

RETLAMI-SEE

Deliverable 1.1 – Map of the research and RMA potentials at the Faculty of Political Sciences and UNIBL

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Table of Contents

List of abbreviations used in this document 4

1) Executive Summary 5

2) Introduction..... 6

3) Short Description of FPN and its Research Activities..... 6

4) Organization of Research and Research Infrastructures 8

 4.1) Departments 8

 4.2) Inter-/Multi-disciplinarity 9

 4.3) Mobility 10

 4.4) Quality Management 10

 4.5) Research Infrastructure 11

 4.6) Third Party Funding..... 11

5) Governance and Personnel 12

 5.1) Department and Faculty Councils..... 12

 5.2) Human Resources 12

 5.3) Gender and Diversity 13

6) Early Career Researchers 14

 6.1) Doctoral Studies..... 14

 6.2) Postdocs 16

7) Research Output (Publications)..... 16

 7.1) Publication Strategy 16

 7.2) Periodicals..... 17

 7.3) Publication Output..... 18

8) Summary: Challenges and Opportunities 19

Annexes..... 22



List of abbreviations used in this document

BAM – Bosnia and Herzegovina Convertible Mark

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

CEEPUS - Central European Exchange Program for University Studies

CEEOL – Central and Eastern European Online Library

CESPASWON - Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network

COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology

DOAJ – Directory of Open Access Journals

EHEA – European Higher Education Area

ERIH PLUS – European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences

ESCI - Emerging Sources Citation Index

FPN – Faculty of Political Science

PUB – Publikacije Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci

R&D Spending – Research and Development Spending

RMA – Research Management and Administration

RRI - Responsible Research and Innovation

RS – Republika Srpska (Republic of Srpska)

SCI – Science Citation Index

SSCI – Science Citation Index Expanded

SEE – Southeast Europe

SRB – Republic of Serbia

TEMPUS - Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies

UNIBL – University of Banja Luka

UNIBG – University of Belgrade

WoS – Web of Science



1) Executive Summary

The following assessment lays out the research and research management and administration (RMA) potentials of the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) at the University of Banja Luka (UNIBL), focusing on the period between 2019 and 2024. The analysis has been performed with the help of the following sources: a) a self-assessment report of FPN, based on a questionnaire; b) official documents, regulations, work plans, guidelines, and declarations of UNIBL; c) desk research on publication and research activities; d) interviews with twelve members of the Faculty and the University. The report explores four main areas of research and research management:

- 1) organization and funding of research and research infrastructures
- 2) governance and human resources including gender equality
- 3) support for early career researchers
- 4) research output, especially regarding publications

The report has identified several strengths of research activities at FPN, such as the joint organization of a multi-disciplinary annual conference on “Society and Politics,” which results in a regular publication. Another major achievement of FPN is the launch of the social sciences journal *Politeia*, in cooperation with a well-known political science research institute in Belgrade. FPN has a laudable commitment towards open access. FPN researchers have successfully worked on international projects, also with EU funding. As a relatively young institution – FPN was established in 2009 –, some of its researchers have gained already notable international visibility. While much of the research is still of a more local or regional relevance, FPN members work on themes that can be scaled up and could make important contributions to salient research debates, such as on labour, migration, demographic change, urban sociology, political language, and the consequences of war. While FPN does not have an explicit research agenda, there is apparently an implicit focus on questions of transformation which should be explicated.

Among the key weaknesses identified by this report is a lack of funding for research. The government does not provide substantial funds for project-based research and in general R&D spending in Republic of Srpska and BiH is insufficient. Some of the identified weaknesses stem from a lack of funds which for example makes internationalization – a key goal of UNIBL – difficult. Another shortcoming is the lack of programs to facilitate interdisciplinary research across the four departments of FPN and to strengthen cooperation with other faculties. This is evident also in the doctoral training school, which lacks a clear research mission. The report finds that FPN members too often publish in the faculty’s house journal, *Politeia*, whereas the number of article publications in international journals is insufficient, despite the interesting nature and good quality of research conducted at FPN.

The present analysis will serve as the basis for a Strategy and Action Plan for Enhancing the Research Profiles and RMA Skills, to be developed next. The Strategy and Action Plan will include recommendations how to better exploit and operationalize the existing research potential at FPN to generate more international visibility.



2) Introduction

This deliverable describes and analyses the research and research management and administration (RMA) potentials of the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) at the University of Banja Luka (UNIBL). To the extent necessary, the report situates the research activities in the framework of the overall strategy of the UNIBL, as laid down in its Development Strategy of 2017 (*Strategija razvoja Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci za period 2017-2025 godine*). Teaching activities are not part of the report, except for doctoral training (“third cycle studies”). For an assessment of teaching, we refer to the accreditation reports as well as the self-assessments of the study programs for the accreditation process.

The analysis has been performed through a self-assessment report by FPN based on a questionnaire (see annexes), supported by desk research, and the analysis of various documents by UNIBL such as work plans, regulations, policies and guidelines and the self-assessments of departments for re-accreditation. Moreover, the analysis includes insights from twelve interviews with full and associate professors of the faculty’s departments, four PhD candidates – one from each department –, two employees of the administration, the dean of FPN, and the vice-rector for science and research of UNIBL.

When assessing the research potential of FPN and any other public entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), it is important to keep in mind that BiH has a very poor record of research and development (R&D) spending. According to World Bank calculations, R&D spending in BiH amounts to only around 0.2% of GDP, which is very low even for regional standards. In BiH, funding for universities and research comes predominantly from the entities, in case of UNIBL the Republic of Srpska. The 2024 state budget of the Republic of Srpska allocates around 134 million BAM (EUR 68 million) to scientific and technological development and higher education, amounting to 2.3% of all state expenses and 0.8% of the entity’s GDP.¹

3) Short Description of FPN and its Research Activities

The **University of Banja Luka** (UNIBL), established in 1975, is the second largest university in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with more than 15,000 students, and the leading university in the Republic of Srpska. The **Faculty of Political Sciences** (FPN) is one of its sixteen faculties, established in 2009 by bundling the four study programs (departments) of Sociology, Social Work, Journalism and Communication Studies and Political Sciences under one roof.

In 2013, the *Institute for Social Research* was established as an additional sub-institutional unit beyond the four departments at FPN. Its mission was to offer opportunities for the best graduate students to develop their scholarly skills by participating in national, regional, and international projects. However, this interesting initiative is not operational anymore. Other additional sub-units

¹ Планови, програми и пројекти Буџет (Budget of the Republic of Srpska, 19/11/2024) (accessed 07/12/2024).



at the FPN are the *Centre for Federalist and International Studies*, the *Centre for Lifelong Learning*, and the *Centre for Social Policy*.

Currently (study year 2024/25), a total of 440 **students** are enrolled at the FPN, out of which 349 in undergraduate (B.A.), 74 in graduate (M.A.), and 28 in post-graduate (PhD) programs.² The faculty consists of 36 academic staff members (among them 21 professors), supported by 20 administrative staff members. However, none of these 20 people are particularly employed as “Research Management and Administration” (RMA) staff as this job description does not exist in BiH. FPN has been housed in a new, separate building with modernized premises on the UNIBL campus since 2013. Its library was supported by funds provided by the Office of the President of the Republic of Srpska. The premises, including office rooms and classrooms, have received positive evaluations by members of the FPN.

