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Coaching in Public Administrations in the Western Balkans

- *Baseline Analysis* -

May 2017

ReSPA is a joint Initiative of European Union and the Western Balkan countries working towards fostering and strengthening regional cooperation in the field of public administration among its Member States. It seeks to offer excellent innovative and creative training events, networking activities, capacity building and consulting services to ensure that the shared values of respect, tolerance, collaboration and integration are reaffirmed and implemented throughout the public administrations in the region.

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ACRONYMS

AKM	Association of Municipalities of Kosovo*
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CF	Competency Framework
CoachU	Coach University
CSA	Civil Service Act
CSL	Civil Service Law
CTI	Coaches Training Institute
DCSA	Department of Civil Service Administration
DEI	Directorate of European Legislation DoPA Department of Public Administration
EMCC	European Mentoring and Coaching Council
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GPPD	General Program for Professional Development
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRMA	Human Resource Management Authority
HRMD	Human Resource Management & Development
HRMS	Human Resource Management Service
ICF	International Coach Federation
ICLA	Institute for Change & Leadership in Albania
KAPS	Academy for Public Safety of Kosovo*
KIPA	Institute for Public Administration of Kosovo*
L&D	Learning & Development
LAS	Law on Administrative Servants
LoCS	Law on Civil Service
MISA	Ministry of Information Technology and Administratio
MLSW	Ministry of Labour & Social Welfare
MNE	Montenegro
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MUP	Ministry of Internal Affairs
PA	Public Administration
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PCPA	Professional Coaching in Public Administration
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
ROE	Return on Expectation
ROI	Return on Investment
RS	Republic of Serbia
TIPA	Training Institute of Public Administration
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WB	Western Balkans
OD	Organisational Development

Executive Summary

Between November 2016 and March 2017, ReSPA, together with a faculty of regional and international experts, conducted a “Baseline Analysis on coaching in Public Administration in the WB region”.

The study has shown that coaching is not well understood and is sparsely used as a method of Human Resource (HR) development in the WB countries. However, there is generally a strong interest expressed in finding out more about coaching and there is an overall widespread belief that coaching can be useful.

One exception here is Serbia, where there is much more awareness about coaching, and where coaching is used in PA. This is not too surprising, as our experience in the EU countries has been that PA follows the private sector, and there has been an increased use of coaching in the private sector in Serbia over the last decade. The other WB countries do not have a very developed coaching practice in the private sector, but in all of them we have observed that the market is just starting to open up for coaching. Our assumption is that, when the private sector accepts coaching as an HR development tool, it will be increasingly used in PA as well. In this respect, now is the perfect time to systematically develop an overall strategy and policy for the use of coaching in PA.

One striking fact, across the board, with the exception of Serbia, is the lack of understanding about what exactly coaching is and how it is separate from other HR methodologies - mentoring in particular. Besides a lack of exposure to coaching practices, another reason for the lack of understanding of what coaching is, is a confusion around the terminology. There are instances, where the term “coaching” has been translated as “training”, or even “mentoring”. In the cases when the term “coaching” is not translated but just transcribed, there is still confusion about the actual meaning of coaching and how it might be different from sports coaching or mentoring.

In most of the WB country institutions, coaching is not used at all, and if it is, those uses are sporadic and unsystematic and their benefits are not measured. In those instances, coaching is initiated through external funding or internal individual initiative, but not as a part of a learning and development (L&D) strategy. It is easy to understand how such sporadic uses of coaching have no consistency of methodology, coach or coachee selection, or alignment with the overall strategy of PA. It is therefore impossible to fully understand their impact on human capital.

What is encouraging in our findings is that there is a great interest for better understanding of coaching, and a belief that coaching can help in capacity building and individual and organizational development. It seems that although little is known about this methodology, there is significant curiosity about its potential benefits.

The obstacles to the possible implementation of coaching as an HR main development methodology are primarily a lack of internal experts and expertise and a lack of funds. What we also observed as a possible challenge to the successful implementation of coaching is the lack of strategic alignment around objectives and methodologies for implementation, both within each individual country, but even more importantly among all the WB countries. This is where ReSPA can play a crucial role in creating a platform for alignment and implementation.

Our research made it clear that PA in all the countries are keen to find out more about coaching. When asked about their preferred ways of disseminating knowledge about coaching, they requested exchanges of experience, workshops, trainings and experiencing a coaching session.

The information gathered above, coupled with what we have learned about PA in the WB countries, has lead us to believe that there is sufficient need for and interest in coaching in the WB countries, but that the steps toward implementation will need to be well thought through and strategically planned.

