



SIGMA

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TELEWORKING SURVEY: LEARNING FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Sample questionnaire to analyse employee perceptions

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SIGMA in co-operation with the European Policy Centre (Belgrade)¹ developed a questionnaire to identify the greatest challenges and benefits civil servants are facing while working remotely in order to examine the possibilities for improving working conditions in Serbian administration. Since almost all countries are fighting with similar issues, we have made the questionnaire available for anyone who would be interested in conducting a similar study in their administration. The questionnaire is rather generic and can be replicated easily in public services of other countries or even within single organisations.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced most public administration bodies to quickly re-organise their work by introducing different modes of working. The confinement measures created an opportunity to examine the potential of institutionalising more flexible work arrangements for civil servants, giving them greater scheduling freedom in how they fulfil the obligations of their positions. Administrations have a variety of work arrangements at their disposal, including flexplace (teleworking, working from home or some other place out of office), flextime, part-time, compressed workweek, etc.

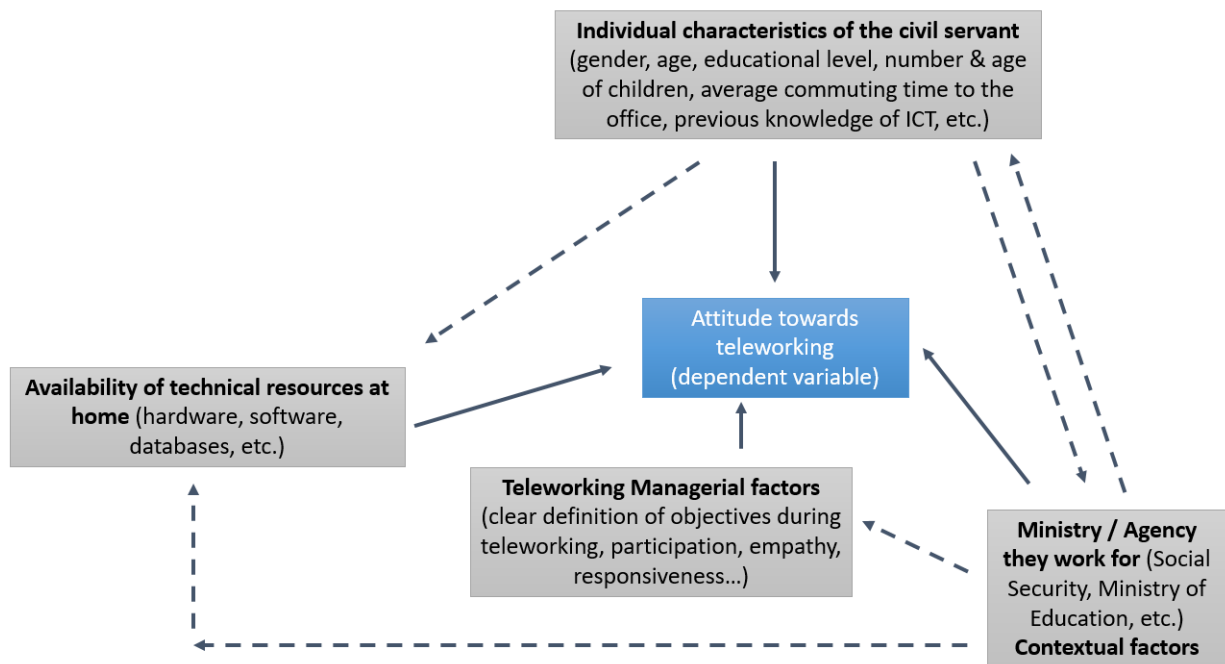


Figure 1: Analytical model

Until the coronavirus crisis, the take up of these options has been modest in many administrations and more conventional ways of working have been preferred. The current environment has created an opportunity for shifting the traditional administrative thinking and opened space for more innovation in handling challenges. Regardless of how the crisis ends, it is clear that teleworking is here to stay in one form or another.

