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Public Service and Human Resource Management

Digital Transformation of Civil-Service Job Applications: Transition to Electronic Submission at the State Level

Introduction: A Rare, Tangible Step in Administrative Modernization

For years, applying for state-level civil-service positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina required candidates to assemble large printed portfolios, certify documents, and rely on postal delivery — a process that imposed disproportionate financial and logistical burdens on applicants outside major urban areas. The cost of participating often outweighed the challenge of proving merit.

The introduction of electronic applications through konkursi.ads.gov.ba marks a decisive shift away from this exclusionary model. Candidates can now create a unified digital profile, upload documentation electronically, and receive instant, time-stamped confirmation of submission. This eliminates postal uncertainty and removes a long-standing cost barrier that filtered out many qualified applicants before competition even began.

By modernizing only the intake stage, the Civil Service Agency has aligned recruitment with contemporary digital-governance standards without altering evaluation procedures. Yet the impact is significant: applying is now remote, predictable, and financially neutral. The reform improves the point of interaction citizens experience

most directly — the act of submitting a job application — and restores fairness by ensuring that competition entry depends on qualifications rather than wallet size or geographic proximity.

The reform makes applying for civil-service jobs accessible to all by eliminating the financial and logistical burdens that once filtered out qualified candidates.

What Changed: The Intake Model, Not the Entire Procedure

The reform introduced by the Civil Service Agency modernizes only one component of the recruitment cycle — the application intake stage — but it meaningfully re-shapes how candidates access public-sector competitions. Until recently, applicants were required to print extensive documentation, certify copies, and submit their portfolios by mail or in person, creating unequal opportunity costs well before their

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qualifications were assessed.

The new system requires candidates to register a MojKonkurs profile, which serves as a unified digital identity for all state-level vacancy announcements. Applicants can upload identification documents, diplomas, declarations, and standardized electronic forms, replacing the need for paper-based submissions. Importantly, digital submission produces an automatic timestamp, eliminating risks associated with delayed delivery, lost envelopes, or unclear receipt deadlines.

This change reduces both direct costs (printing, postage) and indirect burdens (travel, time off work, access to administrative counters) that previously discouraged participation. While the reform does not alter exam formats, committee discretion, or selection procedures, it removes the logistical barriers that disproportionately filtered out candidates at the very moment competition was meant to begin.

By digitalizing access rather than evaluation, the system delivers a practical and immediate improvement: applicants can now enter competition from any municipality, at any time, without depending on physical infrastructure or postal reliability. It is a targeted reform with broad effects — making the recruitment process more accessible, consistent, and operationally efficient.

The reform digitalizes access to competition, cutting logistical burdens without changing how candidates are evaluated.

Reform Impact: Application is No Longer a Cost-Driven Filter

The shift to electronic submission fundamentally alters the economics and logistics of applying for civil-service positions. Under the previous model, applicants routinely incurred costs for printing, certifying, mailing, and repeatedly preparing documentation — expenses that discouraged participation long before candidates' qualifications were considered. These financial and logistical requirements acted as silent fil-

ters, disproportionately excluding individuals with fewer resources or those living far from administrative centers.

By removing the need for physical portfolios and postal delivery, the new system eliminates direct costs and reduces indirect burdens such as travel, time off work, and reliance on notary or postal infrastructure. Automatic timestamped confirmations replace the uncertainties associated with delayed or lost mail, ensuring that eligibility depends on timely submission rather than external logistical factors.

The reform also introduces efficiency and sustainability benefits within public administration. Less paper handling lowers administrative workload and aligns recruitment processes with broader environmental objectives. More importantly, it strengthens the dignity and predictability of the application experience: candidates can apply remotely, quickly, and without fear that avoidable costs or unreliable delivery will jeopardize their participation.

In effect, the reform neutralizes the financial and infrastructural inequalities embedded in the prior system. For the first time, applying to a state-level competition in Bosnia and Herzegovina is no longer shaped by cost calculations or postal risks but by an applicant's willingness and ability to submit a complete digital file.

By eliminating printing, certification, and postal requirements, the digital system dismantles the cost-driven exclusion that once shaped who could even enter competition.

Why This Matters: Applicants Compete, Regardless of Their Wallet

This reform addresses a long-standing contradiction in Bosnia and Herzegovina's civil-service recruitment system: while equal access to public employment was guaranteed in law, the cost of applying made genuine equality impossible in practice. By digitalizing the submission process through the MojKonkurs system, the Civil Service Agency effectively removes the financial and logistical filter that shaped who could participate in competitions.

Electronic submission ensures that competition begins from a position of equity. Candidates no longer need to rely on printers, postal services, courier delivery, or certified documentation obtained in person. Instead, application is instant, remote, and cost-neutral, allowing individuals from all municipalities and socioeconomic backgrounds to enter competition on comparable terms.

This change is particularly significant for young professionals and first-time applicants, who often viewed state-level vacancies as more expensive and burdensome to apply for than private-sector jobs. By eliminating the upfront financial barrier, the reform broadens the pool of prospective candidates and reduces the likelihood that individuals self-exclude because the application process itself is too costly.

Although the reform does not modify examination structures or committee practices, its value lies in strengthening the fairness of the starting point. Every eligible candidate can now apply without calculating whether participation is financially feasible. In doing so, the reform restores credibility to the principle that recruitment to public service should be open to all — regardless of their wallet or where they live.

The reform makes civil-service competition genuinely accessible by ensuring that applicants compete on merit, not on the size of their wallet.

Conclusion: Digital Convenience is a Win, Even If Not a Merit Cure

The transition to fully electronic civil-service applications through konkursi.ads.gov.ba represents one of the most practical and visible modernization steps introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina's public administration in recent years. By removing the financial and logistical burdens traditionally associated with applying, the reform improves the experience of every candidate long before merit assessments begin. Application is now faster, more predictable, and accessible from any location, allowing a broader and more diverse pool of individuals to compete for public-sector positions.

This shift does not address deeper structural challenges in the recruitment system — such as the integrity of evaluation procedures, the consistency of competency testing, or the discretion of selection committees — nor was it intended to do so. Its contribution lies in correcting a foundational inequity in the recruitment process: the exclusion of candidates based on their capacity to afford the act of applying.

The reform also generates administrative benefits. Reduced paper handling eases the workload of HR departments, supports sustainability goals, and signals a broader readiness for continued digital transformation across the public sector. It demonstrates that meaningful administrative improvements do not always require sweeping reforms; incremental, highly visible steps can deliver real equity gains in areas citizens interact with most directly.

Looking forward, the digital intake system provides a platform on which more substantive reforms can be built — from strengthening competency-based assessments to introducing auditable digital evaluation records. Yet even in its current scope, the reform achieves something essential: it ensures that entering state-level competition is no longer conditioned by personal finances, postal reliability, or geographic constraints, but by an applicant's qualifications and willingness to compete.

While not a cure for deeper meritocracy issues, the reform corrects a core inequity by ensuring that access to civil-service competition no longer depends on a candidate's resources.

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