

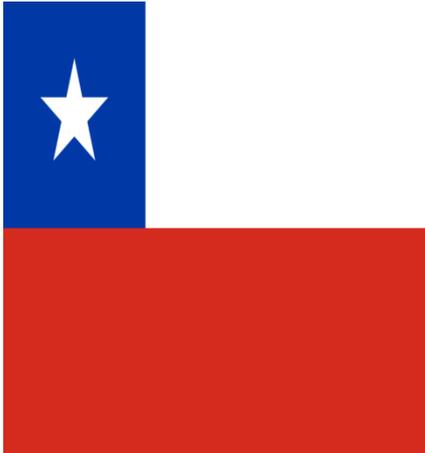
# Senior Civil Service management and political-administrative interface: a practitioner's perspective

Seminar on Public Employment and Management:  
Independence of the Civil Service  
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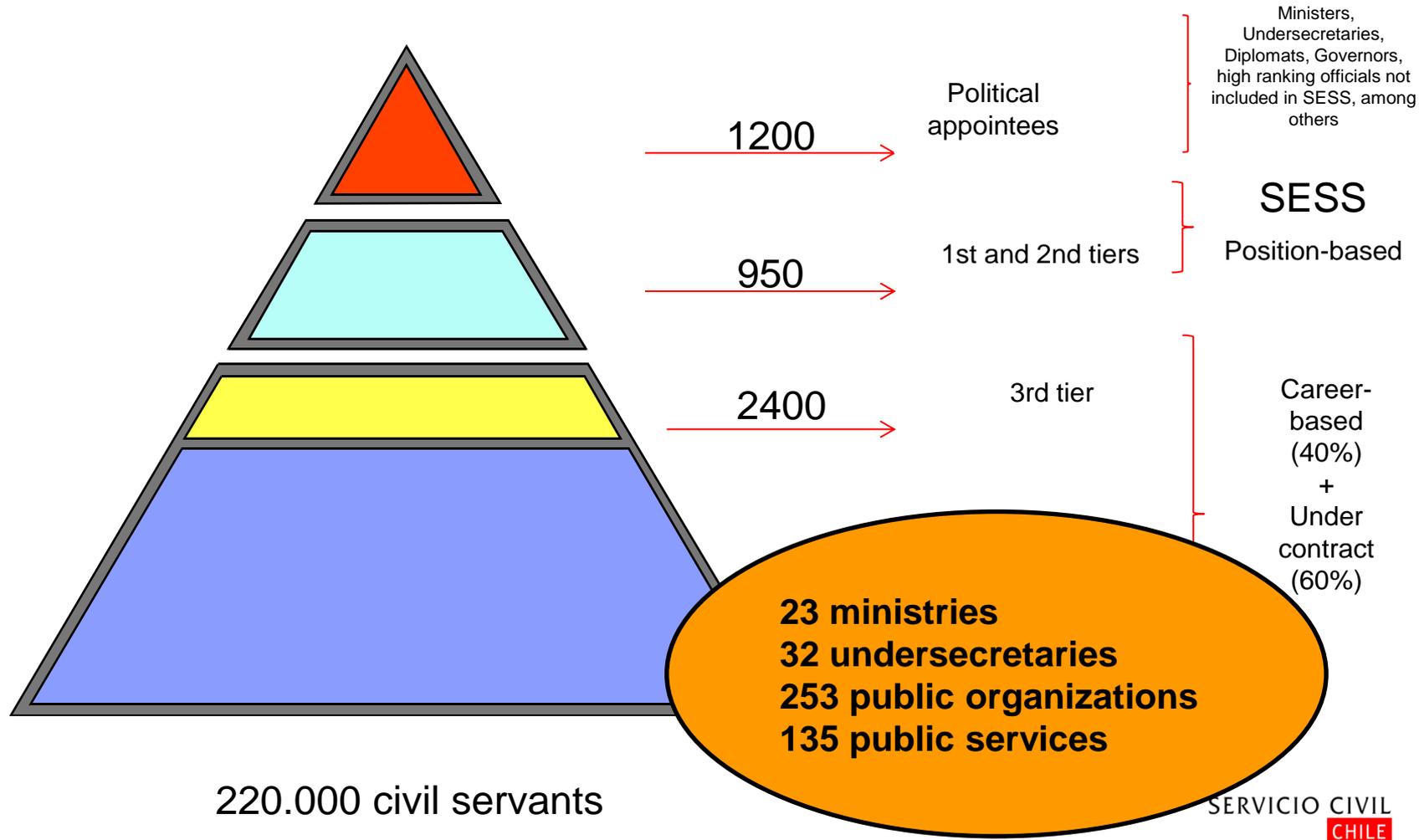