In its fifteen years of existence, FPN has been continuously enhancing its **research and teaching performance**. One of its major achievements was the establishment of the academic journal *Politea* in 2011. *Politea*, with two issues per year, is published jointly by FPN and the well-known *Institute for Political Studies* in Belgrade, Serbia. Another important joint activity of the FPN with international visibility is the annual international conference “Society and Politics”, launched in 2020. The conference is devoted to different themes, in line with research at the four departments of FPN. Selected papers of the conference are published in a proceeding's series, launched in 2021, under the same title as the conference.

FPN does not have its own **development strategy** but contributes to achieving the goals of the university-wide strategy, as laid down in UNIBL's 2017 nine years development plan. This strategy has prioritized “meeting of European standards” in all the university's work, i.e., teaching and research. The strategy commits the university (and its faculties) to train “internationally competent human resources”, based on the “highest international quality standards”. Apart from internationalization, the transfer of knowledge and technology, and functional integration of the different activities of the university to the benefit of social and economic development have been set as crucial goals. To facilitate international cooperation – as a frequently mentioned priority of UNIBL's strategy – the university has joined, among others, ERASMUS+, TEMPUS, and CEEPUS networks and projects.

FPN **cooperates** with manifold organizations and public institutions in the Republic of Srpska and BiH to regulate internships for its students. The most frequent and relevant international cooperation is with academic institutions from Serbia. Intense teaching cooperation has been established between the *Department for Political Science and the Faculty of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship* at the Ural University of the Russian Federation in Yekaterinburg since 2023. The Department of Social Work cooperates with various academic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe through the CESPASWON Network and with institutions in broader Europe through an ERASMUS+ project. But generally, there is relatively little cooperation with other regional universities (located in ex-Yugoslav countries). The most significant recent international academic cooperation by FPN was achieved by the Sociology Department in leading the RETLAMI-SEE Horizon

² Data as of 18 October 2024.



Europe project. The University supports international cooperation with an award for faculties, and the *Ministry for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education* funds participation in international conferences. Students with outstanding grades and significant research potential can receive scholarships through the "Milan Jelić Fond" which also can include participation in international conferences.

The **present assessment** takes the UNIBL strategy into account, evaluating FPN's contribution to it. This implies considering constraints under which FPN operates beyond its direct responsibility. UNIBL has, for example, identified various weaknesses, such as insufficient international recognition, "brain drain", insufficient material support by the state, weak command of foreign languages, a lack of research cooperation, a lack of third-party funds to develop new research projects, weak interest on the side of younger cadres to embark in a research career, and a lack of research monitoring, which invariably shape research also at FPN, but can hardly be solved by the Faculty alone.

4) Organization of Research and Research Infrastructures

FPN does not possess an explicit, faculty-wide **research agenda**. Research in general follows the individual expertise and interests of FPN researchers, organized in four departments, with collaborations according to their specific research and depending on the professional capacities of their department. The lack of a strategy by FPN to develop cross-departmental research and to support inter/multidisciplinary research can be seen as a limiting factor for the exploitation of FPN's full research potential. That such potential exists is shown by FPN's most visible joint endeavour, the journal *Politeia* (see below), but also by an emergent research group on Labour, Migration and Transformation.

4.1) Departments

Research at the Faculty is mainly organized within the four departments:

- (1) Research at the **Sociology Department** relates mostly to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with several important third party funded projects on migration from BiH and leadership behaviour in BiH (on a European level funded under Horizon Europe: RETLAMI-SEE; bilateral projects with the UK; and national-level projects with other partners in BiH). Department members are also participating in a second Horizon Europe project on energy consumption and energy poverty (ENPOWER). This project represents a crucial interdisciplinary endeavour connecting not only technical and social science research, but also enabling collaboration with the industry sector, public agencies, and civil society. The Department of Sociology, therefore, contributes importantly to the strategic goals of UNIBL (internationalization, transfer of knowledge).
- (2) Research at the **Political Science Department** in contrast is somewhat narrower, focusing on issues pertaining to politics in the Republic of Srpska. Important themes of its research are questions of sovereignty, federalism, and local self-governance, but also international relations and security. Department members are participating in the Jean Monnet Policy



Network (Erasmus+) project “ValEUs. Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy” led by the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. UNIBL is one of the 20 cooperating partner institutions in this project, which explores the foreign policy of the European Union and challenges posed to its values. The department contributes to the research of the “Republic’s Centre for Research on War, War Crimes and Missing Persons” in the form of the work by one teaching assistant assigned to the “Atlas of Crimes against Serbs during the Defensive-Patriotic War”. More research potential, however, lies in adding a comparative perspective to the other important research themes of the Political Science department and in fostering involvement in interdisciplinary research on labour and migration policies.

- (3) Research in **Journalism and Communication Studies** focuses on digital dimensions of media, thus addressing up-to-date questions, such as the protection of children on the internet and the development of digital skills among students (relating to media and information literacy, the use of artificial intelligence in education, the recognition of fake news, and ethical standards in the cyber world). Whereas the outreach activities of this department are comprehensive, no third party-funded nor international projects have been listed. We consider that a possible reason for this is the shortage of academic personnel in this department.
- (4) Research of the **Department of Social Work** has a clear practical direction. It tackles questions of regulating social work practices, social policy, values and entrepreneurial skills of social workers as well as questions of teaching social work. The department was part of an ERASMUS+ project and is very active within the CEEPUS program, more specifically in the “Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network” (CESPASWON) through which the department members contributed an article to the edited volume “Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe” published by Springer in March 2024. Such regional perspectives in the research of the FPN should be expanded.

4.2) Inter-/Multi-disciplinarity

Beyond the *Politeia* journals and the annual conference, which have a multi- or interdisciplinary profile, inter/multidisciplinary research has not been institutionalized at FPN. It is limited to individual efforts but there are no specific support structures or incentives in place to strengthen cross-disciplinary cooperation in research. Interdisciplinary research often requires more communication and more preparation to find common ground and a joint language, which might conflict with the other tasks of the FPN’s academic personnel (especially their teaching load). Only at the Department for Sociology can a stronger inclination towards multidisciplinary work be detected, such as in joint work on labour and migration. Given the complexity of the themes addressed by the FPN researchers, we believe that more cross-disciplinary cooperation is warranted as these problems need to be addressed from different perspectives and with different methodologies. FPN has the potential and the great advantage of people working under the same roof (physically and institutionally), which is why FPN should initiate a process to match researchers from different disciplines and to incentivize such cooperation. Interdisciplinary projects would also help to strengthen the participation of FPN researchers in international projects and platforms, for example by contributing relevant case studies.



Another reason for the absence of multidisciplinary research efforts is the lack of funding by the state. Even though the *Ministry for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education* of the Republic of Srpska has calls for applications to fund national research projects, it provides only very modest project financing on a short-term basis (usually granted for only one year). Such funding is neither appropriate for more complicated interdisciplinary endeavours, nor commensurate with the specific time horizons of research projects. We are not aware of any seed funds programs, which generally are a useful instrument to incentivize and support new cooperation with relatively modest investments.

