

## 13.1 Identifying and proactively attracting public servants

Sudden and highly complex policy challenges call for a skilled workforce. The public sector is increasingly competing for professionals, which requires a strategic approach to attracting talent. To proactively attract the right talent, governments must first identify the profile of the employees they need as part of the recruitment process, and then use targeted strategies tailored to recruiting in-demand skill sets. At the same time, they should also foster appealing work environments and well-defined career opportunities to broaden their appeal to a wider range of potential applicants and enhance both the diversity and calibre of the candidate pool.

When recruiting, governments need to identify the skills needed to meet the challenges encountered in modern-day public administration. The OECD has introduced a composite index to assess the use of proactive practices and tools for recruiting skilled candidates (OECD, 2021). These tools help employers to understand the job market and the driving factors that lead candidates to apply for public service roles and also allow governments to reach out to groups they want to recruit through tailored strategies. The index also considers governments' capacity to align with prevailing market wages. On average, Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, make less use of proactive recruitment practices (scoring 0.27 on the index) than OECD countries (0.45). Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico are at the forefront on this measure (Figure 13.1).

Governments often need to use tailored recruitment processes to secure the right candidates. Among LAC countries, the most common approach to reaching sought-after candidates is targeted communication campaigns through newspapers or social media, used by 7 out of 15 countries (47%). In contrast, only Chile, Colombia and Ecuador use headhunting services to source talent for public sector positions. Similarly, just three countries – Barbados, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago – have a fast-track hiring process to recruit public servants whose skills are in high demand. In Brazil, for instance, the public sector has always been perceived as attractive employer, therefore entities do not employ any tools to broaden the potential pool of candidates. (Figure 13.2). LAC countries could benefit from making more use of tailored recruitment practices to attract public servants across the different levels of government, particularly those more with skills valued in the private sector, such as digital areas.

Positioning the public sector as an appealing place to work is another way to attract candidates. LAC countries highlight different benefits of jobs in the public administration,

showcasing their stability, competitive compensation and opportunities for career growth. Job security is the most frequently emphasised benefit among LAC countries, with 10 out of 15 countries (67%) explicitly highlighting it as an advantage. Social security benefits, such as health insurance and pension plans, are showcased by 8 of the 15 countries (53%). Other crucial factors such as career advancement, work-life balance, and access to learning and development programmes are highlighted in only 4 out of the 15 countries each (27%). Only three countries highlight a positive work environment as a key selling point (Figure 13.3).

### Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the 2022 OECD-IBD Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey completed by 15 LAC countries. Respondents are senior officials in central government human resource management (HRM) departments, and the data refer to HRM practices in central government.

The composite index is made up of the following aspects of proactive recruitment: 1) benefits highlighted in recruitment material; 2) policies to attract more and better candidates with in-demand skills; 3) the use of methods to determine what attracts skilled employees; 4) adequate pay systems to attract good candidates; and 5) use of actions to improve the representation of under-represented groups. The index ranges from 0 (no use of proactive recruitment practices) to 1 (high level of use of proactive recruitment practices). Further details on the composite index are available in Annex E.

### Further reading

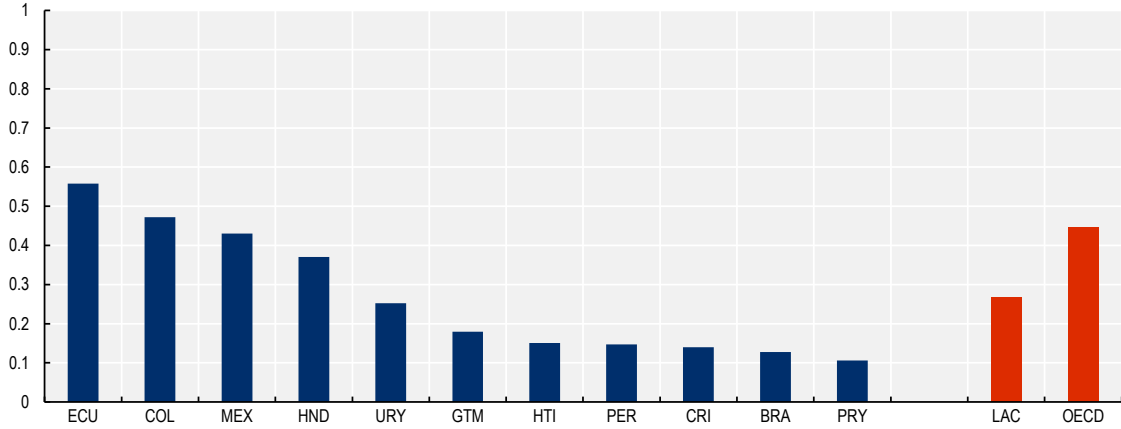
IDB (2014), *Serving Citizens: A Decade of Civil Service Reforms in Latin America (2004-2013)*, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC, <https://publications.iadb.org/en/serving-citizens-decade-civil-service-reforms-latin-america-2004-13>.

