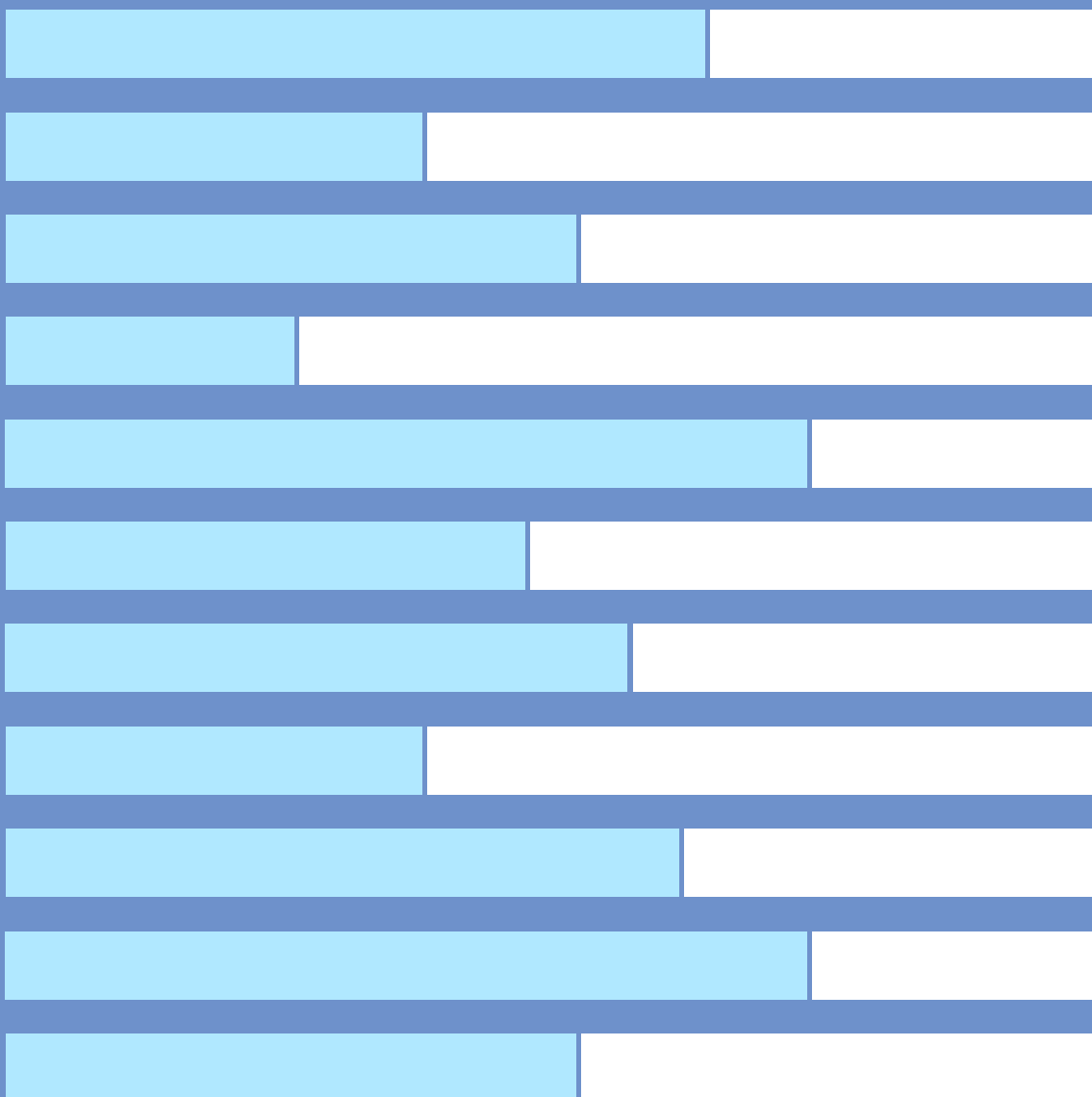


Perception of Public Administration



THIS ANALYSIS WAS PREPARED WITHIN THE PROJECT "FAR - EVIDENCE FOR BETTER ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM", IMPLEMENTED BY THE INSTITUTE ALTERNATIVA AND SUPPORTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION.