4.3) Mobility

UNIBL has set further internationalization as one of the key goals of its current strategy, which applies also to FPN. At the same time, the university assesses current levels of international mobility as insufficient. In our opinion, this pertains also to FPN. The mobility of students and faculty staff is generally very low although the importance of gaining more international experience has been emphasized in the interviews. Insufficient finances are one constraint but not the only reason. There seems to be little in terms of a culture of mobility and clear incentives to go abroad. International experience does not seem to be particularly valued and acknowledged. International mobility is not compulsory in any study program at FPN. Often, language skills are not sufficient, nor is the administrative and financial support for international exchange. Students from abroad who come to study at FPN are either from Serbia or from Russia and their number is in the single digits, as is the number of outgoing students. It was stated in the interviews with FPN members that the international mobility of faculty staff is higher than of the students, but still relatively modest. This is certainly an area where change is warranted. FPN could, for example, strengthen its ties with similar institutions in the other successor states of Yugoslavia and institutions in nearby states, such as Austria and Hungary, and more systematically utilize European programmes.

4.4) Quality Management

FPN does not have an advisory board (like most other faculties anywhere). It undergoes a regular self-evaluation process for the purpose of the (re-)accreditation of its Study Programmes. In addition to that, there is a regular reporting related to the quality indicators in line with the “Quality Assurance Policy” of the University, which is the basic document for establishing, monitoring, and improving the quality of research and teaching at the UNIBL, adopted in 2023. It stresses the aim to comply with European quality standards as part of the *European Higher Education Area* (EHEA) and to improve international cooperation. For that, for instance, UNIBL has created a list of subjects that can be taught in English to attract foreign students. The UNIBL reports annually on the achievement of the goals set in its annual work plan. The 2024 work plan enumerated 185 activities, yet without any prioritization or thematic clustering. Such a work-plan might lead to a mechanic “ticking of the boxes”.

The University lacks clearly established procedures to safeguard Good Scientific Practice, even though it has a code of ethical professional behaviour. There is no ombudsperson to monitor Good



Scientific Practice and to assess suspected misconduct. Neither does the University offer training or awareness measures in this regard.

The University has an Ethics Committee to which the FPN refers as well. Through the H2020 project “Embedding RRI in Western Balkan Countries: Enhancement of Self-Sustaining R&I Ecosystems” (2021-2024), there were attempts to establish the “Community of Practice on Academic Integrity” which would work on bottom-up solutions for ensuring research ethics, but it has not been institutionalized so far.

4.5) Research Infrastructure

The University maintains libraries with over 200,000 books and many scientific magazines subscriptions – which seem to be little used according to information provided by respondents. There is a lack of access to electronic resources provided by the University/Faculty, so that researchers are using different approaches to accessing literature. While the main problem here is a lack of finances, there also seems to be a lack of communication between librarians and researchers. A similar lack of strategic foresight is visible in the sphere of research data management. There is no systemic approach to research data management whatsoever, meaning that research data are in the hands of the individual researchers only. While the University has promoted open science and open access through third party-funding, encouraging researchers to use open data repositories to deposit their research data, there is no systematic policy of establishing a proprietary research data repository. This is a major shortcoming as it reduces the sustainability of research at FPN (and UNIBL in general), as many of its projects generate important data that should be reused. The lack of available metadata information of research data impedes the transparency of the research process. UNIBL also does not provide software licenses, which might put researchers into harm if they use unlicensed software. The lack of research data strategies and infrastructures furthermore limits potentials for international cooperation, for which data exchange is important.

4.6) Third Party Funding

There is no specific strategic plan focusing on grants but overall, FPN is inclined to attract as much income from any third-party funds as possible. The focus is hereby on local funding bodies (such as the *Ministry for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education* of the Republic of Srpska as well as the *Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina*). The *Ministry for Civil Affairs of BiH* supports projects designed for the preparation and implementation of Horizon Europe, EUREKA and COST actions. However, the grants provided by these funding bodies are relatively small in scale, particularly for social sciences and humanities. Additionally, it is important to note that the funding provided by the *Ministry for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska* does not always align with individual project plans or requests. Instead, these funds are allocated at the ministry's discretion, which can limit the flexibility and scope of the research efforts. Aside from the mentioned Ministries, the *Provincial Secretariat for Higher Education of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia* has repeatedly contributed to research funding at the Department of Political Science.



Support by UNIBL in preparation of funding applications is primarily provided through the *Centre for Development and Research Support*, which is part of the *Rectorate / Office of the Vice-Rector for Science, Research and University Development*. The Office of Vice-Rector and the Centre have developed a “Strategic Framework for the Improvement of the Office’s Work” for the period 2024-2030 accompanied by the “Action Plan” (for 2024) for both the Office and the Centre. In the list of externally funded projects at FPN between 2019 and 2024, the biggest grants came from the European Union through Horizon Europe, Jean Monnet Program, and ERASMUS+.

FPN has no specific incentives scheme to encourage researchers to apply for outside funding for projects. At the University level, there is however an “Award Contest for Professors and Teaching Assistants” which provides small cash prizes for researchers who have published their papers in WoS indexed journals (SCI/SSCI/ESCI list), or who are coordinating and are members of international research projects or ERASMUS+ projects. Four Members of the FPN have been awarded in 2024 for outstanding papers and international projects which is remarkable. Nevertheless, this award addresses to those researchers who already are running an international project and does not provide support for those writing proposals for third-party funds. There are also no immaterial incentives (such as reduction of teaching load or promotion) for successful third-party funds activities. Any activity in this regard is mostly the result of individual initiative.

5) Governance and Personnel

5.1) Department and Faculty Councils

Each of the FPN’s four departments – Political Science, Sociology, Social Work, and Journalism and Communication Studies – has its own Council (comprised of all members of the department) for its decision-making. The decisions then go through the *Scientific and Teaching Council of the Faculty*, the key decision-making body at the faculty level. FPN is managed by the Dean and two Vice-Deans: one in charge of research and international cooperation, and the other for teaching, with mandates of four years each. The work of the faculty is supported by different administrative services: the secretary of the Faculty, the Faculty’s accountant, technical support (IT), library, as well as student administration offices. One academic staff member is appointed at the faculty as responsible for international cooperation.

Depending on the subject, decisions can be taken by the faculty management or the dean. For instance, decisions regarding investment activities are made by the faculty management, with the dean as the responsible authority, who may decide on the individual use of funds up to 6,000 BAM (appr. 3,000 EUR). For the use of larger amounts, prior authorization by the rector is required.

5.2) Human Resources

At the Faculty of Political Sciences, most **academic positions** are permanent (tenure) with clear criteria for career progression. As academic staff advances through the ranks (e.g., from assistant professor to associate professor, and then full professor), their contracts are renewed or adjusted



according to their career stage. This system ensures that long-term positions are designed in a way to maintain continuous professional development and to stimulate academic achievements. There is little personnel turnover. The advantage of this system is, from the point of view of the employees, predictability of their career paths and, from the point of view of the university, maintenance of skills. The disadvantage is a lack of mobility and the dynamism that people from the outside bring to an institution. However, since this system of recruitment and promotion is regulated by law, there is little discretion for FPN to change staff development policies.

Currently, thirty-six persons are employed in “Research and Scientific Services,” out of which eighteen are female.³ Nobody is employed only for research, meaning all people working as “Research and Scientific Services” have teaching obligations. Additionally, the faculty hires staff from the University of East Sarajevo (BiH), the University of Novi Sad (SRB) and the University of Belgrade (SRB) on temporary contracts without any research obligations, when there is a need for additional teaching staff (there were four such contracts in 2023). No personnel are employed through third-party funding. 58% of the academic personnel are associate and full professors, 17% are assistant professors (“docents” or postdocs) and 22% are teaching assistants. Some of the teaching assistants are also enrolled as PhD candidates. Additionally, one person is employed as an English language instructor by the Faculty. The possibility of hiring talented students for research support as student assistants is rarely used by FPN. However, there is the possibility for “internships,” with which the faculty can hire highly skilled students for research. There was only one such case thus far, in 2016/2017.

