demographic variables such as gender, age, education, years of service, and rank. The results support the findings of academic research that tends to find a positive relationship between management practices and staff attitudes in public and private sector organisations.

This report is accompanied by separate reports for institutions with a minimum of 10 respondents who completed at least 50% of the questionnaire. The list of institutions is included in the Appendix.



Executive Summary

Staff Attitudes



Work motivation

53% are motivated to work hard (do extra work beyond what is expected of them).

Engagement

45% are engaged with their jobs (are dedicated, absorbed and energetic at work).



Organisational commitment

59% are committed to their organisation.



Public service motivation

60% are willing to make sacrifices for the good of society.

Intent to remain in administration

72% intend to remain in the administration in the short and medium term.



Well-being and work-life balance

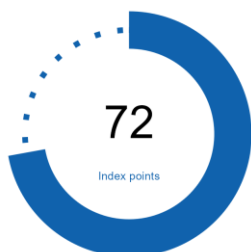
34% do not feel stressed and are able to balance the demands of their work and private life.



Human Resources Management Practices

Recruitment

This index (0-100) measures meritocracy and transparency in recruitment and selection, including (1) the public advertisement of job vacancies, (2) the application of written and oral examinations, and (3) the absence of political and personal connections in determining recruitment and selection decisions.

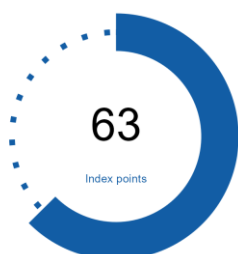


Induction

This index (0-100) evaluates the presence of good onboarding practices for new recruits, including practices to socialise recruits into (1) work tasks, (2) their team, (3) the organisation (its culture and rules), and (4) public service.

Promotion and career advancement

This index (0-100) measures the degree to which promotion processes are perceived as (1) meritocratic and performance-based, (2) free from political and personal connections, and (3) providing career advancement opportunities in the organisation and the wider public administration.



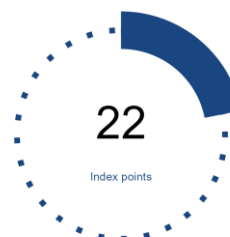
Performance appraisal

This index (0-100) measures the extent to which (1) staff are regularly evaluated, (2) good practices in performance appraisal are implemented, and (3) the results of the appraisal influence human resources management decisions such as career, salary, training and dismissal decisions.



Salary management

This index (0-100) measures the degree to which staff (1) are satisfied with their salary, (2) perceive it as sufficient to maintain their household, (3) consider it competitive relative to private sector salaries, and (5) perceive it as linked to their work performance.

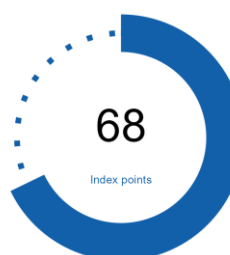


Job stability

This index (0-100) assesses the extent to which staff (1) perceive to have employment stability in the public administration, (2) feel protected from unwanted transfers, and (3) the extent to which government turnover may affect the job stability of staff.

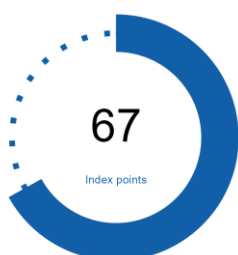
Job characteristics

The index (0-100) measures the extent to which staff perceive (1) to have autonomy to perform their jobs, (2) to use a variety of skills, (3) feel encouraged to come up with new ideas, (4) feel constrained by unnecessary rules and regulations (cf. red tape), and (5) find their work interesting.



Leadership

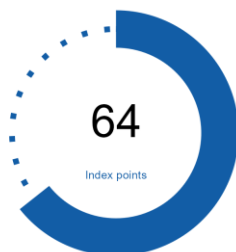
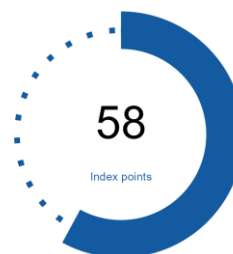
The index (0-100) measures several dimensions of leadership practices of immediate superiors, including the extent to which (1) they communicate a clear vision for the institution's future (cf. transformational leadership), (2) they set an example of ethical behaviour through their actions (cf. ethical leadership), and (3) they show appreciation by listening, inquiring and supporting the growth and development of their staff.





Training

This index (0-100) measures the extent to which staff perceive (1) to have sufficient skills to perform their jobs effectively, (2) to receive sufficient training opportunities, and (3) whether they have recently participated in a variety of training and developing activities.



Teamwork

This index (0-100) assesses the extent to which team members (1) cooperate effectively and help each other to complete their work tasks, and (2) manage conflicts well when they arise.

Communication satisfaction

This index (0-100) assesses the extent to which staff (1) experience communication by their organisation as effective, (2) consider written communications such as emails and newsletter as clear, and (3) regard the frequency of written communication by their organisation as adequate.



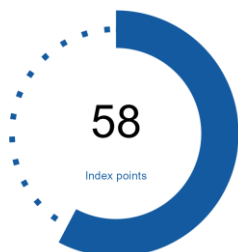
Well-being support

This index (0-100) assesses the extent to which staff (1) perceive the mental health support of their organisation as sufficient, (2) perceive to have enough information and training to ensure health and safety at work, and (3) their organisation provides sufficient support for work-life balance such as telework and flexible work arrangements.



Performance of HRM departments

This index (0-100) measures the perceived performance of Human Resources Management departments such as the effectiveness and responsiveness of the HRM departments of the institutions.



Office environment

This index (0-100) assesses the extent to which staff perceive (1) to have access to necessary tools, technology and equipment to perform their job, (2) whether the physical environment (noise, workspace) allows them to do their job well, and (3) whether the technology they use is reliable.

A black and white photograph of a person's arm and hand in a suit, pointing with a white pen at a document. The document contains several charts, including pie charts, bar charts, and line graphs, along with some text. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text in white.

Part I: Staff Attitudes

Work Motivation

The work motivation index measures the extent to which staff are willing to put in extra work that is not really expected of them.

Index of work motivation

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
53%*	92%	30%

* Average % of staff with positive evaluations of the work motivation question (agree and strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicator

Indicator	Serbia (% agree or strongly agree)
I am willing to do extra work for my job that is not really expected of me.	53%

10%	17%	20%	40%	13%
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree
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Job Engagement

The job engagement index measures how engaged staff are with their jobs.