1 Introduction and purpose of the analysis

1.1 Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the inter-governmental organisation for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration (PA) in the Western Balkans (WB). ReSPA's purpose is to help governments in the region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union (EU).

Since its inception, ReSPA has contributed to the development of human resources and administrative capacities through training programmes and various cooperation initiatives, such as the exchange of good practices, peer reviews and development of know-how.

The main objective of ReSPA's work in 2016-2017 is improving regional cooperation in the field of Public Administration Reform (PAR) and EU integration and strengthening the administrative capacities of its beneficiaries. This objective will be achieved through the following three pillars of the ReSPA Programme of Work for 2016-2017:

- (1) European Integration Pillar: Increased capacity of public administration in the ReSPA Members necessary for successfully conducting the European Integration process;
- (2) Public Administration Reform Pillar: Facilitated and enhanced cooperation and exchange of experience in Public Administration Reform and European Integration activities in ReSPA Members;
- (3) Governance for Growth Pillar: Ensured effective coordination of the implementation of the Governance for Growth pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

Public administration reform, as one of the three key pillars, is itself comprehensive and requires significant resources. Strategic human resources management and development (HRMD) is essential to the good governance and management of public administration. In thinking of the best ways to develop, strengthen and support human resources, we must keep in mind financial, political, educational and cultural challenges and constraints. ReSPA believes that the tools and methodologies used in the process of strengthening these capacities need to be diversified.

Coaching has been recognised as an advanced methodology in strengthening the capacities of PA. In the current environment, performance management systems that strive to be effective must support a constant development of their employees. A constant acquisition of knowledge, adaptability in applying that knowledge and lateral peer development is the key to agile public administration. Rather than to control, the role of the management becomes to support, consult and coach. The culture thus created is much more participative and therefore much more adaptive.

ReSPA has recognised the need to conduct a baseline coaching analysis that would offer a clear picture of where and how is coaching present in the WB countries and what further

actions are needed to develop towards the level of the best practices in the EU member countries.

Between November 2016 and March 2017, ReSPA, together with a faculty of regional and international experts, conducted a “Baseline Analysis on coaching in Public Administration in the WB region”.

The main objective of the analysis originally was to conduct a comparative study with baseline analysis of coaching in the Western Balkans, which would encompass the state of art in coaching policy and legislation in public administrations in the WB countries. It was anticipated that the study would compare the practices among the countries of the WB region as well as between the WB countries and identified samples from EU Member States in achieved progress, with a special focus on potential regional cooperation in this process. It was contemplated that the analysis would then serve as the main document for further support to WB administrations in drafting necessary policy and legal documents at national level.

On the 7th of October 2016, during a two-day HRMD Working Group Meeting on Competency Framework and Coaching, the lead expert on the study delivered a One Day Activity on the Concept of Coaching. The Objectives for this activity were threefold: to introduce the ReSPA HRMD Working group to the use of coaching as a primary HR development methodology, its benefits and applications. In addition, the aim of the activity was to present the methodology, scope and timings of the baseline analysis on coaching and gather preliminary information about the state of coaching as a development tool in the WB countries.

It became clear during the meeting that very little is known about coaching in the WB countries, and, that at least to the knowledge of the experts present at the meeting, coaching was only used in Serbia systematically as an HR development methodology.

These preliminary findings were confirmed very clearly during the study, and it became clear that there is no coaching policy and legislation present in the WB countries, and that the main baseline analysis needs to focus on awareness of coaching and the needs and challenges for the possible introduction of coaching to the region.

It also confirmed the need to draw on the best practices of the EU member states and see how they can be best applied in the WB context.

The objective that remained very relevant, though, was that the analysis can serve as the main document for further support to WB administrations in drafting the necessary coaching policies and legal documents at the national level, should coaching be accepted as a needed and desired methodology in HR development.

Although the findings of the research could be seen as discouraging as coaching is, other than in Serbia, only sporadically or not present at all in the WB countries, this state of practice represents an outstanding opportunity to create a unified platform of shared policies, practices and expertise - the development of which can be easily monitored.

This report has been prepared by six national experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, supported by one international expert. It is based on desk research, selected interviews with key persons in each country and an online survey.

1.2 The role of coaching in HR Development

Our belief is that coaching can make significant contributions to the three pillars of the ReSPA program of work. Coaching is a capacity that will serve managers across all levels in its own right, and, at the same time, it can be used as a management and leadership skill to develop all the other capacities that are defined by the capacities framework of a particular organisation.

There are two approaches used for developing capacities of human resources: technical and adaptive.

