

Bosnia And Herzegovina Public Administration Training and Development Programs Overview and Training Needs Assessment With a View to Respa Activities In 2008

Hazim Kazić
BH Civil Service Agency

Relevant country background

The General Framework for Peace (Dayton 1995) established BiH as a highly decentralised state. Dayton gave extensive powers to two Entities, Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and only limited and specific powers to BiH's state level institutions. Although nine central ministries have been created at state level, the central state remains highly constrained in its ability to exercise effective power.

The Entities, on the other hand, enjoy wide powers, but are characterised by asymmetric structures. Both have presidents, prime ministers, parliaments and ministries, but one is centralised, the other has a federal structure. RS is divided into regions and municipalities (63), but most powers are centralised in Banja Luka. FBiH has 10 cantons and over 70 municipalities. Finally, BiH has a third region with wide legislative and administrative powers - the Brcko District created by the Final Award of March and August 1999.

Civil Service Agencies

Operational as of February 2003, the BiH Civil Service Agency (CSA) has been managing the essential part of government reform initiatives. The CSA is responsible for the public service at State level. In addition to the original mission of maintaining transparency and equality in the civil service practices, the Agency has been designing and implementing a variety of reformative measures to lead the necessary changes in the government. Its main mandates were to review the appointments of current civil servants to determine if they were properly appointed and to develop a recruitment and selection process to staff up the state ministries and other common institutions. It is also in charge of training of civil servants.

The entities have their own civil service agencies. The RS agency was established about the same time as the CSA and the FBiH CSA has become operational in October 2004. Recently established HRM Unit of District Brčko has the mandate to train their civil servants.

The task laid before the Training Units (TU) is to plan, design, organise and deliver training programmes aimed at capacity building of civil servants.

The four agencies received varied support prior or after their establishment. The European Commission supported establishment of the CSA BiH, which was then left on its own to develop programs of activities. A twinning project with the Estonian Civil Service in 2005 further helped in shaping strategic approach to training.

DFID has been supporting the RS CSA from the very beginning and is still present with significant support to the area of civil servant development. Federation agency has been supported by the UNDP in developing of their HRM strategy.

Although separate initiatives, the programs of capacity building and development are of similar standards and compatible but need more cooperation. Accreditation panel consisting of 9 representatives of the four agencies received training on management of training in 2006 within the EC funded UNDP project of civil servants training.

Current state of affairs in the sector

Civil servants are fairly well prepared through their formal education to respond adequately to their professional tasks and challenges, but they lack managerial skills which they need to put into practice the paradigm of public administration as a professional organisation. The problem is currently being addressed by the CSAs in support of the ongoing public administration reform.

Majority of civil servants have inadequate foreign language skills, which slows down and limits the flow of information necessary for activities in relation to the Stabilisation and Association Process. This deficiency also stands in the way of a civil servant's ability to communicate with outside partners; it blocks their access to literature and professional journals in foreign languages as well as limits their access to documents available on internet. Equally important, this restricts civil servants' access to scholarship schemes and short trainings available and offered abroad.

There is a lack of comprehensive professional training policy and coordination among ministries. Some institutions have their own training programmes based mostly on bilateral agreements with international partners but, in general, BiH institutions do not have funds allocated for training in their budgets. ***In addition, there is no central horizontal in-service training institution, such as a national school for public administration.***

The BH Civil Service Agency has drafted Principles of training of civil servants, a document which defines roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in training of civil servants in the public administration at the level of the state. The document has been adopted by the Council of Ministers and imposes obligation of planning, financing and delivering training programs by individual institutions in the area of their policies.

The CSA has applied for IPA funding of a project that shall develop capacity at the institutions related to management of civil servant's training in their specific policy areas. This will lead to development of demand driven programs which truly meet the training needs. The project shall also establish genuine counterparts for the Training Unit of the CSA BiH in planning and designing training activities which are horizontal in nature. The program is expected to start by the end of the year (2007).

The ongoing public administration reform has identified the following main areas for intervention, most of which call for capacity building:

Human Resources Management
Public Finance

Policy Making and Coordination
 Administrative Procedures
 Institutional Communications
 Information Technologies
 Public Administration Sector Reforms

More details can be found at <http://www.parco.gov.ba>

Training of civil servants

Training Units of the CSAs are tasked with civil service training with the goal of creating a system of continuous and systematic professional training of civil servants. Efforts have been made to identify training needs of the institutions and define priority areas for training, which is to lead to the introduction of a systematic training scheme for civil servants.