Job engagement index

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
45%*	68%	23%

* Average % of staff with positive evaluations in the questions underlying the index (agree or strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% agree or strongly agree)
I am enthusiastic about my job.	41%
<div><div>19%</div><div>24%</div><div>15%</div><div>19%</div><div>22%</div></div>	
The work I do gives me a sense of accomplishment.	46%
<div><div>15%</div><div>23%</div><div>17%</div><div>19%</div><div>27%</div></div>	
My job inspires me.	48%
<div><div>16%</div><div>21%</div><div>15%</div><div>19%</div><div>29%</div></div>	
<div><div>■ Never</div><div>■ A few times a year or less</div><div>■ At least once a month</div><div>■ At least once a week</div><div>■ Every day</div></div>	





Organisational Commitment

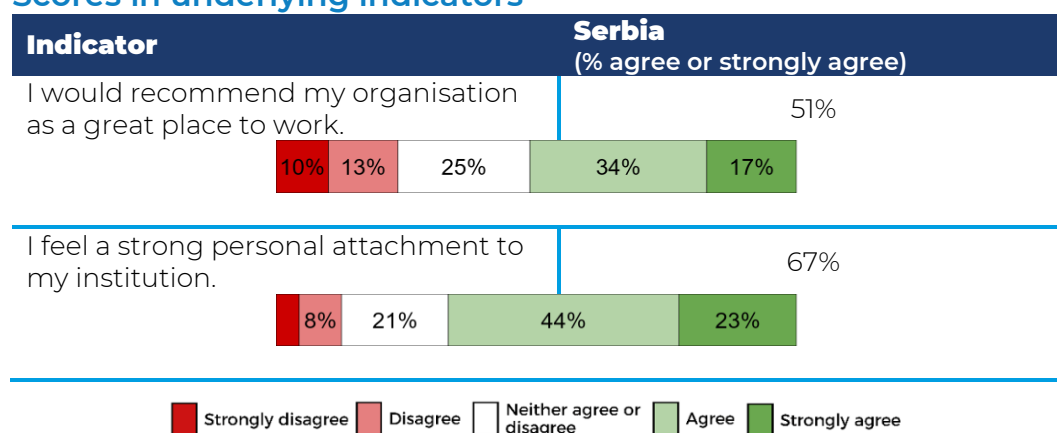
The organisational commitment index measures the extent to which staff feels personally attached to their organisation, sharing its values and recommending it as a good place of work.

Organisational commitment index

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
59%*	83%	35%

*Average % of staff with positive evaluations of the questions underlying the index (agree or strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicators





Intention to Remain in the Administration

The intention-to-remain index – or retention index – measures (1) whether staff have recently looked for alternative job opportunities outside the public sector, and (2) the extent to which they wish to stay in the administration in the near future (cf. turnover intention).

Intention to remain index

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
72%*	90%	26%

* Average % of staff with positive evaluations of the questions underlying the index (agree or strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% with positive evaluation)
During the last two years, I have looked for job opportunities outside the public administration.	78%* (% indicating they have not)
I want to leave the public administration within the next two years.	65%* (disagree or strongly disagree)

8%

10%

17%

32%

33%

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Public Service Motivation

The public service motivation index measures how willing staff are to make sacrifices for the good of society.






Public service motivation index

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
60%*	79%	42%

* Average % of staff with positive evaluations of the questions underlying the index (agree or strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicator

Indicator	Serbia (% agree or strongly agree)
I am willing to make sacrifices for the good of society.	60%
	<div><div>11%</div><div>24%</div><div>45%</div><div>16%</div></div>

 Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree or
disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree





Well-Being and Work-Life Balance

The well-being and work-life balance index measures how easy it is for staff to balance the demands of their work and private life and how often they feel stressed at work.

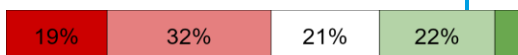
Well-being and work-life balance index

Serbia (% of staff with positive evaluation)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
34%*	70%	19%

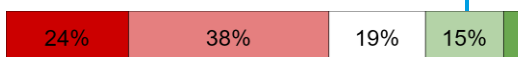
*Average % of staff with positive evaluations of the questions underlying the index (agree or strongly agree).

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% with positive evaluation)
I often feel stressed at work.	28%* (disagree or strongly disagree)

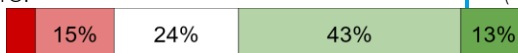


I often feel worn out at the end of a working day.	19%* (disagree or strongly disagree)
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Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

It is easy for me to balance the demands of my work and my personal life.	55% (agree or strongly agree)
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Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Part II: Human Resources Management Practices



Recruitment

The index measures the extent to which recruitment and selection practices are meritocratic and transparent, including (1) the open advertisement of job vacancies (e.g. in newspapers and online portals), (2) the written examination of candidates, (3) the oral examination of candidates (cf. personal interviews), (4) the absence of personal connections and (5) the absence of political connections in determining recruitment and selection decisions.

Recruitment and selection index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
62*	72	52

*Average score in the five recruitment and selection questions underlying the index. The index only reports results for staff recruited during the last ten years.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of staff)
Public advertisement of job vacancies % who found out about their first position in an institution through a public advertisement (instead of, for example, informal channels such as a personal acquaintance in an institution).	60%
Written examination % who were evaluated through a written entry examination.	47%
Oral examination % who were evaluated through an oral examination (cf. personal interview).	68%
Meritocratic recruitment, without the influence of personal connections % who indicate that the support of friends, family or other personal contacts within the administration was 'not' important to get their first job in the institution.	46%*
Meritocratic recruitment, without the influence of political connections % who indicate that the support of politicians or someone with political links was 'not' important to get their first job in the institution.	76%*

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Induction


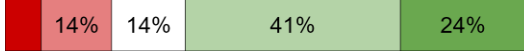
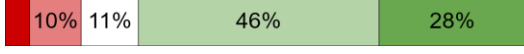

The induction index evaluates the presence of good induction (cf. onboarding) practices of new recruits, in particular, to familiarise new recruits with (1) their manager and team, (2) their work tasks, (3) to provide training to understand the rules and systems of the institution, and (4) to assign a mentor to new staff. Induction questions were only administered to respondents with 10 or fewer years of experience with the institution.






Induction index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
72*	89	48

* Average score across five induction indicators.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% agree or strongly agree)
Induction by manager I was welcomed by my manager in my new job on my first day. 	90%
Induction training I was given training to understand the rules, procedures and systems required to do my job. 	65%
Induction into work tasks I was given a clear picture of my job tasks and expectations. 	74%
Assignment of mentor I was assigned a mentor to guide me on the job. 	59%

 Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree or disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree



Promotion and Career Advancement

The promotion and career advancement index measures the perceptions of meritocracy in career advancement processes and the opportunities for career advancement in the employing institution and the wider administration.

Promotion and career advancement index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
47*	70	30

* Average score across the promotion and career advancement indicators.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% positive evaluations)
Career advancement opportunities in the institution I have good career advancement opportunities at my current institution.	40% (agree or strongly agree)
<div> <div>14%</div> <div>19%</div> <div>27%</div> <div>28%</div> <div>12%</div> </div>	

Career advancement opportunities in the wider administration I have good career advancement opportunities within public administration.	39% (agree or strongly agree)
<div> <div>13%</div> <div>19%</div> <div>29%</div> <div>28%</div> <div>11%</div> </div>	

☐ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree or disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

Better career advancement opportunities outside the public sector I have better career advancement opportunities outside the public administration.	30%* (disagree or strongly disagree)
<div> <div>14%</div> <div>21%</div> <div>35%</div> <div>19%</div> <div>12%</div> </div>	

☐ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree or disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Performance-based promotions and career advancement % who indicate that their job performance will be important (options 5-7 on an importance scale of 1-7) to advance to a better position in the institution.	79%
Meritocratic promotion and career advancement, without the influence of <i>personal</i> connections % who indicate that the support of friends, relatives or other personal contacts within the institution will not be important for them to advance to a better position in the institution.	43%*
Meritocratic promotion and career advancement without the influence of <i>political</i> connections % who indicate that the support of politicians or people with political links will not be important for them to be promoted to a better position in the institution.	50%*

* Inverted scale, as low values would indicate more desirable answers.