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SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Location	Montenegro
Data collection period	01 – 09 September 2019
Data collection method	Face-to face interviews at the respondents' homes, CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing)
Sample universe	Population of Montenegro, 18+
Statistical documents used to design the sample	2011 Population Census
Sample frame	Area served by the individual polling station (similar in size to census units) within the strata defined per region and type of settlement (urban and rural). Note: The areas served by individual polling stations ensure the most reliable sample selection due to the fact that the data for these units tend to be the most complete and most up-to-date available.
Sample type	Three-stage random representative stratified sample
Stratification, objective and method	First stratification level: region Second stratification level: urban/rural settlements
	Objective: Optimized sample plan and reduced sample error Sample allocation across strata is proportionate to stratum size (number of citizens aged 18+).
Urban/rural definition	Settlement classification as urban or rural relies on the administrative decisions. Besides agricultural areas (classified here as rural), the administrative division of settlements into urban and rural ones relies on several combined criteria: number of inhabitants, infrastructure, existence/number of schools (elementary, secondary, university departments), existence/number of health care institutions etc. Thus, the administrative classification into urban and rural settlements is not entirely arbitrary; however, it is not based on the criteria that enable clear definitions of urban and rural.
Definition, number and method of selection - PSU, SSU, TSU	PSU – Area served by the polling station Definition: The area served by the individual polling station is defined as per the voters' register and includes the addresses of the voters assigned to the polling station. It usually covers several streets within a neighbourhood, with on average 200 households, except those settlements where more than 300 households constitute a single unit. PSU sampling type: Probability proportional to size Method of selection: Lahiri (cumulative) SSU – Household Definition: A household includes the people sharing the premises and costs of meals. SSU sampling type: Simple random sampling without substitution Method of selection: Systematic sampling with random selection of starting point and equal step TSU – Respondent Definition: Adult household member Respondent sampling type: Simple random sampling without substitution Method of selection: Random selection of respondents older than 18 years of age
Sample size	1,050 respondents
Marginal error	±1.4% for the phenomena with 5% incidence ±2.9% for the phenomena with 25% incidence ±3.3% for the phenomena with 50% incidence (marginal error)
Control	Field work control was carried out by means of subsequent contacts with at least 10% of respondents. Ipsos Strategic Marketing uses SM-S, survey and data entry program; therefore, 100% logic control took place during the survey/data entry.

KEY FINDINGS

Looking at general population, citizens of Montenegro assigned a somewhat better score to the quality of work of public administration in 2019 than in the two preceding years. They identified the following major problems of public administration: inefficiency, corruption, employment based on personal connections and impolite behaviour of civil servants. Similarly to the two preceding years, citizens perceived reducing corruption as the best measure to improve the performance of public administration bodies. On the other hand, while the number of those proposing stricter internal controls and simplified procedures was on the decline, the number of those who believed that higher civil servants' salaries and stricter sanctions would have a positive impact on the performance was on the rise. With regard to the way the public administration managed its budgets, i.e. whether the money was being spent appropriately, similarly as in the past, more than one-half of citizens thought that was not the case. Along the lines of the previous rounds of surveys, the biggest share of Montenegrin citizens reiterated in 2019 that they saw political connections as the key factor in public administration recruitment; almost one-in-four considered friendships/family relationships and candidates' skills as the key factors. In addition, citizens reported slow processing, impolite behaviour of civil servants and long times spent in queues as the specific problems encountered by them in the course of communication with the public administration authorities. Also, when asked to assess the time required to obtain a decision concerning an application filed with the public administration authorities, almost one-half of citizens thought that process was slow, while one-third believed that the pace was acceptable. Lastly, it was recorded that citizens had become more familiar with the public administration's e-portal over the past three years; however, that did not result in their greater use of the portal.

SURVEY RESULTS

Attitudes towards public administration

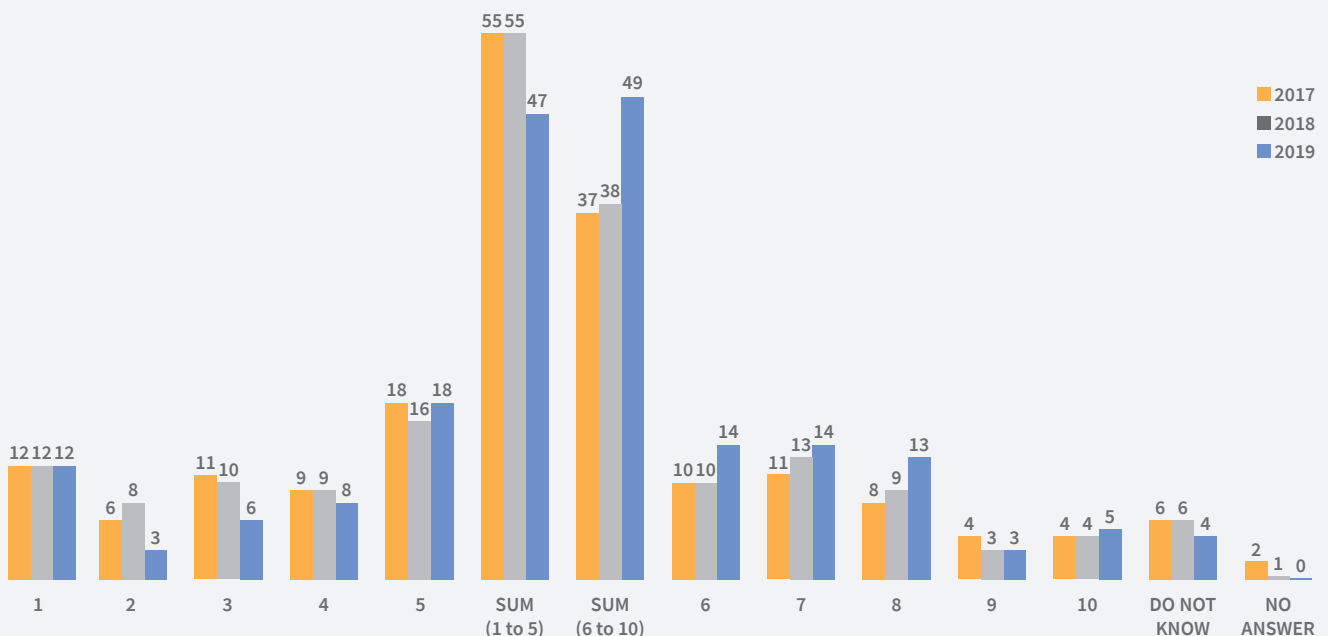
Looking at the general population, citizens of Montenegro assigned a better score to the quality of work of public administration in 2019 (namely 5.4) than in the two preceding years (5.0 and 4.9, respectively). A review of higher (6-10) and lower scores (1-5) shows an increase in the number of citizens who gave positive evaluations. The increase came as a result of the scores of 2 and 3 occurring less frequently and those of 6 and 8 occurring more frequently. For instance, 7.9% citizens opted for the score of 8 in 2017; in 2018 this share increased to 9.1%, and in 2019 it reached 13.1%.