OECD (2021), *Public Employment and Management 2021: The Future of the Public Service*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/938f0d65-en>.

### Figure notes

Figure 13.1. Average for OECD is from 2020 instead of 2022. Barbados, Chile, El Salvador, and Trinidad and Tobago are not shown in the index, due to missing data for one or more of its components.

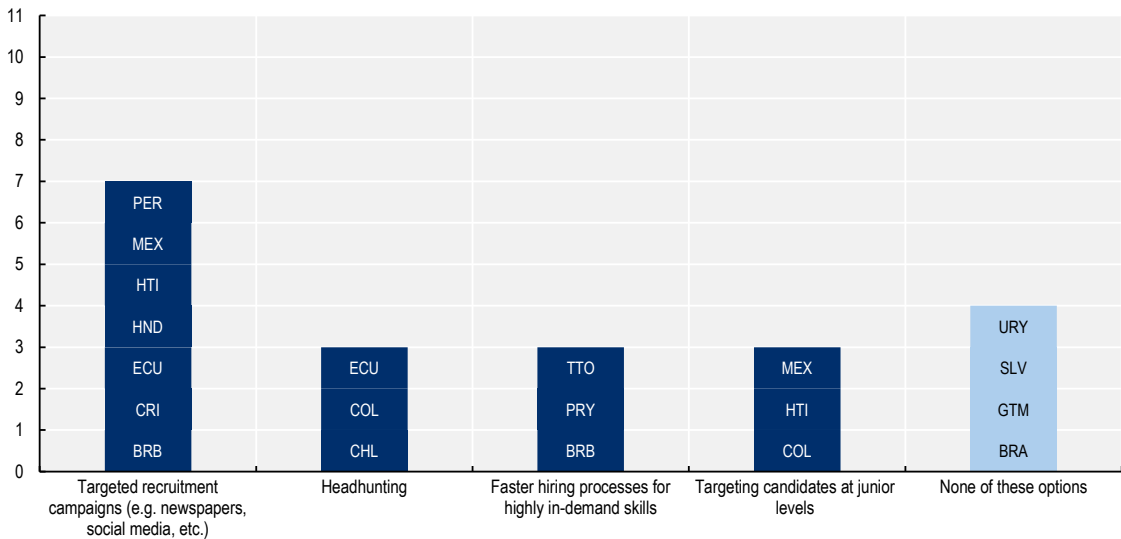
**Figure 13.1. Index on the use of proactive recruitment practices, 2022**



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey; OECD (2020), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/yanvxh>

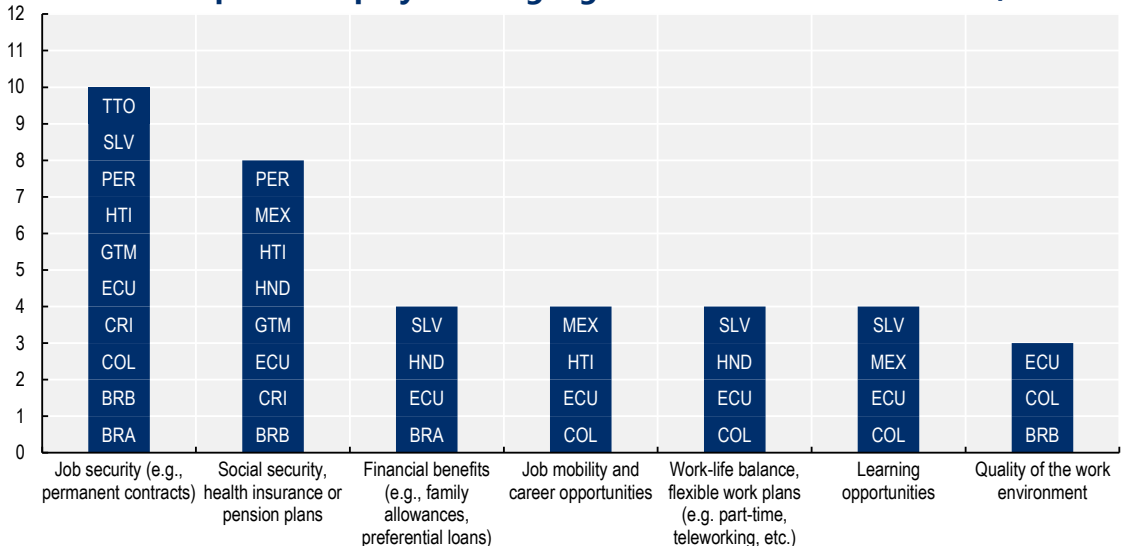
**Figure 13.2. Attracting talent and those with skills in high demand, 2022**



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/oq01pu>

**Figure 13.3. Benefits of public employment highlighted in recruitment material, 2022**



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/g3qmp8>



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