Performance Appraisal

The Performance appraisal index measures the extent to which (1) officials are regularly evaluated, (2) good practices are implemented in performance evaluation processes, and (3) the results of performance evaluations are relevant for personnel decisions (for example, in promotion decisions).

Performance appraisal index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
63*	77	34

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index (in the construction of the index, public servants who did not have an evaluation are assigned a score of 0%)

Scores in underlying indicators

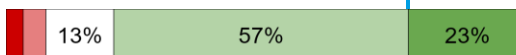
Indicator	Serbia (% of staff)
Evaluations undertaken % who indicates their performance was evaluated in the last two years.	85%
Conversation about objectives % who indicates that before their last evaluation period, performance objectives were established and discussed with them.	74%
Conversation about results % who indicates that they had the opportunity to discuss the results of their last performance evaluation with their superior.	62%



Alignment with performance objectives of the institution

My performance objectives are aligned with the performance objectives of my institution.

79%
(% agree or strongly agree)



Rating practice reflects hard work

The harder I work, the higher my performance rating will be.

58%
(% agree or strongly agree)

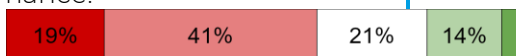


Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Rating practice does not differentiate performance

Everyone in my institution tends to get a positive performance evaluation, no matter their actual performance.

19%*
(% disagree or strongly disagree)



Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

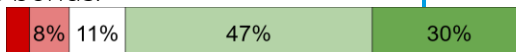
* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Perceived relevance of appraisal for salary

Positive performance evaluation ratings may lead to a salary rise bonus.

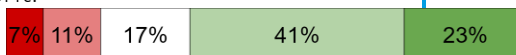
77%
(% agree or strongly agree)



Perceived relevance of appraisal for career advancement

Positive performance evaluation ratings help my career advancement.

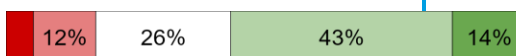
65%
(% agree or strongly agree)



Perceived relevance of appraisal for job stability

Negative performance evaluation ratings may lead to my dismissal from the public sector.

57%
(% agree or strongly agree)



Perceived relevance of appraisal for training

My performance evaluation is used to determine my training and development activities.

50%
(% agree or strongly agree)



Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Salary Management

The salary management index measures the degree to which salaries are perceived by staff as satisfactory, sufficient to maintain their household, competitive in relation to the private sector, and linked to work performance.

Salary management index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
22*	35	8

* Average scores in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% positive evaluations)
Salary satisfaction I am satisfied with my salary.	20% (agree or strongly agree)
Salary sufficiency I could sustain my household through my salary alone.	13% (agree or strongly agree)
The link between performance and salary When I perform well at work, my prospects for a pay rise or bonus improve.	25% (agree or strongly agree)
Salary competitiveness relative to the private sector % who disagree or strongly disagree that it would be easy for them to find a better-paid job in the private sector.	30%*

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither agree or disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither agree or disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.

Job Stability

The job stability index assesses the extent to which staff perceives to have employment stability in the public service, feel protected from unwanted transfers to other (including lower) positions, poor performance may lead to their dismissal, and the extent to which they may be dismissed for political reasons.

Job stability index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
39*	52	26

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% positive evaluations)
Employment stability It would be difficult to dismiss me from the public service.	22% (agree or strongly agree)
Dismissal for poor performance I might be dismissed from the public service if I do not perform well.	55% (agree or strongly agree)
Protection from unwanted transfer It would be easy to transfer me against my will to a position in public service that is inferior to my current position.	39%* (disagree or strongly disagree)
Perceived protection from political dismissal I might be dismissed from the public service for political reasons.	41%* (disagree or strongly disagree)

☒ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree or disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

☒ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree or disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.

Job Characteristics

The job characteristics index measures the extent to which staff (1) find their job interesting, (2) perceive to have autonomy to perform their jobs, (3) use a variety of skills and talents when performing their job, (4) feel encouraged to innovate and come with new ideas, (5) perceive their work objectives to be clear, (6) feel constrained by unnecessary rules and regulations (cf. perception of being constrained by 'red tape'), and (7) experience political interference during their day-to-day work.

Job characteristics index

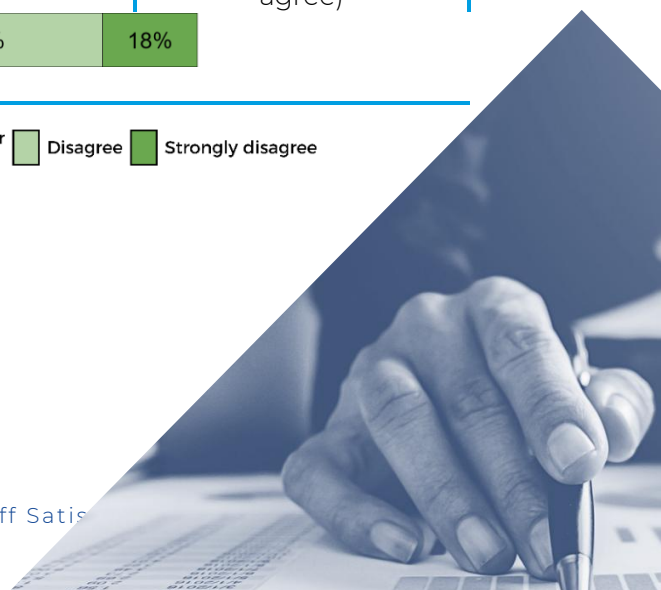
Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
68*	82	52