This increase was recorded across all of the socio-demographic groups considered. The most noticeable improvement in the perception of the quality of work of public administration, which reversed the negative scores between 2018 and 2019, was observed among female respondents (from 4.9 to 5.6), rural population (from 4.7 to 5.6), those living in the northern region (from 4.3 to 5.4) and those aged 45-60 (from 4.7 to 5.5).

If looked at in isolation, the 2019 data suggests differences across groups. Thus, women awarded higher scores than men (5.6 versus 5.3), those below 30 years of age awarded higher scores than those above (6.0 versus 5.0), and rural population awarded higher scores than urban population (5.6 versus 5.3).

Graph 1: Assessment of the quality of work of public administration

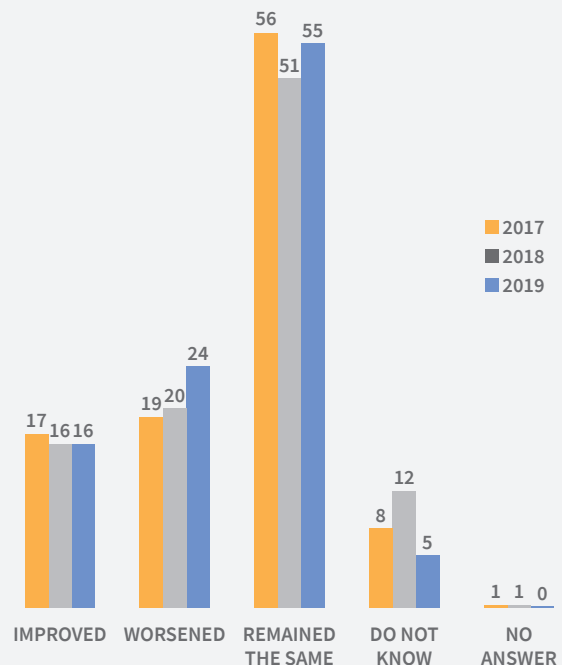
What is your general assessment of the quality of work of PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION? Please indicate on the 1-10 scale, where 1 means "Very Poor" and 10 means "Exceptionally High". Base: Total target population.



Still, when **explicitly asked to score** the change in the quality of work of public administration, i.e. whether the quality of services of Montenegrin public administration had improved, worsened or remained the same compared to three years before, citizens of Montenegro **mainly responded that it had remained the same**. Namely, more than one-half (55%) thought that the quality of public administration services had remained the same, while one-fourth thought it had worsened.

Graph 2: Assessment of the change in the quality of work of public administration

Would you say that the quality of PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION has generally improved, wor-sened or remained the same, compared to 3 years ago? Base: Total target population.



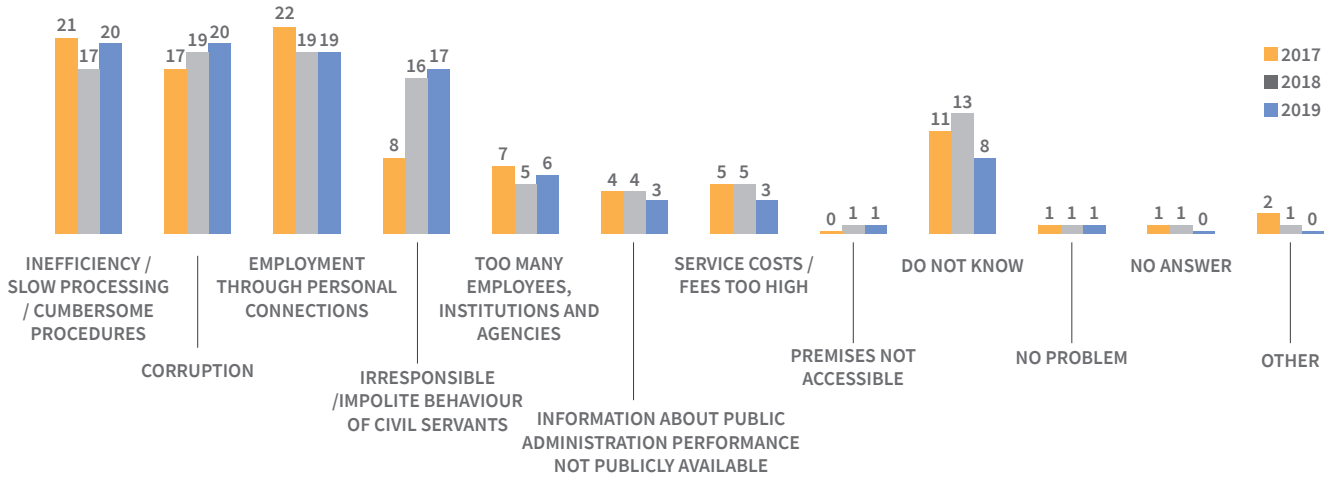
Perception of the problems in the work of public administration