Regarding the allocation of positions at FPN to its four study programs, the Department for Journalism and Communication Studies has noticeably fewer professorships than the others, for unknown reasons: it has only four (counting full, associate, and assistant professors), while the three other departments have seven or eight each. This represents a specific challenge for covering the teaching requirements for the Journalism and Communication Studies program. The Department for Political Sciences stands out by employing three additional part-time professors (one associate, two assistant professors) who are otherwise fully employed in political offices (as government minister, ambassador, and ombudsman).

20 persons at FPN work in administration, among which 15 are female and five are male. Although they are performing duties in “**Research Management and Administration**” too, none focuses specifically on RMA-relevant topics. The only RMA-relevant training provided at the University is organized through the *Centre for Development and Research Support* of UNIBL on an ad hoc basis, upon request, through job-shadowing or through specific third-party funded projects.

5.3) Gender and Diversity

After adopting the “Guidelines for Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment” in 2020, the situation of gender equality has been analysed at the UNIBL for the first time. The assessment

³ 32 persons are full-time employed as “Research and Scientific Services” by the Faculty, one person is fully employed at the Rectorate, but teaches for the Faculty, three are part-time employed by the Faculty due to full time contracts outside of academia (in politics: government minister, ambassador, and ombudsman of BiH).



resulted in the university's first "Gender Equality Action Plan" (GEP) for the period 2022-2026, that has been adopted by the University Senate. A six-member "Gender Equality Advisory Board" (GEAB) is now in charge of its implementation through collecting gender-relevant data on a yearly basis, organizing trainings and events for raising awareness on gender equality in collaboration with colleagues from faculties and those who have been appointed at the faculties as coordinators for monitoring and collecting of gender-relevant data.

The last report for the year 2023 shows a significant change in the management and leadership on the university level, where the percentage of women has increased from 26% in the academic year 2019/2020 to 42% in 2023/2024. The Faculty of Political Science serves as an example: its dean and one of the two vice-deans, elected in 2024, are female. The university-wide report documents a trend towards a gender balance at the level of professorships as well, as the number of female professors increased from 67 (2019/20) to 101 (2023/2024); the increase in the number of male professors was from 109 to 124 in the same period, i.e., proportionally smaller.

Interviews conducted for this report pointed to a notable change in the atmosphere of the Faculty's meetings. The female leadership of FPN is seen as an important public sign of gender equality. Whereas in the interviews with representatives of the management, gender equality has been characterized in interviews with FPN members as a non-issue at the faculty, respondents from the academic staff showed significant gender sensitivity. Although university structures complicate gender equality by not allowing a replacement to be contracted during parental leave of academic personnel, for instance, thus putting an additional burden on the remaining staff, the relationships between academic personnel of both sexes at the FPN has been praised as rather equal (often explained as a legacy of socialist gender policy in Yugoslavia). Nevertheless, it has been stated that women work more, but men are more visible with their research output, and gender sensitive language is not applied at the university.

No measures for reconciling work and family life at the University have yet been implemented but such measures are foreseen in the "Gender Equality Action Plan".

6) Early Career Researchers

6.1) Doctoral Studies

Since 2011, FPN has offered "second cycle studies" (M.A.) and since the academic year of 2017/18 "third cycle studies", i.e., a PhD programme. Currently 28 candidates are enrolled as PhD students.

Doctoral studies are envisaged to last three academic years, or six semesters. The program is composed of 40% instructions and 60% research activities, which include mandatory and elective parts followed by exams. The mandatory courses mainly follow disciplinary patterns and cover the fundamental areas of the chosen research field: theory, history of the discipline, and new approaches to research, whereas the elective parts are adding an interdisciplinary perspective to the program. Participation in international conferences is one possible requirement of the elective parts, yet no funding is provided by FPN and UNIBL for that. Doctoral candidates are required to have three



authored scientific papers published in scientific journals that are indexed in relevant citation and bibliographic databases before submitting their doctoral thesis. During the second year, doctoral candidates choose a mentor with whom they will work on the research for their doctoral thesis. In areas that involve interdisciplinary research and the collection of empirical data, dual mentorship may be provided. After completing the theoretical classes, successfully passing exams, publishing three scientific papers, choosing a mentor (and, if applicable, a co-mentor), and successfully conducting research for the doctoral thesis proposal, doctoral candidates gain the right to submit their doctoral project proposal. The proposal is publicly defended before a committee consisting of at least three faculty members. During the third year of the doctoral program, the doctoral candidates are envisaged to write and submit their doctoral thesis. This means there is comparatively little time for original research, which limits the overall research potential of FPN since PhD level research should be a crucial pillar of research innovation.

Students enrolling in doctoral studies are responsible for covering all educational costs, including tuition fees and other necessary expenses. According to the current Fee Schedule of the University of Banja Luka, annual tuition fees for third cycle studies is 3,000 BAM (approximately 1,500 EUR) for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while for international students it is 5,000 BAM (approximately 2,500 EUR). FPN does not offer PhD positions or scholarships, but the *Ministry for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education* of the Republic of Srpska and municipalities do. However, the scholarship amount is modest, and access limited due to age restrictions which has been repeatedly criticized in the interviews with doctoral students. All the four PhD candidates interviewed are fully employed outside of the university and pursue their PhD at their own expense. Such an arrangement limits the potential scope of innovation of PhD research.

Candidates are required to complete doctoral studies within four years from the date of enrolment in the programme. The duration of the PhD can be extended for an additional two years, upon written justification of the reasons for extension, as decided by the *Doctoral Studies Council*. To date, twenty-eight candidates count as active in the Graduate Programme (fourteen male and fourteen female), out of which nine are in Sociology, fourteen in Political Science, three in Media studies, and two in Social Work. Only three candidates have completed the Doctoral Programme at FPN to date, with the first doctoral candidate to earn the title of Doctor of Science transferred to the programme from another university. The average duration of study in the Doctoral Programme is approximately five years (but the sample size is still too small for definite conclusions).

The interviewees evaluated the Doctoral programme at FPN as overloaded with various requirements before gaining the right to submit the proposal. The (compulsory) instructions have been rated as not particularly helpful for fostering the research process in preparation for the PhD, except the methodological workshop and one class provided on a weekly basis with direct consultations. PhD candidates criticized the lack of research support and skills training. Much seems to depend on the individual initiative of candidates. There is little interaction between mentors and doctoral students, and hardly any interaction between the doctoral students themselves in terms of peer-support and intellectual exchange. The PhD programme lacks a clear mission and does not entail systematic cross-disciplinary dialogue. It is also not directed towards providing PhD researchers with an international profile. We see great potential in the PhD programme but only after a systematic overhaul taking into consideration best practice examples in postgraduate training. The



balance between structure (mandatory courses) and the freedom to conduct creative research is tilted too much towards the former.

6.2) Postdocs

There is no systematic postdoc training and apparently also no institutionalized support for the difficult transition from the PhD phase to the early postdoc phase. For postdocs employed at FPN, the balance between teaching and research is uneven, meaning that early-career researchers often face teaching loads beyond the set norm and/or additional departmental duties, while lacking systematic support for the development of their research skills. Hence, researchers in a crucial career phase are not systematically addressed by training and career enhancement measures. Progress in research primarily depends on individual effort and motivation, without institutional support. There is also no systematic networking between postdocs and no organized peer-feedback. This lack of institutional and financial support further hinders their ability to build research experience and advance in academic careers. More generally, it limits the overall research potential of FPN considering the productivity and innovative spirit of young researchers.