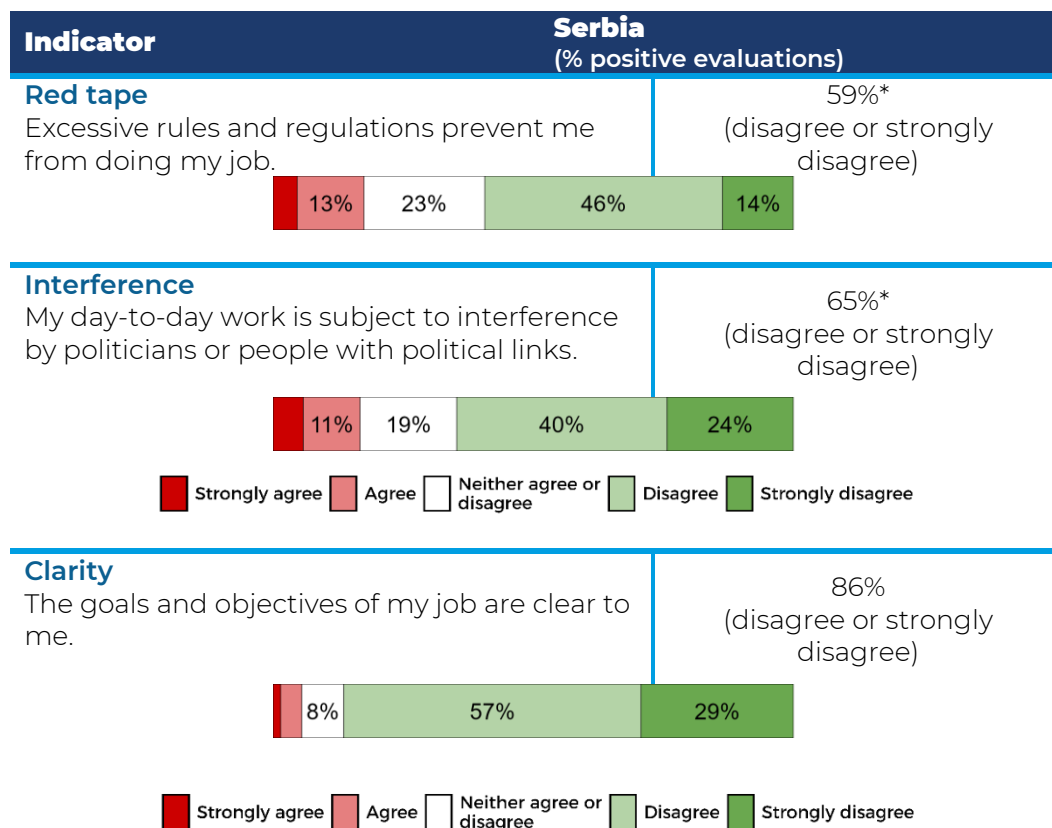
* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% positive evaluations)
Autonomy I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.	55% (agree or strongly agree)
Skill variety My job requires that I use a variety of my skills and talents.	86% (agree or strongly agree)
Space to innovate In my job, I feel encouraged to come up with new and improved work methods.	59% (agree or strongly agree)
Job interesting My work is very interesting.	64% (agree or strongly agree)

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither agree or disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree





* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Leadership

The leadership index measures different dimensions of leadership practices by immediate superiors. It includes indicators that refer to practices such as (1) the extent to which immediate leaders communicate a clear vision for the institution's future, (2) the extent to which they set an example of ethical behaviour through their actions, and (3) the extent to which they show their appreciation for their staff such as providing feedback, listening, inquiring about their well-being and supporting their growth and development.

Leadership index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
67*	88	42

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Communicates vision % who agree or strongly agree that their superior communicates a clear vision of the institution's future.	59%
Positive feedback % who agree or strongly agree that their superior gives them positive feedback when they perform well.	70%

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither agree or disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree



Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Communicates ethical standards % who agree or strongly agree that their superior communicates clear ethical standards to subordinates.	71%
<div><div>8%</div><div>15%</div><div>51%</div><div>21%</div></div>	
Sets example % who agree or strongly agree that their superior sets an example of ethical behaviour in his/her actions.	70%
<div><div>8%</div><div>16%</div><div>48%</div><div>22%</div></div>	
Listens % who agree or agree strongly that their superior listens and pays attention to them.	72%
<div><div></div><div>17%</div><div>50%</div><div>22%</div></div>	
Explains % who agree or agree strongly that their superior explains assignments clearly.	74%
<div><div>7%</div><div>14%</div><div>51%</div><div>23%</div></div>	
Inquires % who agree or agree strongly that their superior regularly inquires about their well-being.	58%
<div><div>9%</div><div>12%</div><div>21%</div><div>40%</div><div>19%</div></div>	
Helps Grow % who agree or agree strongly that their superior provides opportunities for them to improve their skills.	61%
<div><div>7%</div><div>10%</div><div>21%</div><div>41%</div><div>20%</div></div>	

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree



Training

The training index measures (1) the extent to which staff perceive to have sufficient skills to perform their jobs effectively, (2) the extent to which they have sufficient training opportunities and (3) the extent to which they have recently participated in a variety of training and developing activities.

Training index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
58*	95	46

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Skills and expertise I have the necessary skills and expertise to complete all of my work tasks effectively.	96% (agree or strongly agree)

Training opportunities I receive sufficient training at work to be able to complete my work tasks effectively.	60% (agree or strongly agree)

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree



Attendance of workshops

% who confirm that they attended at least one seminar or workshop related to their job responsibilities during the last twelve months.

46%

Attendance of general training

% who confirm that they attended at least one training to improve their general competencies such as project management, accounting, public speaking, IT or language proficiency.

31%



Teamwork

The teamwork index assesses (1) the extent to which staff indicate that they cooperate effectively with their team members and help each other, (2) the extent to which conflicts are managed well when they arise, and there is not too much arguing inside teams.

Teamwork index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
64*	87	45

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Cooperation among team members The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	75%
Conflict management My team manages conflicts well when they arise.	63%
Arguing among team members There is too much arguing in my unit.	55%*

* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



Communication Satisfaction


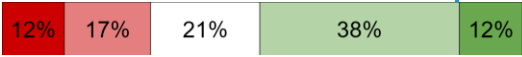
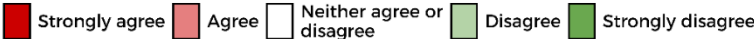
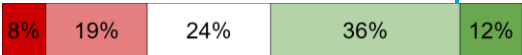
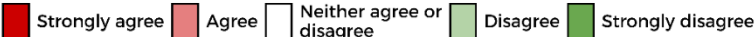
The Communication Satisfaction Index measures (1) the extent to which staff experience communication by their organisation as effective, (2) the extent to which they perceive written communications such as emails and newsletters as clear, and (3) the extent to which they are satisfied with the frequency of written communications by their organisation.

Communication satisfaction index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
56*	80	28

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Clear communication Communications (e.g. email, newsletter) I receive from my organisation are clear. 	69%
Effective communication My organisation communicates effectively with employees.  	50%
Rare communication My organisation communicates too rarely to employees (e.g. newsletters, emails).  	48% *



Well-Being Support

The Well-being support index measures (1) the extent to which staff perceive the mental health support of their organisation as sufficient, (2) the extent to which they perceive to receive enough information and training to ensure health and safety at work, and (3) the extent to which their organisation provides sufficient support for work-life balance such as telework and flexible work arrangements.