Practicing teleworking for the first time at this scale, both civil servants and managers (head of institutions and senior civil servants) have faced new challenges in their work, such as lack of face-to-face communication and availability of colleagues, poor internet connection, lack of office materials and equipment (e.g. scanner, printer, etc.), distractions coming from childcare needs or planning groceries to avoid curfew hours, etc. Nevertheless, the new circumstances opened many potential benefits like improved work-life balance, saving time on commuting to work, and no long hours in the office. This can reduce stress which, in turn, may positively impact not only employees' satisfaction, but also their productivity.

The main objective of the questionnaire is to study the attitudes of civil servants towards teleworking based on different independent variables: individual characteristics of civil servants, availability of the technical equipment at home; managerial factors; and organisational characteristics (Figure 1). It is also

¹ Very useful contributions in developing the questionnaire were also made by José M. Díaz Pulido and Linda Ait Ameur.

possible to adapt the questionnaire for your organisation by bringing in some additional variables or removing existing ones.

The questionnaire can be complemented with other analytical tools like **desk research** analysing the existing legal acts regulating the teleworking area, good practices of the organisations applying these methods, recommendations of international organisations etc. Some areas can be further analysed by employing more **qualitative tools** like semi-structured interviews and focus groups to get a better understanding of attitudes towards teleworking from different perspectives.

It is important that the results of the survey together with the information obtained through other means is used to develop recommendations for improvement of both legal framework and practice to enable public administration to deal better with potential similar crises in the future (short-term impact). Moreover, the study allows proposing the best methods for possible introduction of more flexible work arrangements for civil servants as an integral part of HRM policy and work-life balance aspirations (long-term impact). Therefore, identifying both advantages and disadvantages of teleworking could open a discussion on potential introduction of more flexible work arrangements for civil servants as an integral part of HRM policy.

LEARNING FROM COVID-19 CRISIS: MORE FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey! Your contribution will help us better understand how to improve work conditions for civil servants in [insert country/organisation]

The purpose of this survey is to gain insight into challenges and benefits that you as a civil servant have faced while teleworking during the Covid-19 pandemic. By teleworking (remote work) we imply organising and performing your work using information technologies, where work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis. Additionally, the survey aims to identify possibilities and opportunities for introducing more flexibility into civil service work arrangements in the future.

The survey is prepared and run by SIGMA/OECD as part of the support project for [insert organisation]

The survey is distributed to all civil servants in state administration and it should take no more than **15 minutes** to fill it out. **The survey is fully anonymous and your answers will not be traced back to you.**

Your opinion is invaluable to us and results of this study will be used by the [insert organisation] to improve work conditions in the state administration according to your needs.

P1. Please select the state administration body you currently work in:

Drop down menu... with option Other

P2. During the state of emergency (15th of March - 6th of May), how many working days in total did you work remotely:

0 days (I had no experience working remotely)	1-5 working days	6-10 working days	11-20 working days	More than 20 days
1	2	3	4	5

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P2** IS „0 days“, MOVE TO QUESTION **P38**

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P2** IS NOT „0 days“, MOVE TO QUESTIONS **P3**

YOUR EXPERIENCES AND PREFERENCES REGARDING TELEWORKING

/RETURN TO BRANCHING OF QUESTIONS DETERMINED BY **P2**; MOVE TO **P3**

P3. How would you describe your experience with remote working?

Very negative	Negative	Neither positive nor negative	Positive	Very positive
1	2	3	4	5

P4. How productive were you while teleworking?

Substantially less than usual	Somewhat less than usual	Same as usual	Somewhat more than usual	Substantially more than usual
1	2	3	4	5

P5. What was your workload while teleworking during the state of emergency?

I had no work at all	Much smaller than usual	Somewhat smaller than usual	Same as usual	Somewhat larger than usual	Much larger than usual
1	2	3	4	5	6

P6. With respect to the period of remote working, please indicate how difficult or easy you found the following:

Statements	Very difficult	Moderately difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Mostly easy	Very easy
P6a. Balancing of work and personal life	1	2	3	4	5
P6b. Setting fixed working hours (e.g. not working longer than usual)	1	2	3	4	5
P6c. Making regular breaks during work	1	2	3	4	5
P6d. Working in social isolation	1	2	3	4	5
P6e. Dealing with anxiety about Covid-19	1	2	3	4	5

P7. In your opinion, to what extent did the Covid-19 pandemic and the state of emergency affect the functioning of **your institution**?