Citizens of Montenegro identified the following major problems in the work of the public administration: **inefficiency, corruption, employment based on personal connections, and irresponsible conduct of civil servants**. Combined with the results obtained for the previous two years, this suggests relatively no change in the number of citizens who reported these problems. Irresponsible and impolite behaviour of civil servants is an exception, as growing numbers of citizens identified this as a key problem each year.

Irresponsible and impolite behaviour was more frequently reported by the group aged 30-44, those with secondary education, living in the central region and in bigger towns. Also, a considerably higher number of those living in rural areas perceived inefficiency in the work of public administration as the key problem than in the previous two years (increase from 13% in 2018 to 24% in 2019). On the other hand, however, a distinctly lower share of the eldest group (over 60 years of age) thought that the problem was insufficient publicity of public administration's work (drop from 8% in 2017 to 1% in 2019).

Graph 3: Perception of the key problems of public administration

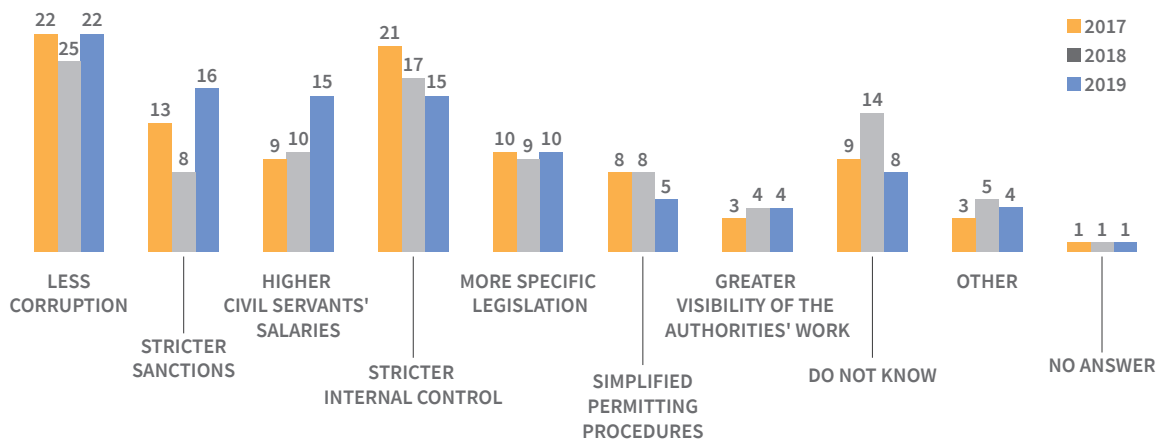
What is the key problem of our public administration in your view? Base: Total target population.



Similarly to the two previous years, citizens see reducing the level of corruption as the best measure to improve the quality of work of public administration. However, an evident change in citizens' attitudes took place with regard to other measures. While the share of those proposing stricter internal controls and simplified procedures decreased (from 21% and 8% respectively in 2017, to 15% and 5% in 2019), the share of citizens (in particular male respondents) who believed that higher civil servants' salaries and stricter sanctions would have a positive impact on the performance increased (from 9% and 13% respectively in 2017, to 15% and 16% in 2019). The biggest increase in the share of those who believed in the effectiveness of rigorous sanctions took place among those living in the southern region and in rural areas (from 5% to 22% i.e. from 8% to 18% from 2018 to 2019).

Graph 4: Proposals for improved quality of work of public administration authorities

What is the best way to improve the quality of work of public administration, in your view? (Unstructured response) Base: Total target population.