1. TECHNICAL

Technical, or lateral development, assumes providing new information so that an employee or a team can be more productive or learn new skills. This is the type of development where manuals, instructions and/or training to develop the capacities are used. Mentoring can also help, through sharing of the mentor's expertise and experience. In many instances, this is the correct approach to capacity building. However, in organisational development (OD) there are very often examples, where new information does not help to instigate a change in behavior or make it sustainable. That is a signal that a different approach to change is needed, namely the adaptive one.

2. ADAPTIVE

The other approach to HR development and OD is adaptive, and it focuses not on new generic information, but on the ways in which a particular individual, or a team, can adapt the information they are given so that they can make use of it and integrate it. It helps individuals and teams grow, develop and adopt new ways of behaving. While technical approaches are always focused on the content coming from the outside, adaptive approaches are focused on the person, and their internal strengths and challenges, helping them to assimilate and apply the new content in a way that is meaningful to them. While training and mentoring can also help with adaptive learning and adaptive changes, it is coaching that can make the most significant difference here.

Both of the technical and adaptive approaches are needed in developing HR capacities, and as a consequence organisations and companies nowadays make sure to have a good balance of the two and carefully choose which one to use in a particular situation.

We believe that the recognition of the need for adaptive change and agility is the single most important reason why coaching is becoming more and more common in organisations.

Coaching is a methodology for unlocking people's potential to improve performance. It can help to develop people's skills, as well as help them deal with set backs and challenges.

As such, it is highly generic in terms of application (it can be applied in any work context and situation), yet it is always customised (the process is shaped to fit the person being coached, and the agenda always comes from the person being coached).

In the companies where coaching is used, the culture created is that of agility and adaptability, responsibility and awareness. And these three qualities are needed for the three pillars of ReSPA's program of work.

The strategic benefits of the use of coaching include:

1. Increasing the overall capacity of PA, as coaching can be used in developing each of the capacities in the capacity framework established.
2. Increasing leadership and management skills at the top of the hierarchy, as the most likely candidates for individual coaching will be senior managers and leaders.
3. Increasing capacity of individuals and teams to create self-generated learning and take ownership and responsibility for their own development.
4. Developing a methodology and language that will help adapt any new program, method or information, to the context of a specific country or institution.
5. Creating high performing teams, as it has been shown that teams that have managers and leaders who use coaching skills score better on positivity and productivity scales and work overall more effectively.

1.3 Purpose, rationale and contents of this study

The purpose of this study is to provide clear guidelines for the development of coaching as an HR methodology in the WB countries.

The aim of this study was to conduct a screening with a Baseline Analysis on coaching in Public Administrations in the WB region, which will encompass the state of art in coaching in public service in the WB countries. The objective was also to draw comparisons between the WB countries and selected EU Member States in the field of work, and to outline the best practices that can serve as a guideline for the development of coaching in the WB countries.

Since 2014 the European Commission has tried to strengthen the credibility of its enlargement policy and enhance its transformative power by ensuring a stronger focus on the three pillars of the enlargement process: rule of law, economic governance and public administration reform. Public administration reform, as one of the three key pillars, is comprehensive in scope and requires resources. The crucial resource is human capital. Human capacity development is an essential, but not easy task given the many challenges and constraints – namely: financial, political, educational, cultural among others.

Strategic HRMD is an essential element of the good governance and management of public administration. It is necessary to develop the capacities of PA in all the WB countries, so as to build a professionally compliant PA that both meets the needs of the citizens and is able to handle the EU integration process. Human resources capacity building and development is needed, both horizontally and vertically. It is clear that there is a need for diversifying the tools and methodologies for strengthening the HR capacities. Coaching has been recognised as an advanced methodology in the supporting the strengthening of the capacities of PA, with particular focus on the senior levels. It is important to analyse and identify the gaps and challenges that coaching may help overcome.

Moreover, coaching has been shown to be a useful way of developing people's skills and abilities, and of boosting performance.

Many EU member states and other developed countries have relatively long experience in

implementing coaching in their respective public services. Good coaching practices have also been recognised in the private sector where administrations may benefit from lessons learnt as well.

1.4 Methodology of Survey and Analysis

Originally, the study was envisaged as a survey that would provide data for the four separate sections of research in order to establish key indicators that would serve as an information base against which future progress could be monitored:

- Presence (including barriers to coaching)
- Regulation
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Our main questions that we approached the study with were:

- Is coaching present as a development method? (if so, how?)
- Is it regulated/standardised? (if so, how?)
- Is it evaluated? (if so, how?)