# Chile



- Chile is a republic organized as an unitary state with a presidential government.
- Has an estimated population of 18 million inhabitants.
- Spanish is the official language and most Chileans are Catholic.
- Chile got its independence from Spain in 1810 and since then has had a long democratic tradition with a sad gap of 17 years under a military dictatorship.
- Chile is one of South America's most stable and prosperous nations. Leads the region in rankings of human development, poverty reduction, competitiveness, income per capita, state of peace, economic freedom and performance, healthy institutions and low perception of corruption.
- Has a GDP of US\$277.200 millions and its income per capita rises up to US\$15.791. Its poverty rate is 14%.
- Chile's income gap is very high: the richest decile earns 27 times more than the poorest one. Women participation in labour markets is the lowest in Latin America.
- Has subscribed commercial agreements with 58 countries that represent the 60 % of the world's population. Is part of UN, APEC, Mercosur and OECD. Is the world's largest producer of copper and also exports fish, fruit, chemicals, poets and wine.

# 4.- Chile's Public Employment structure: 220.000 civil servants and 4.500 managers are part of the Central Government



# Contents

1. The Chilean Senior Executive Service System
2. The challenge of balancing politics and policy
3. Hindrances and remedies
4. Lessons learnt

# 1.- SESS Background / State Modernisation Process

- **First generation of reforms / 80's / Focus on diminishing fiscal deficit**
  - Reduction of public spending
  - Reduction of public sector size
  - Privatisation of public services and companies
- **Second generation of reforms / Return to democracy 1990-1994**
  - Curb the State reduction process
  - Creation of new government agencies
  - Regulation of privatised sectors
  - Improvement of public institutions quality
- **Third generation of reforms / 1994-2000 / Focus on improving public management**
  - ICT
  - Transparency and probity
  - Increase quality of public services and citizen participation
  - HHRR management

# 1.- “Political-legislative agreements for State Modernisation, Transparency and Growth Promotion” 2003

**Government-opposition  
joint agenda**

- Creation of Senior Executive Service System
- Creation of National Civil Service Agency
- Modernisation and professionalization of public servants careers.

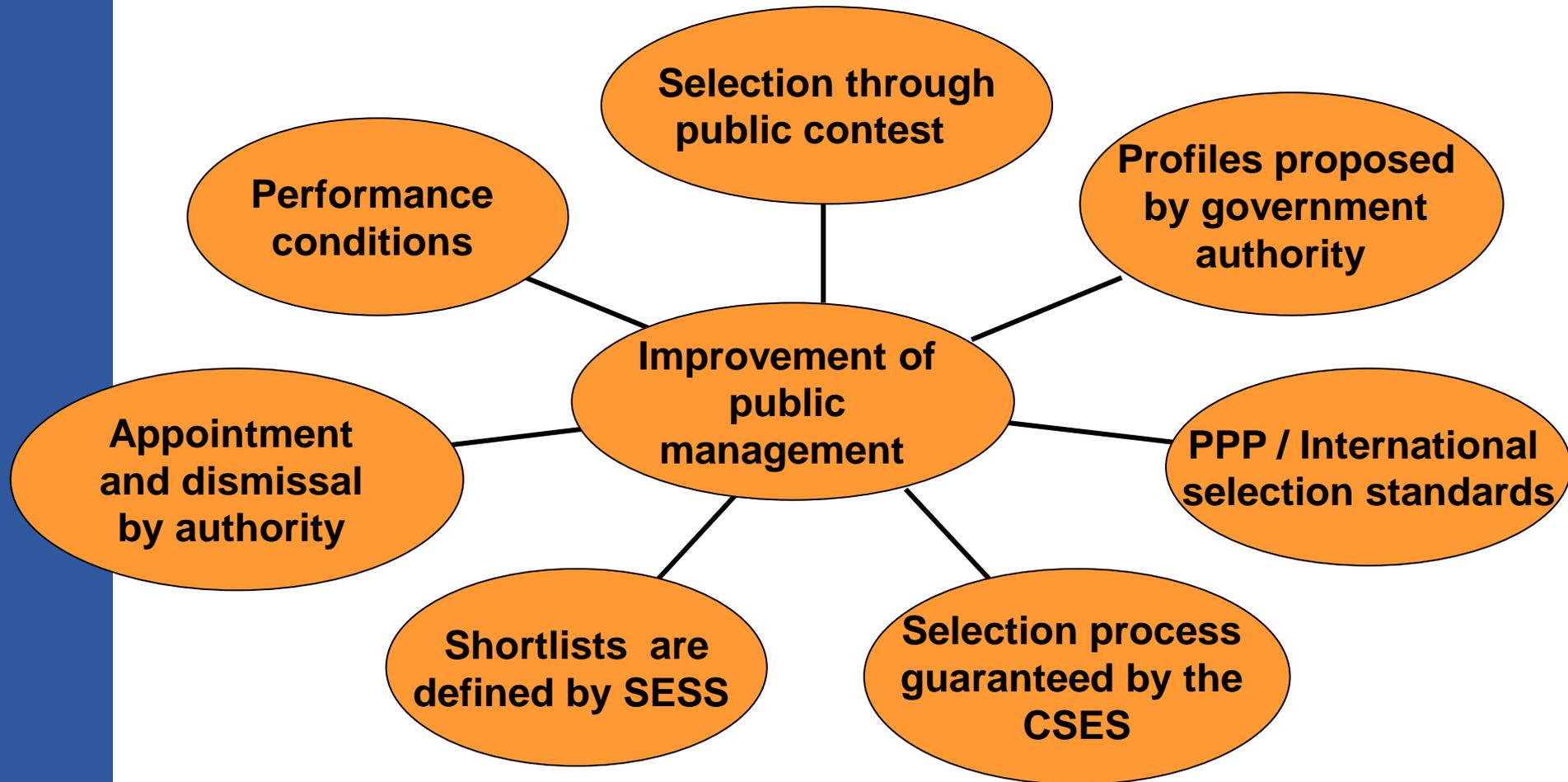
# 1.- Senior Executive Service System (SESS)