The functioning was severely disrupted	There were minor disruptions	There were no changes in functioning	The functioning somewhat improved	The functioning significantly improved	<i>Do not know/I have no opinion</i>
1	2	3	4	5	99

P8. Do you think the introduction of the possibility of remote working in the future will:

Significantly deteriorate the functioning of your institution?	Somewhat deteriorate the functioning of your institution?	Neither improve nor deteriorate the functioning of your institution?	Somewhat improve functioning of your institution?	Significantly improve functioning of your institution?	<i>Do not know/I have no opinion</i>
1	2	3	4	5	99

P9. How would you prefer to organise your work in the future, after the crisis?

Complete absence of teleworking	Some teleworking days per month	Approximately half of working days in a month teleworking	Somewhat more than half a month of teleworking	Full or nearly full-time teleworking
1	2	3	4	5

P10. Using the scale below, please indicate how important for you personally are the following aspects of remote working (teleworking) in general:

Statements	Completely unimportant				Extremely important
P10a. Possibility to organise my own working hours	1	2	3	4	5
P10b. Possibility to use video-conferencing rather than in-person meetings	1	2	3	4	5
P10c. Opportunity not to commute every day to my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
P10d. Opportunity to spend less time every day getting ready for work	1	2	3	4	5
P10e. Possibility to reduce the number of business trips.	1	2	3	4	5
P10f. Opportunity to spend more time with family and/or pets	1	2	3	4	5

CONDITIONS FOR TELEWORKING AT HOME

P11. Do you have access to the basic equipment necessary for remote working (e.g. access to a laptop/desktop, webcam, microphone)

- a. Yes 1
b. No 2

P12. Please compare the working conditions at your regular workplace to the following aspects of your living space used for remote working:

Statements	Much worse	Somewhat worse	Approximately the same	Somewhat better	Much better
P12a. Arrangement of workspace at home (e.g. having a working desk, the position of the desk, having a working chair, position of the computer, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
P12cb. Lighting in your home working space	1	2	3	4	5
P12c. Noise levels around your home working space	1	2	3	4	5

P13. Do you have a separate room for working available at home?

- a. Yes 1
- b. No 2

P14. How many minutes typically does it take you to commute between home and work (in one direction)?

- a. _____

P15. Considering your circumstances while teleworking during the state of emergency, please indicate how frequently you faced the problems with the following:

Statements	All the time	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
P15a. The Internet service	1	2	3	4	5
P15b. The access to office supplies/materials (e.g. paper, scanners, staplers, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
P15c. Software (programs) used for teleworking	1	2	3	4	5
P15d. Computer/laptop used for teleworking	1	2	3	4	5

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P15c** AND/OR **P15d** IS NOT „Never” MOVE TO QUESTION **P16**

/FOR OTHER ANSWERS MOVE TO QUESTION **P17**

P16. Did you receive any support from your employer in the case of the malfunction of the hardware or software necessary for remote working (e.g. advice how to fix problems with programs, or with equipment such as laptop or headphones, etc.)

- a. Yes 1
- b. No 2

/RETURN TO BRANCHING OF QUESTIONS DETERMINED BY **P2**; MOVE TO **P17**

P17. Did you have to take care of any children below 12 or/and elderly or/and a person with disability during your teleworking hours?

- a. Yes 1
- b. No 2

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P17** IS “Yes”, MOVE TO THE NEXT QUESTION **P18**

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P17** IS “No”, MOVE TO THE QUESTION **P19**

P18. Using the scale below, please indicate what was the effect of the presence of the children and/or elderly or/and persons with a disability in your home on your performance and productivity while you were teleworking.

Extremely distracting					Not distracting at all	
1	2	3	4	5		

/RETURN TO BRANCHING OF QUESTIONS DETERMINED BY P2; MOVE TO P19

P19. Using the scale below, please indicate how concerned are you about the effect of Covid-19 on your personal health?