Our Key Indicators suggested both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The first round of investigation was intended to be eliminatory (yes/no) and quantifiable (how many services, how many people exposed to coaching, how many coaching programs), while the second part required a qualitative approach (how?).

However, during the HRMD WG meeting in October 2016 in Danilovgrad, and during the subsequent preliminary conversations with local lead experts, it became clear that coaching is almost absent in the WB and that there was very little knowledge of what coaching exactly is.

These findings influenced our decision of how to proceed with the study and consequently, the study was conducted in two parts. The first part was conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews with heads/representatives of the relevant institutions. The second part of the study was conducted through an online survey conducted in January and February 2017. The survey returned 82 responses in total, which gives a valid overall basis for conclusions. However, the number of respondents in the individual countries does not fulfill the validity criteria, but nevertheless gives a good overview of the state of awareness about coaching and the assumed needs and benefits (The number of respondents in each individual country was: Albania 9, Bosnia 19, Kosovo* 21, Macedonia 7, Montenegro 10 and Serbia 16).

The study is based on the collaboration of the author and regional experts from each of the countries listed above. The research, as mentioned above, included interviews with representatives of relevant institutions, and a follow up online survey for such representatives and additional HR staff and coaching service providers.

2 Importance and Use of Coaching in HR development

“Coaching can be seen as a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders”

Elaine Cox

“Unlocking people’s potential to improve performance”

Sir John Whitmore

Constant development and agile management are the keys in developing an effective and professional PA. This requires the use of different development tools and methodologies based on the needs of the individuals, teams and organisation as a whole. One of the methodologies that has been implemented with accelerating speed in HR development, is coaching. The likelihood of coaching being used across the various situations tested has generally increased in a very short time. For example, senior executives have become significantly more likely to use coaching as an ongoing support tool (33% in 2013 compared with 18% in 2011, and that percentage today is significantly higher). As such, coaching is rapidly becoming one of the most widely used methodologies.

However, there is still confusion, especially outside the Western European countries and North America as to what coaching is and how it can help. The main reason for this is that the practices of coaching are customised to the coach, the coachee (the person being coached) and the context of coaching relationship. Therefore, although the skills used by trained coaches are generally the same, as are the general parameters of the engagement and the process, there will be a variety of different dynamics in each particular situation. This dynamic and contextual nature of coaching is, at the same time, what makes it such an effective tool in human capital development.

A brief history of coaching

Coaching emerged simultaneously in different countries, with the United States and the United Kingdom leading the way in the 80s. However, it was really in the 90s, with the emergence of coaching training schools that the development of coaching accelerated. In Europe, at the time France, Austria, Germany and Switzerland (in addition to the UK) started using coaching as a personal and professional development tool. China, Japan, Singapore and Australia followed in the late 90s.

Some seminal dates in the development of coaching are the following:

1. 1974 — The Inner Game of Tennis, Tim Gallway – Tim Gallway is considered the “godfather” of coaching as he was the first one, in the sports context, to speak about the opponent in one’s own head as opposed to the opponent on the other side of the net, or as he referred to it “the inner game”. He even came up with the formula for performance: performance=potential-interference. And in 1980, he developed Inner Game coaching.

2. 1992 — Coaching for Performance, Sir John Whitmore – Coaching for Performance remains one of the most widely used books on coaching and the GROW model, introduced in this book, is applied across the world, both in management and coaching.

3. 1992 — Coaches Training Institute (CTI): Laura Whitworth, and Karen and Henry Kimsey-House and Coach University (Coach U): Thomas Leonard – In 1992 these very influential coaching schools were founded which helped the development of the coaching profession and paved the way for high standards of coaching education, both for coaching professionals and managers as coaches.

4. 1995 — International Coach Federation (ICF) – The importance of the International Coach Federation in setting the professional and ethical standards for the coaching profession was critical. Today the majority of organisations in Western Europe and the United States, look for ICF accreditation when hiring external coaches. Within Europe, the European Mentoring Council, (founded in 1992), changed its name and scope of activities in 2002 to include coaching, and is active today as the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

How is coaching different from other modalities of organisational development?:

Mentoring and coaching – A mentor is someone who advises or trains a younger colleague. Mentoring is based on sharing the experience and guidance of the more senior person (“this is how I did it”). It tends to provide advice and answers to questions. Coaching, on the other hand, does not provide answers or advice, but helps the person discover the answers for themselves. Coaching also has clearly defined goals and time limits.