7) Research Output (Publications)

As said, neither the FPN nor UNIBL has a separate, dedicated research strategy. There is, therefore, no institutionalized system to develop and increase research output. However, thanks to an up-to-date database of publications by FPN (and UNIBL) scholars, the research output is well visible and comparable. This provides a basis for assessing strengths and weaknesses. FPN is also successfully communicating research-based knowledge to different stakeholders, for example to providers of social care (Department of Social Work). Some FPN members are holders of political office which also creates channels of knowledge transfer. However, there is no systematic agenda nor guidelines for outreach to stakeholders.

7.1) Publication Strategy

A particular strength of UNIBL is the existence of the *Committee for Publishing* at the University level, consisting of the Vice-Rector for Science and Research, the Vice-Rector for Academic and Student Affairs and seven members representing the main academic fields of UNIBL. Members are expected to enjoy scholarly visibility and have experience in publishing. They are proposed by the faculties and appointed by the Senate for a term of four years. The Committee is responsible for the creation of a publication plan at the University level, which sets output goals for each faculty. The latest available plan (as of 2023) lists for FPN five “scientific publications” (monographs), three “educational publications” (handbooks etc.), and the publication of two journals (*Politeia* and *Society and Politics*). This plan provides a good basis for a comprehensive publication strategy – which does not exist yet, though.

Another strength of UNIBL is its digital repository that informs about, stores and enables free access to scientific and creative outputs of its members, including students (*Publikacije Univerzitetu u Banjoj Luci* - PUB). The repository contains scientific and professional papers, theses and dissertations of

students from second and third cycles of studies, preprints, books, journals and other material in various formats structured according to faculties. There is also the *Digital repository of Academic Archives from University of Banja Luka* (SOVA) providing open access and long-term preservation of different categories of scientific papers in digital form. For dissertations, UNIBL offers a separate digital repository (*E-theses*). These repositories manifest UNIBL's laudable commitment to open access and provide easy access to its research results. UNIBL is a signatory of the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" (2016) and an observer to the "European Open Science Cloud" (EOSC).

7.2) Periodicals

One of the most notable research outputs of FPN is the journal *Politeia*, which serves to publish both research by FPN scholars and by scholars from other institutions. This is a multidisciplinary academic journal, which publishes scholarly papers in the fields of politics, international relations, Balkan studies, sociology, communication, media studies, political systems, journalism, public relations, geopolitics, international security, law, history, cultural studies, social policy, and social work, as well as texts from other fields in the domain of social sciences. Although the journal is of a multidisciplinary character, it is the academic personnel of the Department for Political Science that is most engaged in it. The journal's editor-in-chief is the dean of the faculty, Prof. Dr. Ranka Perić Romić, and its managing editor Dr. Željko Budimir, assistant professor for international relations and international security (and *Minister for Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education* in the government of Republic of Srpska as one indication of the close relationship between faculty and government). The editorial board comes from FPN with only one exception (Belgrade). Although an international editorial board is listed with members from all over the world, the comprehensive list of reviewers features mainly scholars from UNIBL and UNIBG; additionally, reviewers are based in Istočno Sarajevo (BiH), Niš and Novi Sad (SRB). This shows that there is room for increasing the engagement of scholars outside of the Serbian-speaking area. *Politeia* can serve as an example for successful quality control: it follows a double-blind peer review facilitated via the SCIndeks software.⁴ The journal publishes two issues per year. The language of publication is Serbian, with an English table of content and English abstracts. Including also texts in English language might be a way to increase its international profile. The Serbian and the English versions of the journal's website urgently need to be updated as the current issues are available only through the SCIndeks submission management tool, but not on the journal's website itself. The journal is indexed by CEEOL and ERIH PLUS. It appears in full open access, recognized by Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), but is available also in print.

The second periodical publication of the Faculty, *Društvo i politika* (*Society and Politics*) functions as an annual collection of papers presented to the eponymous conference organized annually by FPN. The journal (yearbook) aims at fostering and endorsing research within the realm of social sciences and humanities. The interdisciplinary journal is published in open access, with a print version also available, and is indexed by and distributed through CEEOL. It publishes articles in English and the

⁴ SCIndeks is the central hub of the integrated system of quality-controlled scientific publishing in Serbia, a joint venture of CEON/CEES and indexed journal publishers.



official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina. While interdisciplinary in nature, the bulk of its editorial work is carried out by members of the Department of Sociology at FPN.

It should be stressed that both flagship periodicals of FPN appear in full open access, without charging authors a fee. This is a major contribution to the idea of open science and should be maintained.

7.3) Publication Output

In 2023, the 36 researchers at the FPN have in total authored 56 publications (monographs, articles in edited volumes, peer-reviewed articles in journals, excluding newspaper articles, commentaries, blog posts, etc.). This means 1.6 publications per head, which can be considered an average value.

It speaks to the public engagement of FPN scholars that they have authored 36 newspaper articles and commentaries in 2023.

FPN scholars publish a substantial amount of research articles in journals. This increases the visibility of their research given the fact that journal articles are quoted more often than book chapters. As a result of the social science profile of the FPN, book publications are secondary to journal articles. The most frequent publication outlet is the in-house journal *Politeia*. Out of 87 journal articles published by FPN members 2019-24, 24 (28%) were published in the Faculty's own journal. The quality of *Politeia* notwithstanding, this indicates a lack of ambition to publish research internationally. The ranking of the journal would also improve if a higher proportion of articles is published by scholars from somewhere else. The second most frequently used journal is published in BiH as well (*Sociološki godišnjak*, seven articles). On the other hand, only twice have publications by FPN members appeared in leading international journals in that period (*Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, *International Review of Social History*). Worryingly, five articles were published in the predatory journal *European Journal of Social Sciences*, which makes it one of the most frequented places for journal articles published by members of the faculty; another article appeared in *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, which is also a predatory journal. Such publications indicate the need of awareness training about predatory publication models and more generally, of a comprehensive publication strategy. As for book chapters, at least three were published in English in edited volumes with renowned publishers (Routledge, Palgrave MacMillan, Springer), showcasing the potential of individual FPN researchers to publish in a competitive environment.

Yet, there is apparently a clear lack of systematic evaluation of publication places and a lack of a strategy to aim higher, that is, to publish beyond one's own comfort zones. Publication strategies and training on how to write a journal-article should be part of the PhD school curriculum, but also in postdoc training. Except for some rare workshops provided by individual professors on their own initiative, not much attention is being paid to questions of academic writing, notably for an international audience. FPN authors of international publications could offer hands-on training on that.



Looking at the topics of recent publications by FPN members and of the last volume of *Politeia*, a clear potential to engage more strongly with international research is visible. Topics such as labour and migration, but also happiness, demography, security cooperation, myths as a basis of ideologies, media in Republika Srpska, EU integration, animal studies, values in social work, student digital literacy, etc. – to mention just a few – are of interest beyond a narrow local/regional audience. However, a relatively narrow geographical scope and the lack of theorization often limits the communicability and relevance of these interesting research results. The attempt to publish in more international, less region-focused journals would imply the need to broaden the perspective, thus helping FPN scholars to increase the relevance of their research in a broader international context. FPN members who have done so can serve as role models. To increase the visibility of publications, the establishment of thematic clusters and interdisciplinary research groups, which produce co-authored article, might help. There is, for example, great potential to contribute to research on transformation – not least because of the unique transformation experiences the region on which FPN scholars work has gone through.