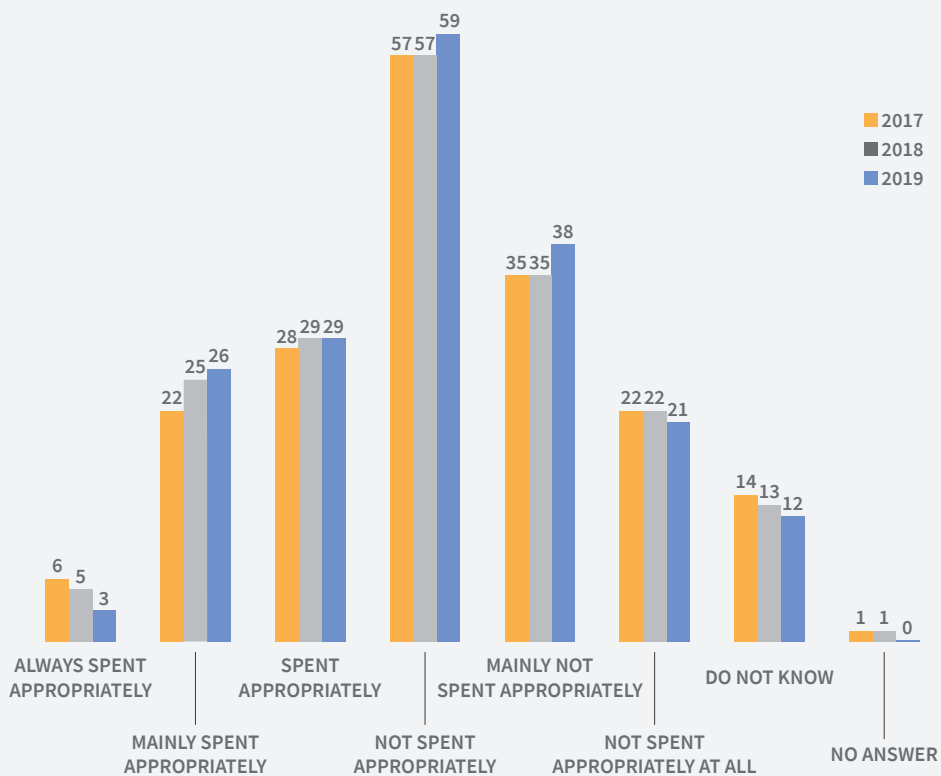


Citizens of Montenegro assigned on average the same score for public administration budget management (2.9) over the past three years. To be specific, in all the three rounds, **more than one-half of citizens thought that public administration did not manage the budget appropriately.** The only statistically significant difference is identified in the category of those who believed that public administration “always spent money appropriately”, with a noticeable drop from 6% in 2017 to 3% in 2019. Although this difference does not affect the sum total, it shows a decreasing number of those completely convinced in sound budget management within this category.

A comparison across different socio-demographic groups shows that, in 2019, the citizens whose income was up to €100 per household member awarded a better score for budget management (3.1) than those with income above €200 (2.8).

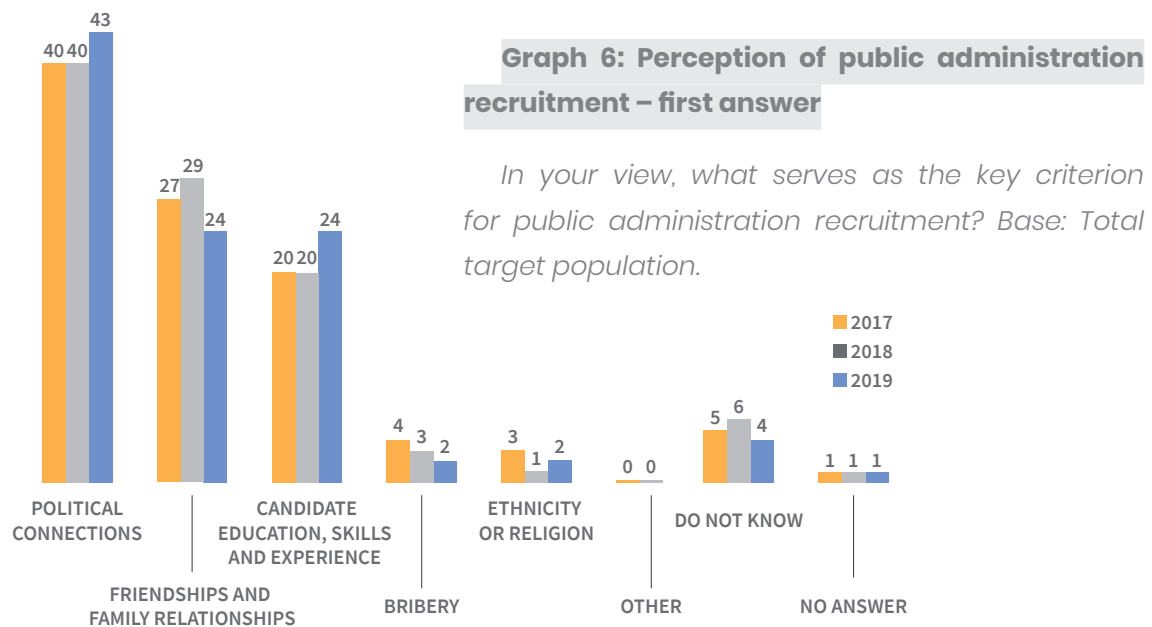
Graph 5: Perception of public administration budget management

Does the public administration manage its budgets well in your view i.e. does it spend money appropriately? Base: Total target population.



Similar to the previous rounds of surveys, citizens' first answers in 2019 showed that **most citizens of Montenegro considered political connections as the key factor in public administration recruitment** (43%), while one-in-four considered friendships/family relationships (24%) or candidate's education, skills and experience (24%) as the key factors. Although the total result did not show any major differences between the rounds, an evidently bigger share of citizens living in towns with population above 100,000 perceived candidates' skills as the critical factor of public administration recruitment in 2019.

When all the responses are considered, friendships and family relationships gain even more importance, as more than one-half of citizens mentioned political connections (59%), but also friendships and family relationships (57%) among their responses.