Training and coaching – Training involves imparting information through an organised activity, in order to teach or develop someone’s skills. It has clearly pre-defined outcomes coming from the outside of the trainer/trainee relationship. In coaching, the goals are defined within the coach/coachee relationship and the agenda is set by the coachee. Also, while training and mentoring imply a hierarchical relationship, coaching is a partnering process where the coach and coachee are considered to be equal.

At the times when PA needs to show flexibility, agility and responsibility, coaching is an excellent tool to help develop these capacities. Because, while training and mentoring can help in transferring particular skills, coaching promotes individual development and ownership and conscious, intentional implementation of those skills. The ability to tailor the coaching to the needs of the coachee sets it apart from training and mentoring. This is not to say that one is better than the other, rather that one might be better suited to a particular context or particular needs than the other.

Furthermore, not only is coaching a competency in itself, but it can help develop all other competencies in the competency framework. In an environment where change is rapid and constant, coaching can provide necessary support for the fast-paced learning and development needed.

Benefits of coaching

We have mentioned earlier that coaching is dynamic and contextual. Because of that, the specific benefits of coaching are numerous and varied, depending on the goals of the coachee, the goals of the organisation and the context of coaching. We believe that the process of coaching is most effective at:

- **Increasing confidence**
- **Interpersonal effectiveness** (better communication skills, less toxic behaviours)
- **Developing strategies for coping with work demands**
- **Enhancing personal performance**

The benefits for the organisation include:

- Improvement in productivity
- Increased levels of employee engagement
- Improved team work
- Leadership development and performance at all levels

The PricewaterhouseCoopers study for the ICF identifies the following benefits of coaching (the data is quoted from the ICF website)²:

Increased Productivity

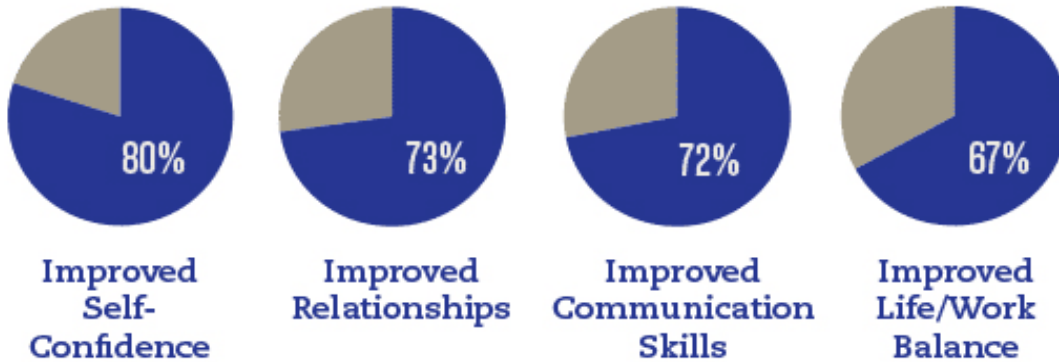
Professional coaching maximises potential and, therefore, unlocks latent sources of productivity.



² Source: ICF Global Coaching Client Study was commissioned by the ICF but conducted independently by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

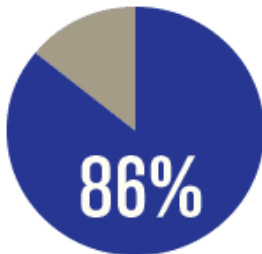
Positive People

Building the self-confidence of employees to face challenges is critical in meeting organisational demands.



Return on Investment

Coaching generates learning and clarity for forward action with a commitment to measurable outcomes. The vast majority of companies (86%) say they at least made their investment back.



Satisfied Clients

Virtually all companies and individuals who hire a coach are satisfied.



Conclusion:

The implementation of coaching as an HR development tool would therefore help strengthen PA in the WB countries and further build the capacities of employees regardless of the level they are currently at. The nature of coaching is such that it can be applied regardless of the level of knowledge, skill or experience, as it is always customised for the person, team or organisation in question. Therefore, while other kinds of HR methodologies – specific trainings for example, have to be adjusted for a particular level or target audience, or cultural environment, a strategically designed coaching policy and methodology can be used across the WB countries, creating a unified platform for future development.

2.1 Global and European developments

On a global level, the current development of coaching is very often referred to as the “second wave”. This mostly relates to the context of coaching. During the “first wave” of coaching in organisations, there was a misguided tendency to perceive coaching as a correction tool. That provoked resistance among employees, as being coached was viewed as a sign of a weakness or a failure. The “second wave” of coaching, rightfully so, emphasises coaching as a methodology to further develop one’s potential, and as such is accepted from the employees as “good news”. The offer of coaching is nowadays perceived as a sign of trust from the organisation and the willingness to invest in the employee.