8) Summary: Challenges and Opportunities

In its only fifteen years of existence, the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Banja Luka has continuously enhanced its research and teaching performance. As an organizational unit of UNIBL, FPN is facing constraints that can hardly be solved by the faculty as such, for instance the drop of student numbers and – more important for research – the “brain drain” of particularly talented students that decide to pursue their academic career abroad or go into private business. Financial support by the state is clearly insufficient, be it for technical equipment or for long term research projects. Despite such broader challenges, the four departments of FPN have used manifold opportunities in the last years to contribute to the University’s strategic aim of reaching European standards in research and teaching. International cooperation as a crucial ambition has been strengthened particularly, but not only, by the Sociology Department through winning a Horizon Europe grant as lead partner and participating in another Horizon Europe project at UNIBL, whereas the Political Science and Social Work Departments foster international collaboration through participating in a Jean Monnet Network, and in ERASMUS+ and CEEPUS programmes. To fully explore the potentials of international cooperations, research support needs to be fostered by FPN, be it through the training in RMA-relevant topics for the administrative personnel to prepare third-party funding applications, or through a more strategic approach to research data infrastructures.

Although FPN has the capacity to serve as a research service for the public and private sectors, these potentials remain largely untapped due to the limited funding available for extracurricular activities. Similar problems are present when it comes to acquiring suitable software support. Due to financial constraints, FPN is unable to regularly replace outdated technical equipment or invest in technical resources for specific purposes (e.g. a studio for the Journalism Studies Department).

Close connections with politics – some FPN members hold high political offices – represent a potential challenge for FPN and its academic autonomy. During the interviews conducted with different levels of the academic and administrative staff of FPN, diverse assessments of political influence on the work of FPN were given. Several interviewees held the opinion that the public



atmosphere in the Republic of Srpska complicates outreach via scientific argumentation, others perceived this as an opportunity to reach out through the media using a different language to communicate their findings. Others said that they rather withdraw from public outreach because of politicization. One interviewee stressed that when compared to critical political science research in Serbia, where the government “reacts to that”, the situation in the Republika Srpska appears more permissive. A particular challenge to FPN’s autonomy is the political engagement of certain faculty members, which can potentially cause a politicization of the workplace and of research. On a practical level, the political engagement of some researchers puts additional workload on the remaining researchers and therefore limits their time for research. On a positive side, political contacts open channels for policy advice and might enrich study programmes. The lack of clear guidelines for knowledge transfer generates ambiguities, which should be addressed heads on.

It needs to be positively stressed that the staff employed at the FPN (and UNIBL) work under long term or permanent contracts with clear steps of career advancement set. Yet, to raise the mobility of researchers, additional incentives need to be provided by FPN. While a clear career path for researchers to advance within FPN/UNIBL has been established, early career researchers lack institutional support to build an international profile and to communicate their research in international fora – be it by publishing in English speaking journals or by participating in international conferences. The great potential of FPN’s PhD programme should be unleashed after a systematic overhaul taking into consideration best practice examples in postgraduate training. International exposure should become a mandatory part of early career researcher’s schedule.

Another positive aspect pertains to gender equality and gender balance in decision making positions at UNIBL which has significantly advanced with more female staff both in major management positions and in professorships also at FPN.

A strength of UNIBL are several digital repositories that inform about, store and enable free access to scientific and creative outputs of its members. These repositories manifest UNIBL’s laudable commitment to open access and provide easy access to its research results. Furthermore, the publication plan at the University level provides a good basis for a comprehensive publication strategy by FPN, which does not exist yet, though. As a next step, FPN could build a research data repository, which would also increase its international visibility.

One of the most notable research outputs of FPN is the journal *Politeia*, which serves to publish both research by FPN scholars and by scholars from other institutions. This is a multidisciplinary academic journal published in the languages of BiH and serves thus as the major publishing outlet for all the Departments of the Faculty except Social Work. Whereas the quality control at the *Politea* journal can be evaluated as successful through its double-blind peer review, the list of scholars engaged in the review process and the list of authors could be increased beyond the Serbian-speaking area. *Politeia* can provide a good platform for regionally oriented cooperation. The journal’s website should be updated. The second crucial regular publication by FPN is the annual *Society and Politics*. As it features also full articles in English language, it should aim at a wider, international readership and authorship. It should be stressed that both flagship periodicals of FPN appear in full open access, without charging authors a fee. This is a major contribution to the idea of open science and should be maintained.



The publication output at the Faculty of Political Sciences is 1.6 publications per head, which can be considered satisfactory. Most publications appear in journals which in general increases the visibility of research more than book publications. However, the scope of journals should be diversified beyond the Serbian-speaking sphere; too many articles are published by FPN members in the faculty's own journal. The attempt to publish in more international journals would imply the need to broaden the perspective, thus helping FPN scholars to increase the relevance of their research on an international level. It should also be connected with more attention to training in academic writing for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

So far, there is little institutional support and no organized mechanism for the facilitation of interdisciplinary research. Yet, by setting-up a cross-departmental research programme, FPN's promising research potential could be fully developed. Such research would likely also enjoy more international visibility. Identified cross-cutting topics on which FPN's Departments of Sociology, Political Science, Social Work and Journalism and Communication Studies can collaborate as a basis for long-term interdisciplinary research relate to labour and migration studies. Such topics would immediately link empirical local research with European debates, e.g. about care migration. Given the unique transformation experience of BiH/Republika Srpska and the region more broadly, empirical research on this region can produce interesting insights into the dynamics of social change.



Annexes

1. Self-assessment Questionnaire
2. Informed Consent Form for Interviews
3. Interview Questionnaire



Annex 1 – Self-assessment questionnaire**1. Key data: Statutory mission, organization, budget, personnel of UNIBL, FPN**

Year of foundation:

Legal form:

Total budget

_ BAM in institutional funding,

Income from grants for project financing,

_ BAM income from projects.

Expenses

Number of employees (see overview in Chapter 5):

_ Persons “Research and Scientific Services”,

_ Persons “Research management and administrative staff (RMA)”

Number of students

_ of them: _ undergraduate (BA), _ graduate (MA), _ post-graduate (PhDs)

Organization:

Briefly explain the organization (structure) of the Faculty. Include also information on teaching obligations (hours per week) and organization of research and of teaching.

Insert the following overviews in the appropriate place:

(i) Organizational chart (please make it easy to read and no larger than one page)

ii) List of senior academic staff (full, associated and assistant professors. Please explain the hierarchy of positions / the model career path in a note).

Name:	Discipline	at the Faculty since:	Year and grade of appointment, if applicable:

Appendices to chapter 1:

- Organizational regulations (statutes, articles of association, etc.)
- links to professional CV of professors

2. Overall concept and central work results

Briefly explain (approx. 2 pages) the overall concept [strategy] and work plan of your faculty.

What are the main challenges the faculty is facing (separate from research and teaching)?

Describe the central research results (“highlights”) of the institution (10 most important work results)⁵.