Extremely concerned					Not concerned at all	
1	2	3	4	5		

JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES

P20. Please use the scale below to rank your technical/IT skills necessary to effectively telework:

Unsatisfactory skills	Satisfactory skills	Good skills	Very good skills	Excellent skills
1	2	3	4	5

P21. Please use the scale below to rank technical/IT skills of **your colleagues** necessary to effectively telework:

Unsatisfactory skills	Satisfactory skills	Good skills	Very good skills	Excellent skills
1	2	3	4	5

P22. Please use the scale below to rank technical/IT skills of **your clients** with respect to filing in the requests electronically or using e-government.

Unsatisfactory skills	Satisfactory skills	Good skills	Very good skills	Excellent skills	<i>Do not work with citizens or businesses</i>
1	2	3	4	5	99

P23. Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Statements	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	<i>Does not apply to me/ I do not know</i>
P23a. My working tasks cannot be done remotely because legally prescribed administrative procedures do not allow for it	1	2	3	4	5	99
P23b. Due to the lack of digitalisation, I have had problems with accessing information and documents	1	2	3	4	5	99

necessary to perform my working tasks						
P23c. Due to remote working, I have had problems in providing information and services to interested citizens or businesses	1	2	3	4	5	99

P24. What part of your daily working tasks can you complete using just your computer?					
None of the tasks	Some of the tasks	About half of the tasks	Majority of the tasks	All of the tasks	
1	2	3	4	5	

P25. Which channel did you use mostly BEFORE the period of the state of emergency and confinement to serve citizens or businesses?					
a. Face-to-face at the public sector office					1
b. By Phone		2			
c. By e-mail		3			
d. By using software custom made for my institution				4	
e. My job does not include direct contact with citizens or businesses					5

P26. Which channel did you use mostly DURING the period of the state of emergency and confinement to serve citizens or businesses?					
a. Face-to-face at the public sector office					1
b. By Phone		2			
c. By e-mail		3			
d. By using software custom made for my institution				4	
e. My job does not include direct contact with citizens or businesses					5

P27. Please indicate how frequently you were using the following channels BEFORE Covid-19 to interact with your colleagues/managers in order to complete your job duties?					
Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
P27a. Face-to-face at the office	1	2	3	4	5
P27b. Phone calls	1	2	3	4	5
P27c. E-mail communication	1	2	3	4	5
P27d. One to one and/or group chats (e.g. using Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger)	1	2	3	4	5
P27e. Online video conferencing/meetings (e.g. via Skype, Zoom)	1	2	3	4	5
P27f. Online collaboration and cooperation including document sharing and online teamwork (for example, using Microsoft Teams, Trello)	1	2	3	4	5

P28. Please indicate how frequently you were using the following channels **DURING** Covid-19 to interact with your colleagues/managers in order to complete your job duties?

Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
P28a. Face-to-face at the office	1	2	3	4	5
P28b. E-mail communication	1	2	3	4	5
P28c. Phone calls	1	2	3	4	5
P28d. One to one or group chats (e.g. via Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger)	1	2	3	4	5
P27e. Online video conferencing/meetings (e.g. via Skype, Zoom)	1	2	3	4	5
P27f. Online collaboration and cooperation including document sharing and online teamwork (for example, using Microsoft Teams, Trello)	1	2	3	4	5

P29. Please indicate up to three tools you used most frequently during the state of emergency to share office documents (allow 3 answers):

- a. Official government e-mail account
- b. Personal email account (Gmail, Yahoo! mail, or other)
- c. Google drive
- d. Dropbox
- e. Microsoft Teams
- f. Software custom made for my institution
- g. Other (write-in answer)

P30. Using the scale below, please indicate how concerned you were about security of data and documents while teleworking?

Extremely concerned				Not concerned at all	
1	2	3	4	5	

P31. With how many colleagues from your institution do you work on an everyday basis?

I work independently/alone.	I work in a small team of people (2-10).	I work in a large team of people (more than 10).
1	2	3

P32. Please, let us know, on average, how much time daily did you spend in online meetings while teleworking during the state of emergency?

No time at all	30 minutes or less per day	More than 30 minutes but less than 1 hour per day	More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours per day	2 or more hours per day
1	2	3	4	5

P33. How satisfied are you with respect to the length of the online meetings?

Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

P34. In comparison to the time spent in meetings before the state of emergency, please, let us know how much time did you spend in online meetings while teleworking during the state of emergency?