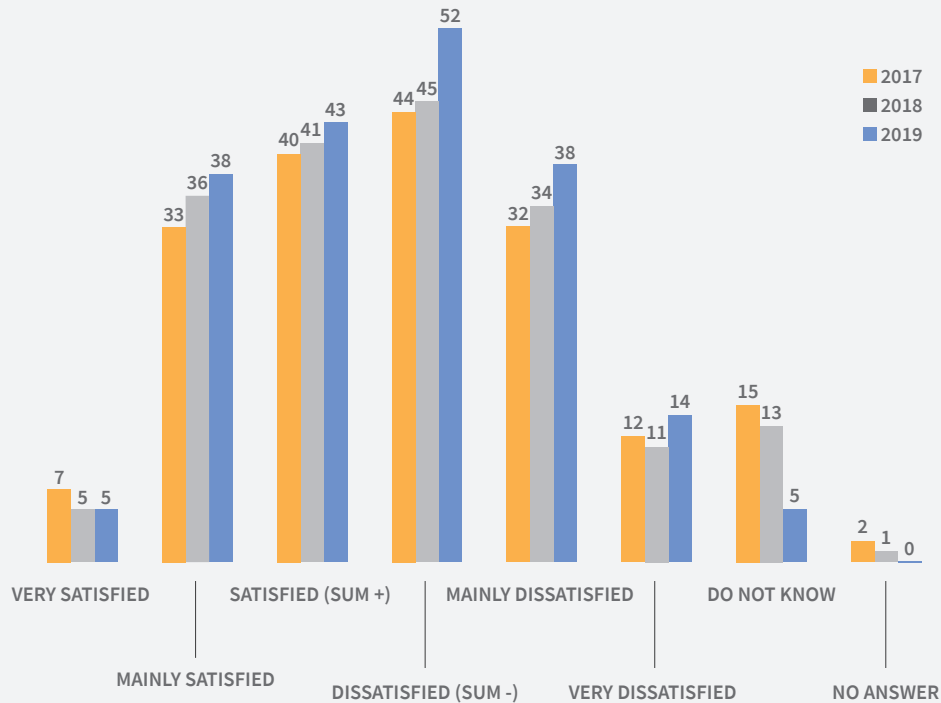


Perception of public administration services

While in 2017 44% of citizens gave negative feedback (combination of mild and strong dissatisfaction) concerning public administration services, in 2019 that share exceeded one-half (52%). This increase in the level of dissatisfaction was accompanied by an increase in the number of citizens who were ready to articulate their views (the share of those who responded “I do not know“ was lower by 10% in 2019 than in 2017).

Graph 7: Satisfaction with public administration services

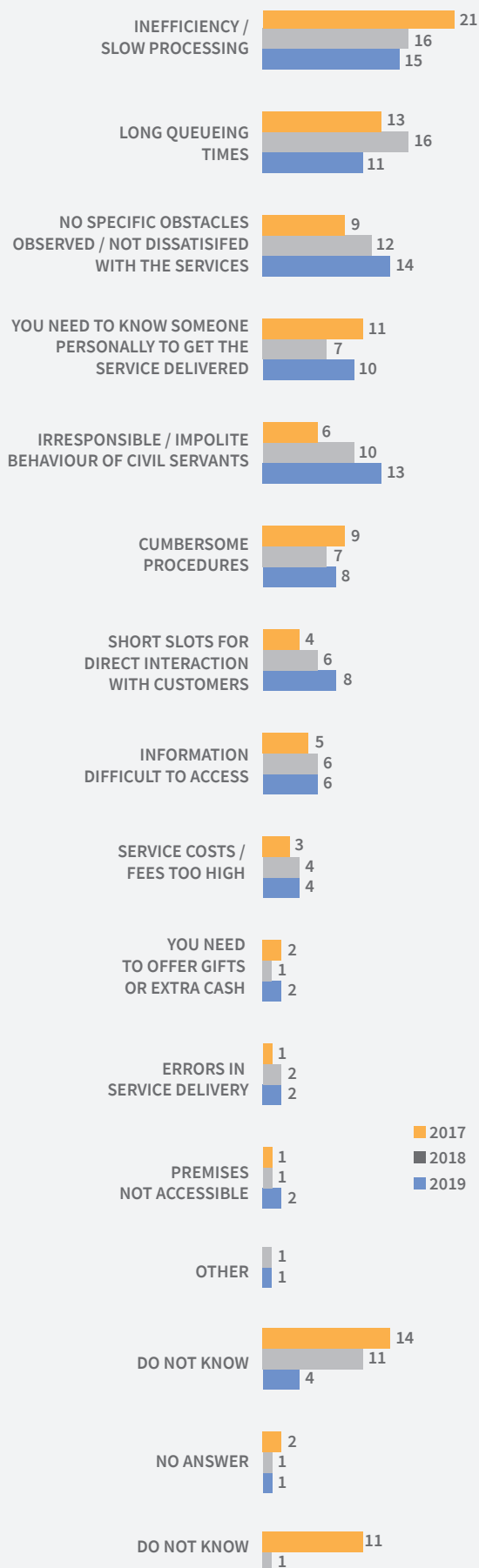
How satisfied are you with the public administration services? Base: Total target population.