- i) List of the (max. ten) most important research results (“highlights”) since 2019

For publications, give also abstracts (BKS or ENG)

⁵ These can be publications, but also major projects, conferences or other research-related outcomes.

ii) Number of publications of the institution

Type of publication	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Monographs					
Individual chapters in edited works					
Articles in peer-reviewed journals ⁶					
Articles in other journals					
Working and discussion papers					
Editorship (collective volumes)					
Blog posts					
Newspaper articles, commentaries etc.					

⁶ if articles have been accepted but not yet published, these can also be indicated in brackets in the respective year

iii) Number of expert opinions of the institution

(This refers to expert opinions and expert reports on scientific advice for politics, business, associations, etc. Not relevant are expert opinions for scientific qualification work and peer reviews for publications or funding applications)

Please mention also examples of such commissioned expert reports.

3. Control and quality management

3.1. Funding

What targets are there for income from third-party funds (income from grants for project financing, income from services)? In particular are there targets in relation to grants from specific third-party funders or in relation to the composition of the third-party funding portfolio?

Is there any organizational support by the UNIBL for the preparation of funding applications?

Are there incentives in place to encourage researchers to apply for projects?

Appendix to chapter 3:

- List of externally funded projects (2019-2023)

Third-party funder	Project leader	Funding amount (in €)	Project title	Research area

3.2 Structural and procedural organization

What is the organizational structure (structure and personnel composition of management and management committees, structure of the subdivisions and, if applicable, other organizational units)? **Desk research JN and correction by UNBL**

What is the procedural organization (decision-making processes, in particular for controlling the faculty's work)?

What measures does the faculty take to provide its teaching/research staff with time for research?

Are costs incurring from research (e.g. travel costs, surveys) supported by the faculty?

3.3 Quality management

Explain the quality assurance measures. Address the following topics in particular, insofar as they play a role at your institution:

- Does an Advisory Borad exist? What is its role?
- Are there regular evaluations?
- Measures to ensure good scientific practice? **Desk research**, UNIBL checks
- Measures to ensure research ethics?
- Publication strategy (including handling open access)? **Desk research**, UNIBL checks
- Measures for quality management of research infrastructures?
- Research data management (including handling open data)?
- Internal performance incentives, for example performance-related allocation of funds (LOM)?
Desk research, UNIBL checks

4. Personnel

4.1 Research and RMA positions

Explain the procedures for hiring research staff and professorships.

Does the faculty recruit from other places than Banja Luka within Republika Srpska/BiH and internationally?

Did employees of your institution move to professorships somewhere else in the reporting period?

How does your institution deal with temporary and permanent positions?

Are there any specific measures to support post-docs?

4.2 Doctoral researchers

In what way does your institution promote doctoral researchers?

- i) Please explain the supervision concept for doctoral candidates at your institution.
- ii) Explain any structured doctoral programs (curriculum, duration, funding, supervision, etc.)
- iii) What is the average duration of doctoral studies? How do you monitor the quality and success of your doctoral training?
- iv) Are doctoral students trained for specific job markets?



- v) Do you follow the career paths of graduates? Does your institution maintain contact with former doctoral candidates (e.g. via an alumni network)?

Include the following overview in an appropriate place:

Completed qualifications at the institution:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Degrees qualifying for doctoral studies					
Completed PhDs					
Higher?					

4.3. Students

Which measures are taken to integrate students in research?

Is there any structured transition from MA to doctoral studies?

4.4. Research management and administrative staff (RMA)

Please explain the professional qualification measures.

How many training places and which qualifications does your institution offer?

Please state the number of professional qualifications completed between 2019 and 2023.

5. Equal opportunities and work-life balance

Explain the measures taken and the status achieved by your institution with regard to gender equality standards of the EU (work-life balance and organisational culture; gender balance in leadership and decision-making; gender equality in recruitment and career progression; integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content; measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment).⁷

What problems still exist? How are they to be remedied?

Fill in the table with data as of 31.12.2023

⁷ Sf. Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/horizon-europe-gep-criterion> (06.09.24).



Research staff	Numbers	Of these: Third-party funded (procentage)	Permanent contract	Fixed-term contract	Women	Staff from abroad
Professors						
Docenti						
Teaching assistants						
Etc.						
Total						
RMA						
Different positions						
Trainees						
Total						
Student Assistants						
PhD Students						

6. Cooperation and Networks

6.1. Explain the main collaborations of your institution. List the most important collaborations with other institutions between 2019 and 2023.

Academic and non-academic

Domestic and international

6.2. Please highlight the most important (strategic) international cooperations and briefly describe their content.

6.3. Internationality

How do you promote international cooperation? How do you promote international visibility?



7. Research-areas

7.1. Please describe the sub-areas [disciplines] of your faculty.

Provide a brief description (max. 2 pages) of the research and main tasks, activities and successes (but without teaching) of each sub-area [study programmes or interdisciplinary research fields].

Include the following aspects, if applicable:

- i) main research results
- ii) dissemination and outreach activities
- iii) networking (esp. on international level)
- iv) training of early career scholars

7.2. Does the faculty have cross-cutting (interdisciplinary) research fields? Does the faculty support such research (interdisciplinary)?

7.3. List the 10 most important work results of each study programme:

7.4. List for each area the academic personnel

Name	position	At the faculty since	Working group, project etc.

List of max. ten journals in which employees in the subdivision have published most frequently:

Journal	Peer-reviewed Yes / No	Number



Annex 2 - Informed Consent Form for Interviews

Informed Consent Form

PARTICIPANT'S NAME:

LEAD RESEARCHER: Jacqueline Nießer, IOS Regensburg

BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH:

The EU-funded Horizon Europe project "Enhancing Capacities for Quality and Impactful Research on Transformations, Labour and Migration in Southeast-Europe" (RETLAMI-SEE) is coordinated by the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Banja Luka (FPN UNIBL). RETLAMI-SEE **aims to enhance the research capacities and empower young researchers at FPN UNIBL to conduct interdisciplinary research on transformations, labour, and migration in Southeast Europe.** The IOS Regensburg is one of the four project partners. It cooperates with - beside the University of Banja Luka - the University of Vienna, Research Center for the History of Transformations (RECET) and the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts for RETLAMI-SEE. **The first step is to map the research and RMA potentials and analyse the current state-of-affairs at Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN) and UNIBL for which IOS is the lead partner.** Based on this assessment, the project will develop a strategic framework and action plan with concrete steps towards reaching the goals of increased quality and capacity of researchers and RMA staff at UNIBL, FPN.

PROCEDURES OF THIS STUDY:

The assessment is realized by analysing the existing potentials and current situation at the FPN UNIBL, which will serve as a basis for developing a Strategy and Action Plan for Enhancing the Research Profiles and RMA Skills, including the potential establishment of the Research Group on Transformations, Labour and Migration in SEE (RETLAMI-SEE group) at FPN UNIBL. The mapping is done through a combination of desk research and interviews with FPN UNIBL management, researchers and RMA staff as well as with representatives of UNIBL partners and peers.

USE OF DATA:

IOS uses the collected data to write an assessment of the research performance of FPN UNIBL during the last five years. The assessment will be the baseline for a Strategy and Action Plan for Enhancing the Research Profiles and RMA. The Strategy and Action Plan will be published at Horizon Europe's Website.

The online interview will be recorded by use of the Zoom software. The record will be stored only at the partner institutions. **No for-profit organisations or political parties will be**



Funded by
the European Union

involved in storing the collected data.