The Training Units have neither capacity nor the funds to deal with specific training needs of individual institutions and are mostly dealing with horizontal training.

Budget allocation for training and ongoing training and development programs

Civil Service Agency BIH	# of civil servants: 2.100	Budget: 150.000 Euro
Training and Development Programs and Activities		
European integration PASS Scholarships for postgraduate courses abroad HRM management for specialists Managerial training of senior civil servants Strategic planning, policy building Foreign languages ICT according to ECDL standard Induction training and Refreshment courses for civil servants on relevant civil service acts, ethics, EU etc.		

Civil Service Agency FBIH	# of civil servants: 5.800	Budget: 100.000 Euro
Training and Development Programs and Activities		
ICT training Relevant civil service acts HRM - Senior managers		

Civil Service Agency RS	# of civil servants: 3.850	Budget: 50.000Euro
Training and Development Programs and Activities		
Induction training Senior management training - Shaping the future ToT - 12 civil servants being trained currently HRM ICT		

Internal and external communication

HRM unit BD	# of civil servants: 800	Budget: 100.000 Euro
Training and Development Programs and Activities		
Recently established, for the most part shares training programs financed by the EC and coordinated by the CSA BH.		

Most of the training areas listed above have been covered to a certain extent by the ongoing programs of training that are funded either by the CSAs or by the EC (CARDS) / DFID. In spite of the fact that the training market is underdeveloped in BH, we have been able to identify competent local trainers and to offer most of the trainings with local experts or in combination of local and foreign experts. The problem we face is not with the trainers and has to do with provision of adequate funding for training instead.

Planned activities

Training management capacity building

As mentioned above, training management in the BH institutions calls for special attention as the capacity is not present. In a recent effort to define training priorities for 2007, the CSA BH undertook every effort to involve all stakeholders in the process. The CSA defined a list of priority areas for horizontal development programs based on strategic papers and available financial resources and prepared a simple and yet comprehensive instruction to be followed by institutions in identifying and planning their priority areas for training. The response we received was negligible – only a couple of institutions responded, which is a clear indication of the lack of expertise to complete the task. It should be noted, however, that this was a complex task which calls for specific capability and skills.

Establishment of the Institute of Public Administration

There is a demonstrated need to develop and provide training programs that are in accordance with the public administration reform and EU integration objectives and actual needs of institutions. BiH needs to establish a “think tank” that would be charged with the task of identifying training strategies and needs for professional development and development of curricula and syllabi.

The institute is to become a focal point for training activities in all three sectors of government: state, entity and local. The project will contribute to provision of demand driven training programs to all levels of administration.

The purpose of the project is to address identified shortcomings in training of civil servants in an environment in which training is only too often seen as an expenditure and not as an investment. The institute is expected to significantly help in the shift to life long learning. Provision of high quality training programs that support strategic objectives, missions and objectives of individual institutions will best serve this purpose.

The following areas of training still require our (and ReSPA's) attention and additional efforts in the next three years:

- EU integration
- Strategic planning (the CSA BH have delivered training for 64 top civil servants so far and the total number that needs to receive this training is approximately 300. The number is much larger at the entities level)
- Advanced training for HRM managers – 22 HRM managers have been trained in a 15 day course. Currently at the level of the state we have 60 institutions and the number of state institutions is on the rise. We need to train at least one HRM manager from each institution.
- Policy planning and coordination, Legislative drafting – A number of trainings have been delivered both by the CSA and internationals but a more systemic approach is needed
- Institutional communication
- Public administration principles
- Public finance
- Various ToT programs - building and enhancing local training capacity
- Management of change

ReSPA in 2008

ReSPA needs to be recognized as the competence center establishing common principles for quality civil service training and supporting their implementation across administrations in the region. Public administrations in the region are at different levels of development and it will be difficult to adopt a shared approach to capacity building and development of training institutions or civil servants in the region. To alleviate that, ReSPA should support cross-border contacts and transfer of transition successes and best practices.

Training the trainers alone is not enough as the CSAs in BH have limited funds for training activities and would have difficulties organizing trainings for a larger number of civil servants later on. ReSPA should plan funds for delivery of trainings to a larger number of civil servants in common areas through organization of regional conferences on topics like European integration issues, evaluation of impact of training activities, quality of governance, strengthening institutional accountability, transparency and integrity, e-governance.

Another worthy contribution ReSPA could make would be identification of training providers / trainers in the region and building a database of trainers and topics they can competently cover. In most cases, the trainers can be active throughout the region in training areas not available locally without the need to provide interpretation and at a cost that would be acceptable.