The problem that citizens' most frequent first answers concerning their communication with the public administration authorities were **slow processing, irresponsible and impolite behaviour and long queueing times**. Compared with the situation from the two preceding years, the increase in the number of citizens whose first answer included irresponsible and impolite behaviour and insufficient time slots for dealing with customers was statistically significant. There was equal distribution of those who reported irresponsible and impolite behaviour among men and women (13%), and the increase in the share of those dissatisfied by this aspect was particularly noticeable among those above 60 years of age (from 7% in 2017 to 18% in 2019).

On the other hand, those living in the southern region reported inefficiency and slow processing as problems less frequently in 2019 than they did before (26% in 2017 versus 10% in 2019).

Further comparisons of specific socio-demographic groups in 2019 show significant differences across income categories. Namely, the problem of inefficiency was more frequently reported by the citizens with lower income (up to €100 per household member) than the rest (23% versus 13%).



Graph 8: Perception of problems in communication with public administration – first answer

If you are dissatisfied with the services, what do you consider as the biggest hindrance when communicating with the public administration institutions, i.e. in the course of the procedures that you address them about? Base: Total target population.

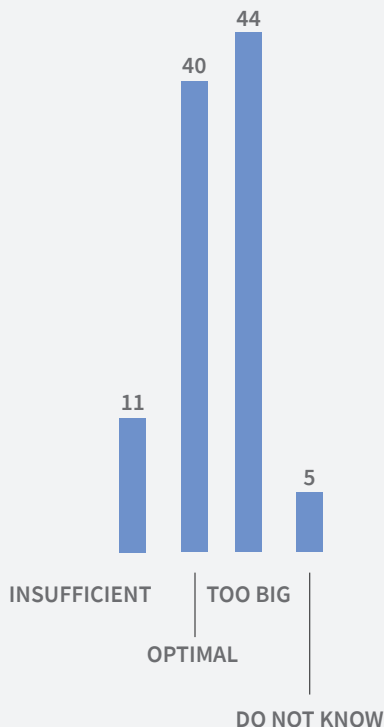
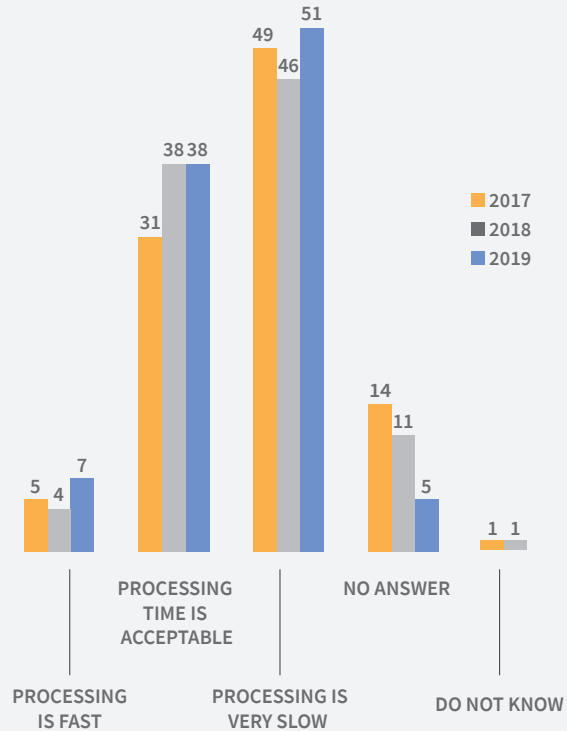
When assessing the time needed to obtain decisions on the applications filed with public administration authorities, almost **one-half of citizens thought the turnaround was slow, while one-third thought it was acceptable.** These results do not depart significantly from the ones obtained for the two previous years. However, a comparison across specific socio-demographic groups shows that a somewhat bigger share of those under 29 years of age and citizens of the Capital City of Podgorica thought the applications were being dealt with very fast (2% and 5% in 2018; 10% and 11% in 2019).

Comparisons of income and employment status in 2019 show that, although the level of satisfaction with the processing time was generally low, it was somewhat higher among the employed, those with university education and those with higher incomes than among the unemployed, those with lower education levels and those with less than €200 per household member. Conversely, the dissatisfaction with the processing times, although high across all categories, was more pronounced among the unemployed, those with lower education levels and those with lower incomes.

Graph 9: Perception of the time needed to process applications

How would you assess the performance of public administration with regard to the length of time needed to decide on individual applications/cases? Base: Total target population.

With regard to the perceptions of staff numbers, 44% of citizens thought that the size of public administration was too big, while 40 % thought it was optimal, and 11 % that it was insufficient. The differences across regions are evident here, with the citizens living in the northern region more inclined to believe that public administration was too big (63%), while most of those from the central region (47%) thought it optimal.