Well-being support index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
29%*	56%	12%

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Mental health support My organisation provides sufficient support for mental health, such as counselling or mental health days.	19%
<div><div>28%</div><div>33%</div><div>21%</div><div>15%</div></div>	
Health and safety support I have the information, training and equipment I need to ensure my health and safety at work.	44%
<div><div>11%</div><div>19%</div><div>26%</div><div>37%</div></div>	
Work-life balance support My organisation supports work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements or telecommuting.	24%
<div><div>24%</div><div>32%</div><div>19%</div><div>20%</div></div>	
<div><div>Strongly agree</div><div>Agree</div><div>Neither agree or disagree</div><div>Disagree</div><div>Strongly disagree</div></div>	



Performance of HRM Departments

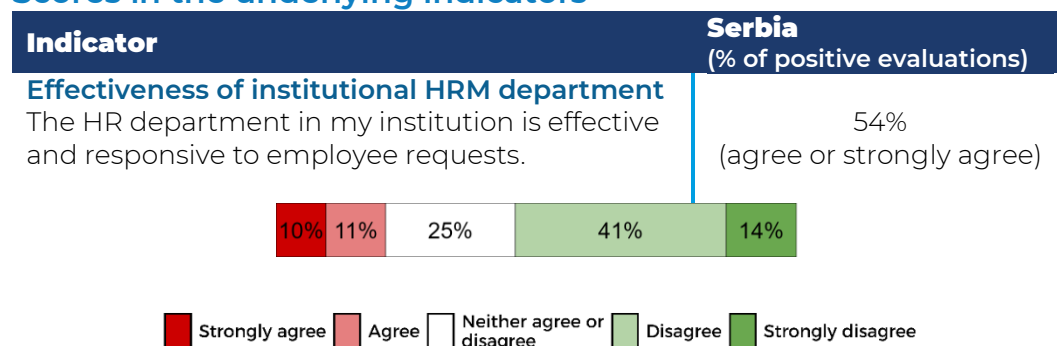
The performance of Human Resources Management departments index measures the effectiveness and responsiveness of HRM departments of the institutions.

Performance of HRM departments index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
54*	100	25

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators





Office Environment

The office environment index measures (1) the extent to which staff perceive to have access to necessary tools, technology and equipment to perform their job, (2) the extent to which the physical environment (noise, workspace, temperature, cleanliness) allows them to do their job well, and (3) the extent to which the technology they use is reliable.

Office environment index

Serbia (Score in the index)	Top score of an institution in Serbia	Lowest score of an institution in Serbia
58*	100	27

* Average score in the indicators underlying the index.

Scores in the underlying indicators

Indicator	Serbia (% of positive evaluations)
Availability of equipment I have the tools, technology and equipment I need to do my job well.	59% (agree or strongly agree)
Physical environment My physical environment at work (for example, office, workspace, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness, uninterrupted electricity) allows me to do my job well.	55% (agree or strongly agree)
Reliability of equipment I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of unreliable technology.	59%* (disagree or strongly disagree)

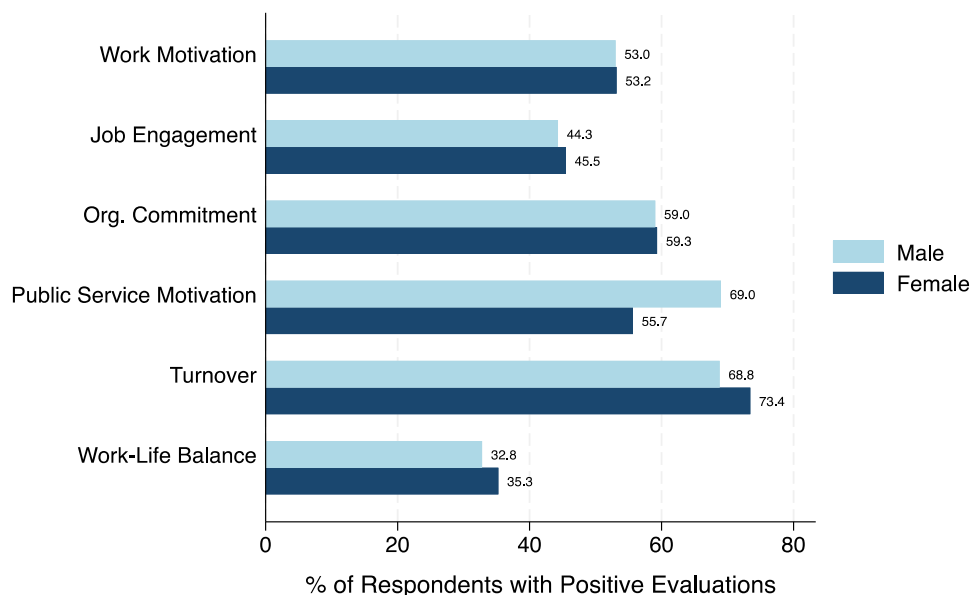
* Reversed scale as lower response values are preferable.



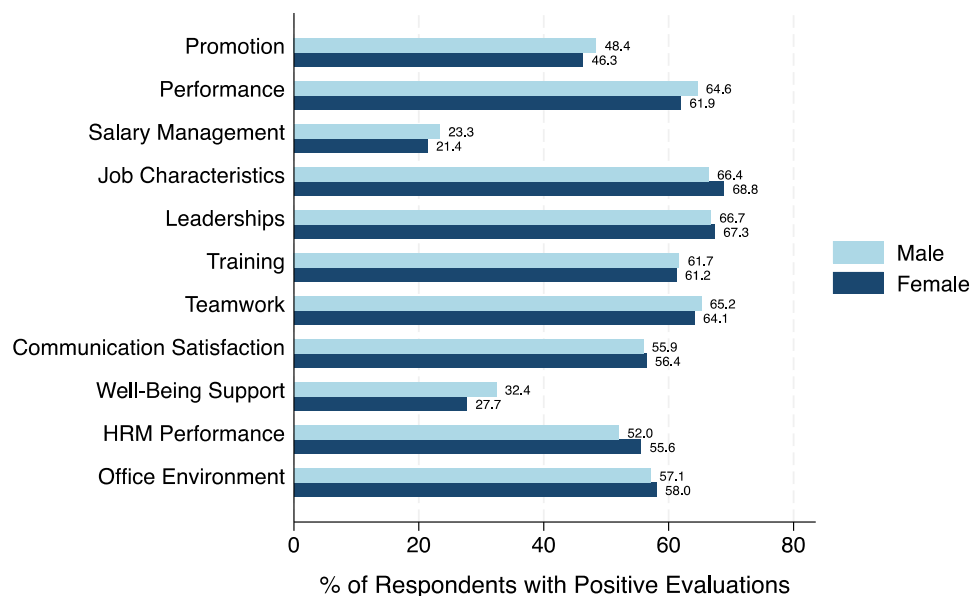
Differences across gender

The two figures below the differences in indices of staff attitudes and human resource management practices across gender.