Studies show that coaching tended to evolve in organisations over time rather than as a response to a specific event, and therefore very few organisations have a developed coaching strategy. Coaching is generally brought into an organisation in the context of leadership development, transition, or culture change. Coaching is sometimes introduced at times of specific changes in organisations to help with the change management (like organisational expansion or transformation).

Currently, on the global level, coaching is offered to a variety of levels in organisations, with the emphasis still being on the senior managers. There is an increasing demand for team coaching as that is seen as having a significant impact on building a desirable culture in the organisation.

The objective for coaching is most frequently increasing an individual’s performance, not as a correction, but as help to bring it to the next level. That is why coaching is very often used at senior levels, or at times of transition from one position to another.

For individual coaching, employees volunteer, or are selected to receive coaching and generally have between 6 and 12, coaching sessions, conducted over a 3-6-month period. Generally, it is the individual him or herself who volunteers or the line managers that suggest a particular employee for coaching.

Coaches are then selected either from an internal or external pool, based on their experience and recommendation. In the best practice cases, the coachee can select between the two or three coaches offered.

Coaching is mostly conducted face to face, although skype coaching is also a widely-accepted practice.

The price of coaching for the organisation vary, with the average for the senior levels being 200-400 € per hour.

A majority of employees and organisations see coaching as a good investment, as the main objective of coaching, namely enhancing personal and team performance, is most often achieved.

One trend in the global development of coaching is the development of better evaluation tools that help quantify both ROI (return on investment) and ROE (return on expectation) of coaching. While ROI focuses on the benefit to the organisation, ROE focuses on the value added to the coachee. Qualitative benefits are the main measures used to assess the effectiveness of coaching, although there is a desire and need for more quantitative measures. According to the ICF, the success of a coaching program is determined by the feedback from coachees and their line managers (in 75% of the cases). In light of this, while the majority agrees that coaching is effective, most of the available evidence for this conclusion is still anecdotal. We believe that well established feedback loops that would involve the coachee, the coach and the manager (keeping in mind the alignment with the organisational strategy), would lead to the most effective use of coaching in organisations.

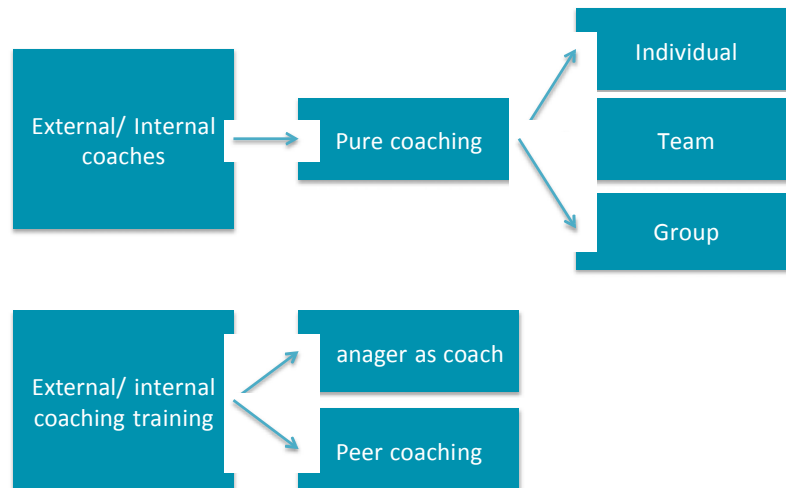
In our view, the key current issues facing coaching as a methodology in HR development are: lack of strategy for the use of coaching within the organisation; insufficient evaluation and uneven standards. The development of coaching is currently moving towards resolving these issues and bringing coaching to a new level.

2.2 Overview of the modalities of coaching used in organisations

When coaching was first introduced to organisations, only one modality was utilised – individual coaching done by an external coach. That is still the most common way for coaching to be delivered in OD, but nowadays a variety of modalities are available and it is important to make an informed decision when deciding which one to use. Using a variety of approaches works the best if the objective is to make more sustainable changes across the organisation or to evolve the organisational culture.

The overview of the modalities of coaching used in organisations is set out in the chart below:

Organizational applications



9

Individual coaching – Individual coaching is a process that involves regular one-to-one sessions between a coach and the coachee, over a limited period of time (sessions can be weekly, bi-weekly or once a month, commonly one hour in length, over the period of 3 to 6 months, sometimes longer). These sessions can be held face to face or over skype or phone.