Graph 10: Job optimization (2019)

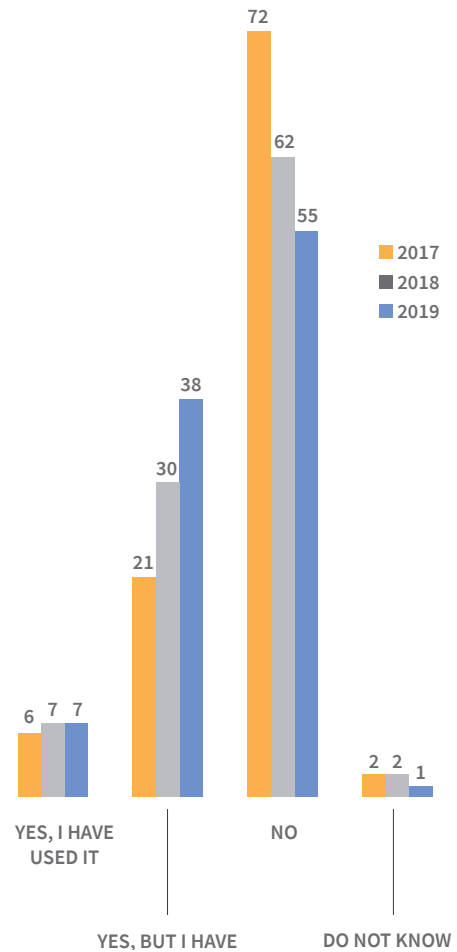
Base: Total target population.

Public administration websites

An increase in the share of citizens who were aware of the existence of the public administration e-portal was recorded from one year to the next over the past three years. The share of those who were not familiar with the portal was on the decline throughout that period, and the share of those who reported that they had heard about it but not used it was on the rise, with no changes registered with regard to the share of those using the portal. This prompts the conclusion that **the level of awareness of the e-portal increased somewhat, but its use did not increase significantly.** Also, while better awareness was recorded across all groups of citizens, it was most noticeable among those older than 45 years of age and those with secondary education.

The e-portal was used more frequently by the employed than those with alternative employment status, as well as by those aged 30-44, those with college or university education and those with higher incomes (above €200 per household member).

Finally, with regard to the contents of the e-government portal, all citizens reported being able to fully or partially access the service or information required, with no reports of failed access. Namely, two-thirds of citizens reported being fully successful, while one-third reported being partially successful in gaining such access; no significant differences were recorded across different demographic groups.

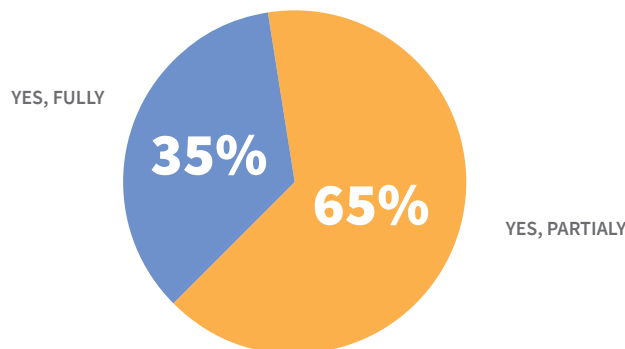


Graph 11: Awareness of the e-government portal

Are you aware of the existence of e-government portal? Base: Total target population.

Graph 12: E-government portal contents (2019)

Were you successful in accessing the service of information you required via the e-government portal? Base: The respondents familiar with the existence of the portal.



[Institute Alternative \(IA\)](#) is a non-governmental organization, established in September 2007 by a group of citizens with experience in civil society, public administration and business sector.

[Our mission](#) is to contribute to strengthening of democracy and good governance through and policy analysis as well as monitoring of public institutions performance.

[Our objectives](#) are to increase the quality of work, accountability and transparency, efficiency of public institutions and public officials; to encourage open, public, constructive and well-argument discussions on important policy issues; raising public awareness about important policy issues, strengthening the capacity of all sectors in the state and society for the development of public policies.

[The values](#) we follow in our work are dedication to our mission, independence, constant learning, networking, cooperation and teamwork.

We function as a [think tank](#) or a research centre, focusing on the overarching areas of good governance, transparency and accountability.

On the basis of our five programmes, we monitor the process of accession negotiations with the EU, actively participating in working groups Public procurement (5), Judiciary and Fundamental rights (23) and Financial control (32). Our flagship project is the Public Policy School, which is organized since 2012, and in 2018 we organized the first Open Budget School.

So far we cooperated with over 40 organizations within regional networks in the Western Balkans and with over 100 organizations in Montenegro. Institute is actively engaged in regional networks: Think for Europe (TEN), Pointpulse, SELDI, WeBER, UNCAC Coalition, Global BTAP, PASOS and The Southeast Europe Coalition on Whistleblower Protection.

The results of our research are summarized in 107 studies, reports and analyses, and the decision-makers were addressed 1036 recommendations. Over four thousand times we communicated our proposals and recommendation to the media for better quality public policies.

We started three internet pages. [My town](#) is a pioneer endeavour of visualization of budgetary data of local self-administrations. [My Administration](#) followed, which serves as an address for all those citizens that have encountered a problem when interacting with public administration and its service delivery system. The newest internet portal, [My Money](#), provided national budget data visualization.

Institute Alternative regularly publishes information about finances, projects and donors that support the work of the organization. For this reason, the Institute have five-stars rating third year in a row, according to a survey conducted by the international non-profit organization Transparify, which evaluates transparency for over 200 research centers.

President of the Managing Board is Stevo Muk, and our organization currently has ten members.