Staff attitudes



Human resource management practices

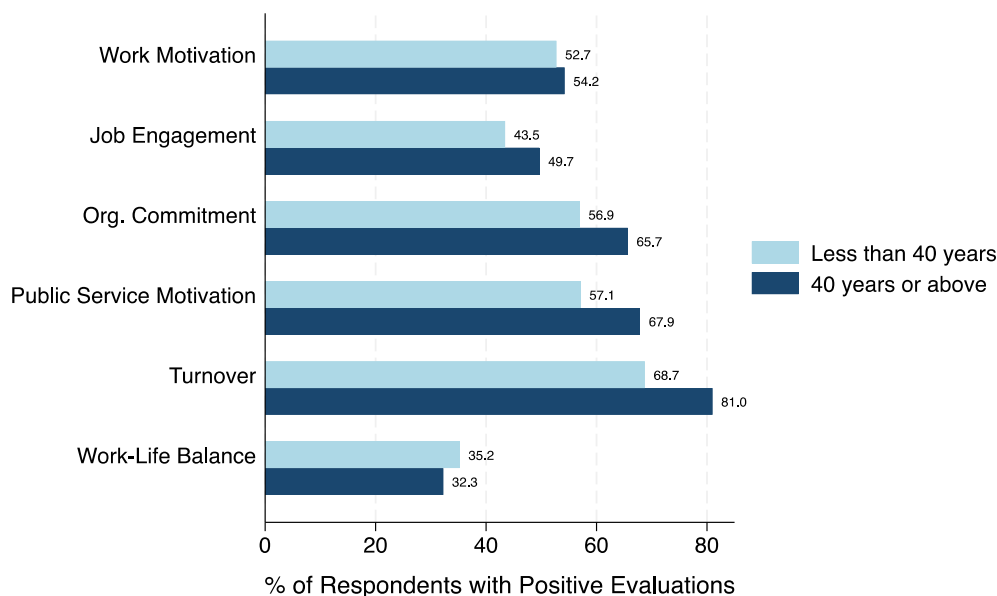




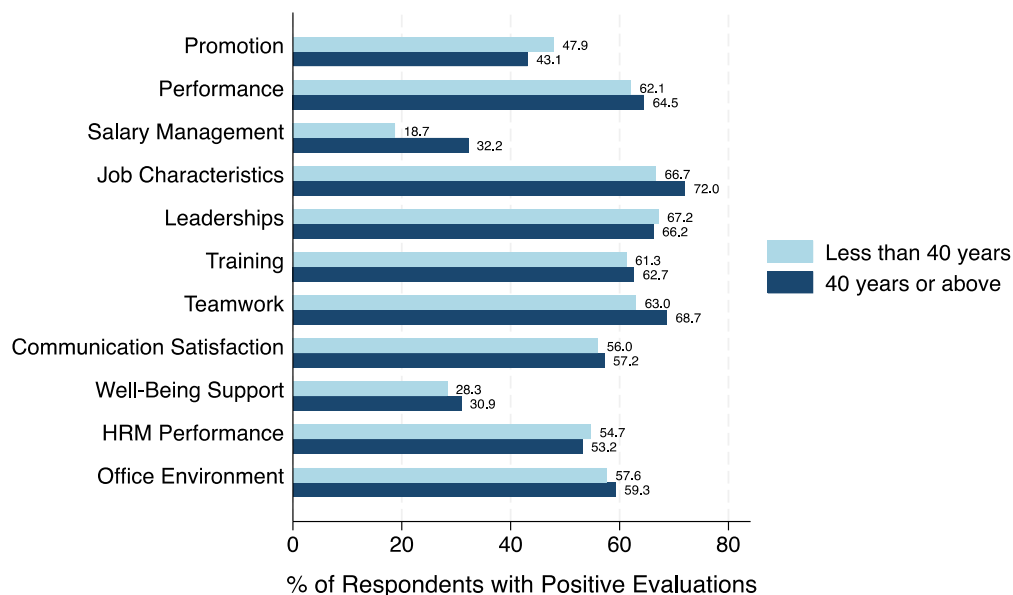
Differences across age

The two figures below show the differences in indices of staff attitudes and human resource management practices across age.

Staff attitudes



Human resource management practices

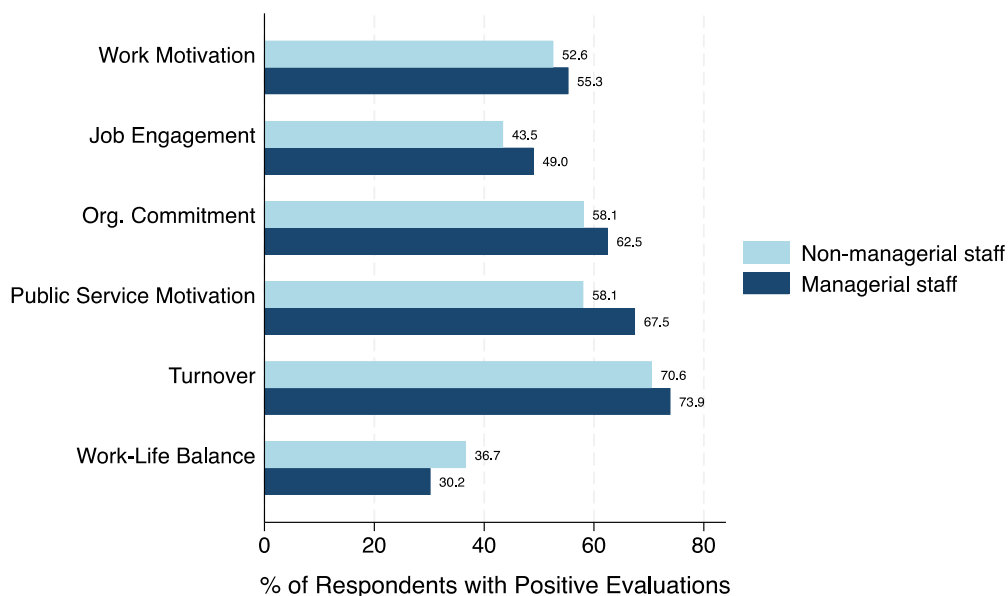




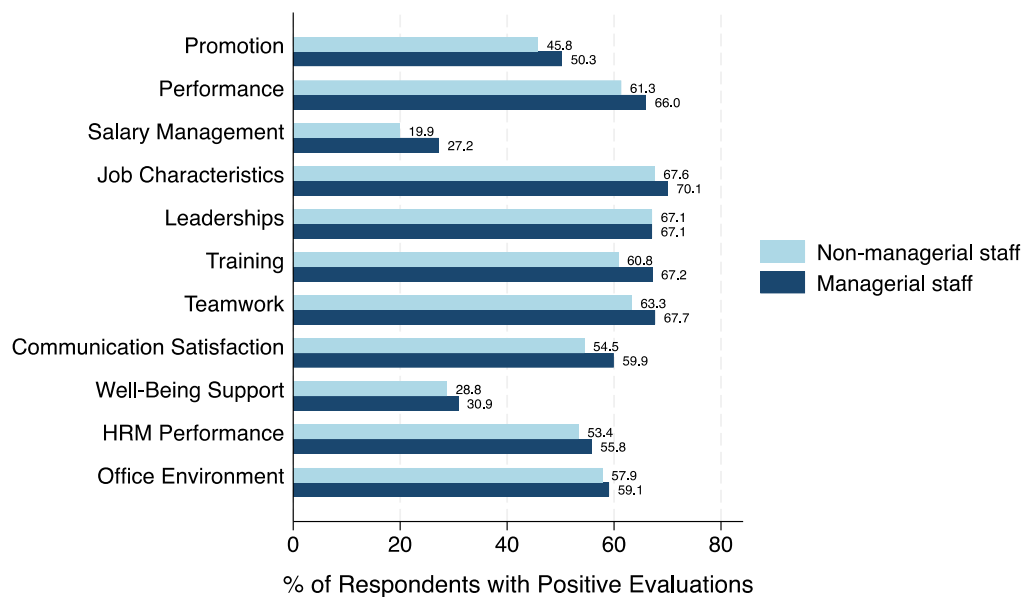
Differences across ranks

The two figures below show the differences in indices of staff attitudes and human resource management practices across ranks, distinguishing managers from non-managers.