Team coaching – Team coaching is a process where one or two coaches work with a team as a whole to improve their performance and strengthen the team culture, based on the goals that team itself has defined. Coaches facilitate reflection, dialogue and action in bi-weekly or monthly sessions over a period of time (6 to 12 months).

Group coaching – Group coaching is a process whereby a coach works with a group of individuals, who are not from the same team, and are not line managers or direct reports to each other, facilitating a process that will support professional and personal development of each individual in the group by leveraging the insights and experiences of group members. Group coaching usually involves one to two hour monthly or bi-monthly sessions over a period of 6 to 12 months or longer.

Peer Coaching - Peer coaching is a process through which two or more professional colleagues, who are trained in coaching skills, work together to reflect on their goals, behaviour and overall professional development. Peers can have regular hourly sessions, on bi-weekly or monthly bases, or they can meet on demand to work on a particular issue in one or a few sessions.

Manager as a coach – Coaching can be used as an approach in managing people in order to help people develop, increase motivation, and improve performance. In this case, coaching would be a way of communicating rather than a structured process, although the manager might decide to have regular meetings dedicated to discussing the employee's development,

providing timely feedback and allowing the space for reflection for both parties. This approach assumes that manager is trained in coaching skills.

External versus internal coaching

Both external and internal coaching has its benefits and can be successfully used.

Internal coaches have the benefit of understanding the culture of the organisation and the nature of the work better. They require initial investment in their training, but once trained, they represent a readily available resource to the organisation without additional cost. As such, they are easily accessible to the coachees. An organisation that utilises internal coaches also has the added benefit that the internal coaches will use their coaching skills in other daily work interactions, not just in the coaching sessions. The potential downsides of using internal coaches are the issues of confidentiality and the influence of their opinions and biases on the coaching process that is supposed to be neutral. Often the level of training of the internal coaches is lower than that of the external ones.

The advantages of external coaches are that they are on average better trained and more experienced and that coaching is their main professional activity. They are often experienced in different coaching models and use a variety of approaches. They tend to be independent and unbiased. The main downside of the external coaches is the cost. Lack of understanding of the context and the company's culture can also be perceived as a drawback.

2.3. Examples of the best practices in coaching

The use of coaching in HR development in Europe has grown exponentially over the past two decades, and has become an integral part of organisational development in many organisations both in the private and in the public sectors. It is important, at this point, to learn from best practices that could inform the future interventions, policies and research in the field.

Below, we share two examples of best practices in coaching in PA, one from the European Commission, and one from the French public administration at the ministry level that we believe are instructive. The reason we have chosen these two particular examples is two-fold:

- a) In both instances a variety of coaching modalities are used, showing great understanding of the use of coaching and also allowing for the coaching culture to be embedded in the organisation.
- b) In both instances coaching is seen as a development and not corrective tool, and as such both practices reflect the advanced, second wave of coaching, that focuses on growth, transformation and potential.

The European Commission

The European Commission is exceptional among public institutions in that it has organically developed and successfully implemented a variety of coaching modalities, creating a strong coaching platform in the organisation.

The following coaching modalities are used within the Commission: individual, team, group and peer coaching. Both external and internal coaching are used, as well as training for managers as coaches. This multi-prong approach has allowed for coaching to slowly but steadily become imbedded in the organisation, developing a common language that is important for a sustainable use of coaching.

We will outline a brief history of the development of coaching within the European Commission as it offers valuable insight for the organisations that would like to implement coaching in their HR development. We will then go on to outline the implementation of each of the modalities used.

A brief history of the development of individual coaching and coaching training in the European Commission:

At the beginning of this century, external individual coaching for managers was the first coaching modality to be brought into the EC.

It was seen as a solution for the demand of the top managers to be given a platform where they can expose, share and think through their work dilemmas and difficulties in a safe environment.

At first, HR believed that training in a circle of peers might provide that platform, but an attempt to implement this was met with disapproval from the managers. It became clear that what was needed was not training, as the managers were not looking for new skills and knowledge, but a different kind of intervention where they could reflect on their issues and look for solutions in a non-pressured, neutral environment. This was a signal for the head of Learning & Development (L&D) to turn to coaching. In 2003, the first external coaches were procured for the EC managers who expressed an interest.

In 2006, following the interest of the trainers who had already started using some coaching techniques in their interventions, a coaching training program was organised for internal trainers. An external coaching trainer was brought in to facilitate a 10-day training in coaching skills. The trainees were offered the possibility to continue towards accreditation, which two of them did.