Much more time than before	Somewhat more time than before	More or less the same amount of time	Somewhat less time than before	Much less time than before
1	2	3	4	5

MANAGERIAL FACTORS OF TELEWORKING

P35. Considering your experience with remote working during the state of emergency, please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Statements	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
P35a. My manager provided me with regular feedback on my work performance and tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
P35b. My manager gave me clear tasks and deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
P35c. My manager trusted me and did not impose any additional supervising procedures on me	1	2	3	4	5
P35d. My manager communicated clearly the work conditions for remote working (e.g. when to be available for calls, how to report working hours, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
P35e. My manager required of me to be permanently available during working hours	1	2	3	4	5

P36. Please let us know about the following:

Statements	Yes	No
P36a. Did your employer provide you with any training or advice on remote working (teleworking)?	1	2
P36b. Did your employer provide you with any hardware for remote working (e.g. laptops, tablets, etc.)?	1	2
P36c. Did your employer recommend or provide you with any software for remote working (e.g. Microsoft Teams)?	1	2

P36d. Did your employer compensate any additional costs of remote work, which you didn't have before (e.g. internet)?	1	2
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P37. Considering your experience, please assess the effect of remote working (teleworking) on the following aspects of your working life:

Statements	Very negative effect	Somewhat negative effect	Neither negative nor positive effect	Somewhat positive effect	Very positive effect
P37a. Coordination between management and the employees	1	2	3	4	5
P37b. Coordination of work tasks with your colleagues and team members	1	2	3	4	5
P37c. Coordination between different institutions of government (e.g. between ministries)	1	2	3	4	5

QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT TELEWORK

IF THE ANSWER TO **P2** WAS „0 days”, MOVE TO THE NEXT QUESTION **P38**

P38. Please let us know about the reasons you did not telework during the state of emergency:

a. I was requested by my superiors to work at the office	1
b. My job involves provision of services which could not be provided remotely	2
c. I requested myself and was granted permission to work at the office	3
d. Other (please specify)	4

P39. How would you like to organize your work in the future (after the Covid-19 crisis)?

Complete absence of teleworking	Some teleworking days per month	Approximately half of working days in a month teleworking	Somewhat more than half a month of teleworking	Full or nearly full-time teleworking
1	2	3	4	5

QUESTIONS FOR MANAGERS

/THIS QUESTION FOLLOWS EITHER **P37** OR **P39**

P40. Please indicate if you are occupying a managerial or a non-managerial role.

a. Managerial role	1
b. Non-managerial role	2

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P40** IS “Managerial role” MOVE TO THE QUESTION **P41**

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P40** IS “Non-managerial role” MOVE TO THE QUESTION **P46** (DEMOGRAPHICS)

P41. Did you manage a teleworking team?

- a. Yes 1
b. No 2

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P41** IS "Yes" MOVE TO THE NEXT QUESTION **P42**

/IF THE ANSWER TO **P41** IS "No" MOVE TO THE QUESTION **P46** (DEMOGRAPHICS)

P42. In your experience, to what extent it was difficult to manage workers who were teleworking

Very difficult	Moderately difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Mostly easy	Very easy
1	2	3	4	5

P43. Did you receive any training, tutorials or advice from your institution on how to organise remote working of your employees?

- a. Yes 1
b. No 2

P44. Did you receive the any technical support for organising teleworking of your employees (e.g. ensuring required software)?

- a. Yes 1
b. No 2

P45. Using the scale below please indicate how important are the following conditions for successfully managing your team through teleworking in the future:

Statements	Completely unimportant					Extremely important
P45a. Improved online document management system	1	2	3	4	5	
P45b. Training of management on topics such as managing of remote teams, digital skills, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	
P45c. Training of your employees on topics such as online conferencing, file sharing, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	
P45d. Software for managing teams remotely	1	2	3	4	5	

DEMOGRAPHICS

/REMOVE ALL BRANCHING

P46. What is your gender?

- a. Male
b. Female

P47. What is your year of birth?

a. _____

P48. Considering your education, what is your highest obtained degree?

- a. **Elementary school degree**
- b. **High school degree**
- c. **University education degree or higher**