- 3.114 freely designated posts changed their status, now to be selected through merit-based public contests
- 1024 posts in 156 government agencies and other public entities are selected through the SESS.
- SESS aims at optimizing the delivery of goods and services through the professionalization of central government management teams.



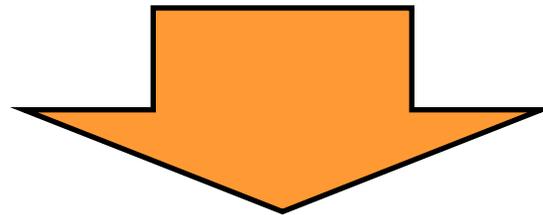
**SESS selects Senior Executive Servants  
-to the first and second hierarchical levels-  
through merit-based public contests, along with government agencies**

# I.- SESS: constitutive elements



## 2.- The challenge of the Chilean model: to balance merit and trust

- Senior Civil Service management and political-administrative interface has been a main issue for the Chilean SESS.
- Its establishment was possible because of a political crisis.
- The chosen design aims at balancing technical capabilities and responsiveness of SES to the democratically elected government.



**SES are selected by the SESS by merit-based contests and appointed by the President or the agency director. The same authority is entitled to request their resignation whenever deemed necessary.**

## 2.- The challenge of the Chilean model: to balance merit and trust

In the selection process of SES

### SEES ..

- Approves profile
- Develops public contest
- Generates shortlists
- Guarantees:
  - Technical selection
  - Non discrimination
  - Confidentiality
  - Values



### Authority ..

- Requests public contest
- Proposes profile
- Appoints
- Declares void
- Assesses performance
- Fires
- Defines policies

# 3.- Hindrances...

- The shifting of Administration and the intensive use of tools designed to achieve democratic governance strained relations within the Chilean SESS.
- Since its creation the SESS has faced two changes of government...
  - The authority exercised its legal power of dismissal. Dismissal rates rose up to 65% in the first tier and to 40% in the second one during the first year of each new government.
  - The extended use of the legal figure of temporary occupants of SESS posts has operated as a discouragement for potential candidates and has harmed the image of the SESS.

# 3.- ..and remedies: SESS on-going reform

- Chile is currently undergoing a legal reform aimed at strengthening its SESS, focused on diminishing the impact of Administration change.
- The proposed measures are:
  - Eliminate the figure of temporary occupants of SESS posts
  - Allow the new President, at the beginning of the Administration, to appoint directly, without public contest, maximum 10% of the first tier of SES.
  - No new public contests at the end of a presidential term.
  - Not allow the dismissal of SES of the second tier at the beginning of a new government.

## 4. Lessons learnt

The complexity of modern public management demands professional capacities. A highly qualified and professional Civil Service is an asset for good governance and facilitates the achievement of Government agenda goals. Professional Civil Service and political wisdom are complementary and part of a win-win approach.

**SES are the most vulnerable part of the equation**



# 4.- Lessons learnt

**Be patience,  
persistent &  
impeccable**

**Make the right  
institutional  
arrangements**

**Values matter**

**Strive to select  
the right  
people**

**Train, develop &  
support SES /  
Enhance skills  
related to political  
issues**

**Have strong  
performance  
agreements &  
assessments**

**Manage  
knowledge &  
environment**

**Learn from  
international  
experiences & be  
open to share  
yours**

**Build your  
case &  
“advocate for  
the cause”**



***“ we want to provide Chile with a modern State that will allows us to face the challenges of development and build a fairer society with less inequity ....”***

President Michelle Bachelet



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