Staff attitudes



Human resource management practices



A black and white photograph of a person's arm and hand in a dark suit jacket, holding a white pen. The hand is positioned over a document that contains various charts, including pie charts and bar graphs, as well as tables of data. The document is spread out on a surface, and the person appears to be reviewing or pointing at the information. The background is blurred, showing what might be office furniture.

Part III: Recommendations



Recommendations for Serbia

The results of the staff satisfaction survey highlight several strengths and areas for improvement in human resources management. Addressing these areas will require interventions at various levels: some at the Government level, some by the Human Resources Management Service, and others by the leadership or middle and lower management of individual institutions.

Areas of Strength

#1 Key work attitudes of public servants receive mixed evaluations. However, public servants indicate a high degree of willingness to stay in the public service and thus do not seek to leave public administration.

#2 Induction practices are evaluated positively by public servants, suggesting a general practice of onboarding new recruits. The development of a dedicated mentoring programme for new recruits and for early career public servants could be considered by the Human Resources Management Service.

#3 Job characteristics receive mixed evaluations. Overall, public servants find their job interesting, they use a variety of skills and indicate that the goals of their work are clear.

#4 Leadership practices receive mixed evaluations (see below). Yet, according to public servants, managers at the top, middle, and lower levels routinely provide feedback to improve performance, listen to subordinates, and communicate ethical standards to the members of their units.

#5 Teamwork is evaluated positively, as public servants report cooperating effectively to complete their tasks.

Areas for Improvement

The focus will be on human resources management practices, as these can be directly influenced by reforms and actions. Appendix D shows that almost all HR management practices are significantly linked to public servants' attitudes, such as job satisfaction, work motivation, engagement, and the intention to stay in public administration. Therefore, improving these practices is expected to enhance overall attitudes and the performance of government institutions.

At the general level

#1 The survey results indicate substantial variability in public servants' attitudes and HR management practices across institutions. The Human Resources Management Service should develop an action plan to follow up on the results of the staff satisfaction survey for the benefit of institutions. Actions should include communicating the results of the survey to institutions by sharing the government report and separate institutional reports, presenting findings to help institutions develop action plans, and supporting institutions in implementing improvements.



At the level of Human Resources Management

#2 Staff well-being, particularly concerning stress and burnout risks, is critically assessed by public servants. Additionally, support for mental health and work-life balance receives low scores. The Human Resources Management Service should consider actions to enhance well-being support, ranging from regular well-being check-ins with staff to establishing mental health hotlines and offering well-being and mental health workshops. Alongside the development of a mental health infrastructure and measures to support a health work-life balance, the Human Resources Management Service may want to consider measures to communicate the offers with the aim of raising awareness and take-up by public servants.

#3 Leadership practices receive mixed evaluations from public servants (see above). They refer to the 'direct superior, reflecting public servants' experience with low, middle, and top-level management. The Human Resources Management Service and other responsible institutions, such as the National Academy of Public Administration, should invest in enhancing leadership practices. This includes developing transformational leadership skills (e.g. strategies to communicate and apply the institution's mission more effectively), and coaching skills focused on empathy, attentive communication, and professional growth of subordinates.

#4 Internal communication receives a mixed evaluation from public servants. Written communication methods being under-utilised and communication inside organisations could generally be more effective. The Human Resources Management Service and other relevant institutions (e.g. NAPA) should support improvements in internal communication practices by offering courses on effective meeting preparation and management as well as enhancing written and oral communication skills for managers at all levels.

#5 Performance appraisal practices receive mixed evaluations. Although appraisals are routinely conducted and goal-setting conversations are conducted, public servants do not always receive feedback on the results of the appraisal. The Human Resources Management Service should support managers in ensuring feedback on the appraisal is provided, through training and developing reminder systems.

#6 Training opportunities receive mixed reviews. While public servants assess their skills and expertise as high, many have not attended training in the past year. The Human Resources Management Service, the National Academy of Public Administration, and the HR units of institutions could increase training offers, improve communication of opportunities, and better align training with performance appraisals to ensure greater participation.

#7 Recruitment practices receive mixed evaluations. Public servants pass personal interviews prior to entry to the public service. The use of written examination and the importance of public advertisements for job vacancies has increased in recent years. However, efforts should be made to further strengthen their role, also in light of a large proportion of appointees on temporary contracts who do not have to pass the merit-based recruitment procedure of the public



service. Efforts should also be made to reduce the role of personal connections during the recruitment and selection process, primarily in relation to the employment of temporary contract staff.

#8 Salary management is among the most negatively evaluated areas. Public servants express dissatisfaction with salaries, finding them insufficient for maintaining their households. Addressing this issue is crucial for improving morale. The Human Resources Management Service should work with the Government to review and enhance the salary system and salary levels.

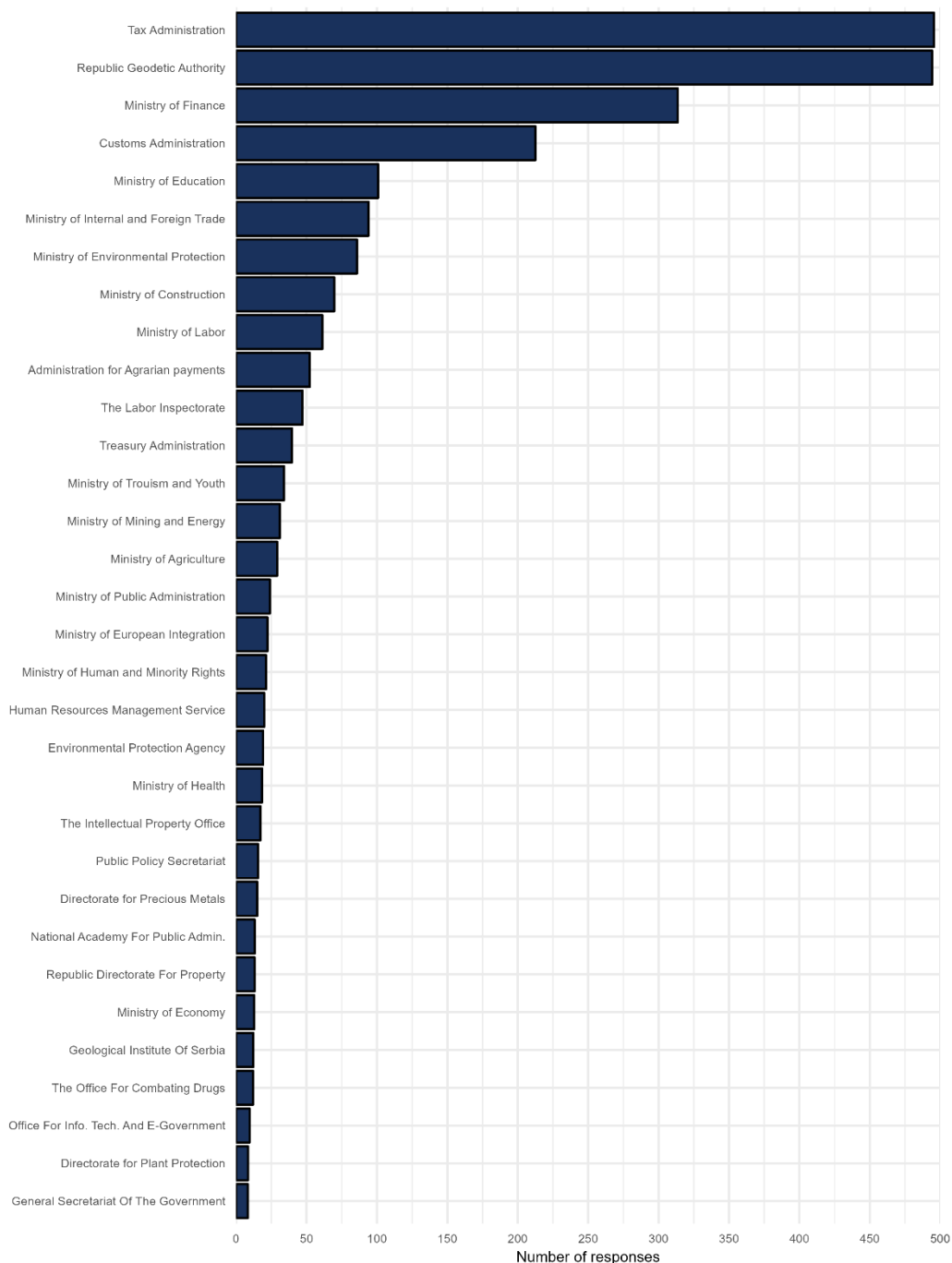
#9 Promotion and career advancement opportunities are critically evaluated. There are limited opportunities within institutions and the wider public service, while better opportunities exist outside the public service. Moreover, personal and political connections are identified as barriers to merit-based career advancement. The Human Resources Management Service, along with other responsible institutions, should consider initiatives to enhance career mobility and growth prospects for public servants and to minimise the influence of personal and political connections.

