

Beyond Classroom Learning (BCL) Workshop

Collaboration Leadership: Cross-unit Coordination under Constraints

National School for Public Administration, Zagreb, Croatia

28-29 April 2026

Background and rationale

Public administrations are operating in an environment of rising complexity, uncertainty, and stakeholder pressure. In practice, leadership and collaboration challenges rarely appear as isolated “skill gaps” (e.g., empathy, communication, inclusion). They show up as real workplace situations: appraisal/performance talks, conflict escalation, negotiation with stakeholders, decisions under ambiguity, or fairness and inclusion dilemmas.

Traditional classroom-based training remains important, but transfer to the workplace is often limited. The well-known 10/20/70 logic is frequently referenced, yet the “70% on-the-job learning” is not systematically designed. Under real workload and constraints, participants often return to existing routines.

This workshop focuses on collaboration leadership at the operational level—i.e., how leaders and teams coordinate across units under real constraints, such as unclear mandates, urgent delivery pressures, limited resources, and competing priorities. The emphasis is on collaboration behaviour, practical ownership, and simple decision routines that help participants move work forward across silos.

At the same time, we recognise that leadership culture also has a strategic level (e.g., initiating and managing change, shaping direction, and leading across organisational ecosystems). We therefore see the three workshops as a practical starting point, with the intention to later add strategic leadership scenarios (e.g., leading change and transformation) once the workshop method and packaging are proven.

This creates an opportunity for training institutions to strengthen their future role: from primarily organising courses to enabling workplace learning and leadership practice, and to demonstrate visible impact.

Purpose of the workshop

This second workshop in the series is designed to co-design, test, and package practical collaboration leadership micro-practices that can be piloted and then scaled across the Western Balkans via ReSPA.

Draft workshop schedule:

- Workshop 1: 24–25 March (Zagreb, NSPA)
- Workshop 2: 28–29 April (Zagreb, NSPA)
- Workshop 3: after summer (date tbc)

This workshop focuses on the scenario of collaboration leadership and develops “how-to” practices for 2–3 priority situations related to cross-unit coordination under constraints.

Participants from the Western Balkans will be deputy directors of the training institutions in the region or senior managers responsible for training programmes and methodologies.

BCL focuses on situations as the real unit of leadership work. Instead of teaching single competencies in isolation, we define capability bundles that leaders need in real situations (e.g., clarity + empathy + fairness + accountability + decision-making). We then translate those bundles into simple, usable micro-practices (“how-to” scripts and checklists) that leaders can apply in 10–15 minutes.

The workshops are designed as a prototype and learning cycle. Each workshop produces a tangible Workshop Pack (a transferable package of micro-practices, pilot guidance, and reinforcement elements) for operational leadership situations. In parallel, the workshop helps build the foundation for a broader evolution of training institutions toward an enabling role for workplace learning.

To ensure behaviour change is sustained, we add a reinforcement layer and a simple Leadership Culture Operating System (OS), including:

- a short pulse (monthly or biweekly when needed) as an early-warning indicator,
- self-reflection prompts after application,
- peer-to-peer coaching/learning loops,
- lightweight evidence (practice stories + minimal pilot log).

We recognise that a full transformation of training institutions requires additional changes beyond workshop content—such as adjustments in structures, processes, capabilities, and governance (e.g., how institutes work with ministries and agencies, how pilots are supported, and how learning is embedded into organisational routines).

BCL process

1. Define scenarios (small scenario library relevant for the region).
2. Select 2–3 situations per workshop within one scenario (prioritised by frequency, impact, and transfer relevance).
3. Collect short situation inputs from Croatia + Western Balkans delegates (anonymised, real-world).
4. Co-design in Zagreb using role-play stress testing to refine micro-practices.
5. Pilot in workplaces and collect minimal evidence for improvement.
6. Finalise and package (v1.1) for ReSPA-supported replication across WB institutes.
7. Reinforce via OS routines: pulse + reflection + peer-to-peer loops.

Note on scope: This concept note describes the BCL workshop method and outputs. A broader “training institute transformation” (structure/process changes to move L&D deeper into public organisations) can be addressed as a follow-up phase, informed by lessons learned from the workshop series.

Tuesday, 28 April 2026

Time	Session (topic + what happens + output)
09:00–09:30	Welcome & objectives – Why BCL, what we want to produce in 2 days, working rules, and introduction of participants. Output: shared understanding of goals, participant profile, and expected workshop deliverables.

09:30–10:15	Confirm workshop focus – Confirm the scenario (Collaboration Leadership: Cross-unit Coordination under Constraints) + 3 situations (S1–S3) and agree “what good looks like” hypotheses. Output: final workshop focus + success outcomes.
10:15–10:30	Break
10:30–12:00	Role-play cycle – Situation 1 – Scenario-based practice on ownership and coordination across silos (e.g., “not my mandate”). Baseline role-play → introduce basic “How-to” → improved role-play → capture v1 draft. Output: v1 draft micro-practice for Situation 1 (script + checklist + watch-outs).
12:00–13:00	Light lunch
13:00–14:30	Role-play cycle – Situation 2 – Scenario-based practice on urgent delivery with unclear requirements. Baseline → basic “How-to” → improved role-play → capture v1 draft. Output: v1 draft micro-practice for Situation 2.
14:30–14:45	Break
14:45–15:30	Quick refine S1 & S2 – Polish wording, simplify steps, and align on usability, ownership, and coordination routines across units. Output: improved v1 drafts for S1 and S2.
15:30–16:15	Leadership Culture OS (Pulse) – Select pulse items, cadence (monthly/biweekly), and trigger rule for when to activate collaboration practices. Output: OS pulse draft + trigger rule.
16:15–16:30	Prepare Situation 3 – Align on Situation 3 inputs, focusing on resource tensions and cross-unit coordination under pressure; prepare role-play roles and observer focus. Output: clear plan for Situation 3 role-play on Day 2.

Wednesday, 29 April 2026

Time	Session (topic + what happens + output)
09:00–09:15	Recap – Confirm Day 1 outputs and objectives for Day 2. Output: aligned start.
09:15–10:45	Role-play cycle – Situation 3 – Scenario-based practice on resource tensions across units. Baseline → basic “How-to” → improved role-play + optional advanced add-on (constraints). Output: v1 draft micro-practice for Situation 3.
10:45–11:00	Break
11:00–12:00	Pilot design (per situation) – Define where to test, who will use it, minimum uses, and check-in dates, with attention to deputy directors and senior managers responsible for training programmes and methodologies. Output: Pilot Plan (draft).

12:00–13:00	Light lunch
13:00–13:40	Evidence-lite plan – Agree pulse snapshot, 2–3 practice stories per situation, and a simple pilot log. Output: Evidence Plan (draft).
13:40–14:30	Transfer packaging (ReSPA-ready) – Define “core vs adaptable” and outline Workshop Pack structure for handover. Output: transfer notes + Workshop Pack outline.
14:30–15:15	Next steps & responsibilities – Clarify who finalises v1.1 after pilot, and confirm handover steps/timeline. Output: responsibility list + timeline.
15:15–16:00	Close – Confirm workshop outputs and immediate actions. Output: Workshop Pack v1 (draft) + Pilot Plan + Evidence Plan + transfer notes.