Participation is voluntary: every participant has the right to withdraw from the project and delete individual responses without penalty at any time during and after the research. If a participant submits a written request of withdrawal, all publicly available data will be deleted from the media produced by the project. Personal data and data on institutions are kept separately: if requested, personal data will be linked only to a participant ID number, therefore, the identity of the participants will remain concealed. The interviews archived by the academic partner institutions will not be made available to third parties. Personal data will not be published.

The expected duration of the participant's involvement is defined by the duration of the project (36 months).

DECLARATION:

- I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent.
- I have read, or had read to me, a document providing information about this research and this consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand the description of the research that has been provided to me.
- I approve the use of the data I provide for scientific purposes, and I have no objections to this data being published in scientific publications in a way that does not reveal my identity.
- I understand that I may stop electronic recordings at any time and that I may, at any time, even subsequent to my participation, have such recordings destroyed (except in situations such as above).
- I understand that, subject to the constraints above, no recordings will be replayed in any public forum or made available to any audience other than the current researchers/research team, except those that fall within the scope of the right to freedom of information.
- I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal rights.
- I understand that I may refuse to answer any question and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I understand that my participation is fully anonymous and that no personal details about me will be recorded.
- I have received a copy of this agreement.



PARTICIPANT'S NAME:

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Statement of the researcher's responsibility:

I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT DETAILS: niesser@ios-regensburg.de

Partner organization: IOS Regensburg

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:

Date:



Annex 3 – Interview Questionnaire

Head of Doctoral Programme*Department for Political Science*

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

(Since when? And why?)

2. How would you describe the objectives of the 3rd Cycle Studies?
3. How would you describe the relationship between the participating disciplines?
4. Are there interdisciplinary research projects? On which topics?
5. Do you follow the career paths of your graduated doctoral candidates? Is there an Alumni-Network?
6. What is the Drop-out rate? Particular challenges of the doctoral students?

General/individual

7. What is your own research focus?
8. Which factors have impacted your career advancement? (Academic and non-academic factors?) Are you satisfied with your job?
9. Are there specific gender related opportunities and challenges at the faculty?
10. How would you describe the conditions for conducting research at your faculty, and in your discipline in particular?
11. How would you describe the research support and the research infrastructure?
12. Which role does international mobility play in your discipline?
13. Which incentives are there for publishing internationally?
14. Which incentives does the faculty provide to fundraise third-party funds?
15. How would you describe the social relevance of Political Science in the RS? In BiH? In the region?
16. How do you see the public outreach of your faculty?



17. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

Vice-dean for Teaching

(she was also Head of *Department for Journalism and Communication Studies* until recently)

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

(Since when? And why?)

2. How would you describe the relationship between teaching and research at your faculty? Is there anything specific re this relationship in your discipline?
3. Which opportunities and challenges are students facing at the faculty? And in journalism and communications studies in particular?
4. For the Graduate Programme: How would you describe the relationship between the participating disciplines?

General/individual

1. What is your own research focus?
2. Which factors have impacted your career advancement? (Academic and non-academic factors?) Are you satisfied with your job?
3. Are there specific gender related opportunities and challenges at the faculty?
4. How would you describe the conditions for conducting research at your faculty, and in your discipline in particular?
5. How would you describe the research support and the research infrastructure?
6. Which role does international mobility play in your discipline?
7. Which incentives are there for publishing internationally?
8. Which incentives does the faculty provide to fundraise third-party funds?
9. How would you describe the social relevance of Journalism and Communication Studies in the RS? In BiH? In the region?



10. What do you think about the public outreach of the faculty?
11. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

Academic Coordinator for International Exchange of Students and Staff

Department: Social Work

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

(Since when? And why?)

2. Which programmes for international exchange of students and staff exist at UNIBL?
3. Do the study programmes include obligations to study abroad?
4. How is international mobility acknowledged during studies, and how is it for the staff?
5. How many students go abroad? What are the favorite destinations?
6. How many international students come to UNIBL? What are the major countries they are coming from?

General/individual

1. What is your own research focus?
2. Which factors have impacted your career advancement? (Academic and non-academic factors?) Are you satisfied with your job?
3. Are there specific gender related opportunities and challenges at the faculty?
4. How would you describe the conditions for conducting research at your faculty, and in your discipline in particular?
5. How would you describe the research support and the research infrastructure?
6. Which role does international mobility play in your discipline?
7. Which incentives are there for publishing internationally?
8. Which incentives does the faculty provide to fundraise third-party funds?



9. How would you describe the academic and social relevance of Social Work in the RS? In BiH? In the region?
10. How do you see the public outreach of your faculty/discipline?
11. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

Professor, Department of Sociology

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

(Since when? And why?)

2. How do you assess the cooperation between the university and the faculty?
3. How would you describe the role of sociologists in RS, in BiH, the region?
4. How much does the discipline of Sociology follow its Yugoslav tradition? In what way does it differ from its Yugoslav trajectory?
5. How would you describe the research politics in RS, BiH?

General/individual

1. What is your own research focus?
2. Which factors have impacted your career advancement? (Academic and non-academic factors?) Are you satisfied with your job?
3. Are there specific gender related opportunities and challenges at the faculty?
4. How would you describe the conditions for conducting research at your faculty, and in your discipline in particular?
5. How would you describe the research support and the research infrastructure?
6. Which role does international mobility play in your discipline?
7. Which incentives are there for publishing internationally?
8. Which incentives does the faculty provide to fundraise third-party funds?



9. How do you see the public outreach of your faculty/discipline?
10. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

PhD Students

1. In order to start, please introduce what is your PhD about? Since when are you a PhD student? And why?
2. How did you come to your topic?
3. How do you evaluate the supervision of your PhD?
4. Is the structure of the PhD studies helpful for you? In what ways it could be ameliorated?
5. How do you finance your postgraduate studies?
6. How important is international experience in your doctoral programme?
7. Did you participate in international exchange programmes?
8. How do you evaluate the research infrastructure, like libraries, data collections?
9. Which kind of skills training would you find useful?
10. Which kind of academic training would you find useful for advancing your PhD studies?
11. Did you encounter any gender related opportunities and challenges in your doctoral programme?
12. What kind of job do you aspire to?
13. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

Management

Faculty's Secretary

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

(Since when? And why?)

2. How would you describe the university as an employer?
3. How do you assess the cooperation between the university and the faculty?
4. How would you describe the interaction between research and administration staff at the faculty?
5. Please describe the research politics in RS, BiH!
6. How much flexibility does the faculty have re the allocation of financial resources?
7. Which measures to ensure gender equality does the faculty provide?
8. What kind of training and career advancement exists for the management staff?
9. Are there incentives to foster international collaboration?
10. Which incentives does the faculty provide to fundraise third-party funds?
11. How do you see the public outreach of the faculty?
12. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end, be it opportunities or challenges?

Financial Officer / Accountant

1. In order to start, please introduce yourself and your **role** at the faculty!

Since when are you doing this job? And why?

2. How would you describe the university as an employer?
3. How do you assess the cooperation between the university and the faculty?
4. How would you describe the interaction between research and administration staff at the faculty?
5. Which measures to ensure gender equality does the faculty provide?
6. What kind of training and career advancement exists for the management staff?
7. What kind of training would you find useful?
8. Have you participated in any international exchange?
 - a) If not, what are the reasons?



- b) If yes, what was useful in that experience? What could be done better?
- 9. What would you consider the biggest opportunities and what are the biggest challenges in your job?
- 10. Is there anything additional you would like to mention at the end?