#10 The performance of HRM units is critically viewed. The role of HRM units and personnel managers is vital for implementing HR practices and supporting managers. The Human Resources Management Service should make efforts to establish and strengthen HRM units within institutions.



Appendices

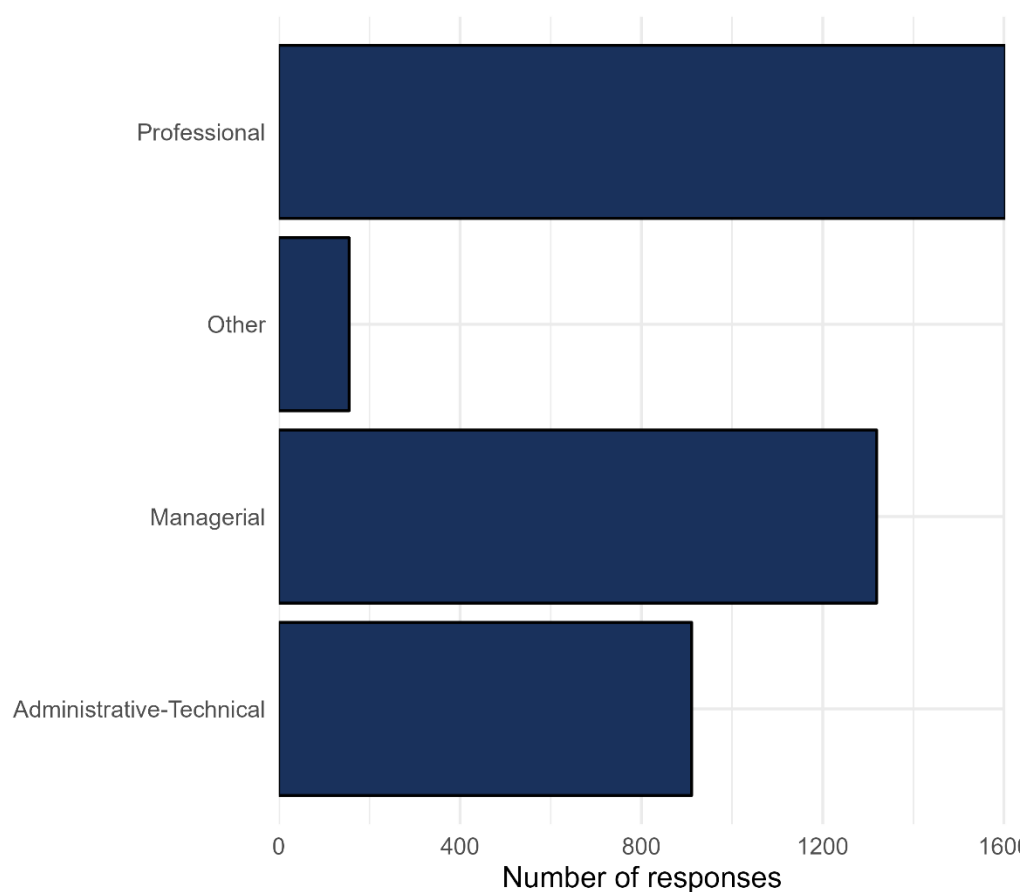
Appendix A: Responses per institution



The graph lists the number of responses from institutions that returned a minimum of 10 responses.



Appendix B: Distribution of ranks





Appendix C: Demographic information of the survey sample

	Percentage in sample (rounded)
Gender	
Women	68%
Men	32%
Age	
29 or less	3%
30-39	17%
40-49	29%
50-59	30%
60 or more	21%
Education	
University	82%
Years in Public Service	
Average years	18.5
Contract Type	
Permanent	83%
Temporary	13%

Appendix D: Regression analysis – The effects of HRM practices on staff attitudes*

	Work Motiv.	Job Engage.	Commit.	Public Service Motivation	Intent to Remain	Work- Life Balance
Recruitment	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Promotion	0.299	0.460	0.583	0.262	0.386	0.271
Performance	0.202	0.252	0.358	0.184	0.260	0.168
Salary Manage.	0.284	0.425	0.466	0.279	0.369	0.326
Job Characteristics	0.555	0.827	0.907	0.527	0.629	0.523
Leadership	0.272	0.422	0.514	0.251	0.354	0.272
Training	0.210	0.258	0.289	0.247	0.140	0.154
Teamwork	0.264	0.381	0.482	0.222	0.361	0.305
Comm.						
Satisfaction	0.277	0.442	0.547	0.265	0.377	0.262
Well-Being						
Support	0.324	0.483	0.545	0.319	0.314	0.371
HR Manage.	0.166	0.261	0.339	0.156	0.221	0.166
Office Environ.	0.234	0.224	0.340	0.202	0.211	0.275

*Correlations are obtained from linear regression models regressing the tables column on the tables row controlling for Gender, Years of service, Education level, Income bracket, and Rank. Green fields indicate statistically significant, positive associations. Associations that do not obtain statistical significance at a 5% alpha level are coloured white and marked "n.s." The colours indicate the strength of the relationship. Correlations between 0.66 and 1.00 are dark green, 0.33 to 0.66 are medium green, and 0 to 0.33 are light green, similarly for any negative correlations, which will appear in shades of red.



ReSPA Staff Satisfaction Survey in the Western Balkans

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