However, the trainees, who now had the coaching skills, still did not have an official platform to implement internal coaching. Believing that this would be extremely useful for the employees, despite the fact that there was no official platform, they volunteered their time outside their work hours (lunch times, weekends, after hours, etc) to providing coaching to those interested. The demand grew, and soon after one of the two accredited coaches, Sophie Mercier, found herself, with permission of her senior manager, coaching during regular work hours as well, and very quickly the majority of her time became dedicated to coaching work.

This period of development was marked by enthusiasm of the HR staff and their belief in coaching which allowed them to move forward despite the lack of the structure. They created both the buy-in and the structure by doing and implementing coaching.

The next phase of development came in 2015 with the introduction of a new L&D strategy. In the preparation of this strategy, the new head of L&D organised focus groups across the Commission to find out important information. One of the questions posed asked about the most useful learning and development interventions that the employees had experienced. Two kinds of interventions were voted as the most useful:

- 1) Participatory Leadership and
- 2) Coaching – with a strong emphasis on the internal coaching.

Following those findings, the EC HR decided to set up an internal coaching practice. The intention was to make a policy paper, but, for efficiency reasons, the decision was made to write an orientation note under a wider document on development for managers. The orientation note is currently being developed.

In the meantime, with the same unwavering enthusiasm, the HR department decided to immediately develop an internal coaching service, and European Commission now has an active internal coaching network.

They have followed the advice of Catherine St John-Brooks, whom they hired to advise on the development of internal coaching, not to start “coaching for everybody”. What this meant was to define target service users, in line with the overall L&D strategy and offer coaching to them. Having learned from experience that managers trained in coaching skills have more productive teams, they decided to develop a coaching program for managers. As a consequence, a peer coaching program was developed, through which managers are trained in coaching skills, while in parallel a platform for peer coaching is created. In that way, there is a double benefit for the organisations. Managers can both utilise their coaching skills with their teams, but they can also support each other through the peer coaching program.

Parallel to this, there was another strand of development that allowed for the strengthening of internal coaching within the organisation.

HR employees who worked on career guidance and counselling recognised a strong need to add coaching to their skillset, and a large number of them received external coaching qualification (though self-initiative) training in different methodologies. HR recognised that more and more people were getting skilled, and understood that for the organisation it would be the best to create the structure where this wealth of resources could be utilised in line with the L&D strategy.

With the idea of creating a network that allows for the practice of coaching to be aligned with the common vision, HR offered an internal HR accreditation path, based on the same path as the peer coaching for managers program.

This provided for the coherency in the approach, abiding to the same ethical guidelines, and service agreement that outlines responsibility both towards the client and the organisation.

At the moment, managers in the EC have an option to be coached by an external coach, by an internal HR coach, or by a peer coach.

Parallel to the development of individual coaching and training in coaching skills, the EC also started implementing group coaching and team coaching.

Currently, the only evaluation of the coaching process are the questionnaires that are sent to managers after the coaching agreement is finished. The managers consistently feed back that coaching has increased their confidence, made them more assertive, reignited their motivation and improved their communication with peers and direct reports.

Outlined below are the processes for the different coaching methodologies currently in use:

External coaching

A manager can request an external coach. It is important that the coaching process is started upon the manager's initiative. He or she can choose their coach from an approved list of coaches that contains all the external coaches' bios. Typically the manager will pick three coaches from the book, have a half-hour chemistry session with each one of them and then choose the coach he or she would like to work with.

The contract between the manager and the coach would generally be for 6 to 8 sessions, with the possibility of renewing the contract. On average, the length of the coaching relationship is 12 sessions.

(All the contracts for external coaches are done through the School of Administration. The coaches, once their skills and experience are approved by the School of Administration, have to go through an accreditation process with the EC HR panel, which evaluates not only their skills, but also how well they are aligned with the EC culture.)

Internal coaching

A manager can request an internal coach. Again, it is important that the coaching relationship is started upon initiative. Managers interested in coaching approach the HR department coach, who then recommends an internal coach. Following the recommendation, the manager has a chemistry session with that coach, and if agreed, they contract for 3 meetings with a possibility of renewal. The reason this contract period is shorter is because the internal coaching is mostly used to deal with a pressing work challenge.

Peer coaching

A manager can express interest in undertaking training in coaching skills. If selected, he or she will go through the training, over a 3 month period, with a group of other managers. Following the training, the manager is then added to a pool of peer coaches. Peer coaches regularly meet to practice their coaching skills. Those interested in being coached are connected with a peer with whom they do not work directly, and have no work interactions.

Team coaching

Team coaching is typically requested by the team manager as an intervention, most often because the team is facing a challenge in the way they work together or "resolve issues". This type of coaching is usually conducted by one or two external coaches, working together in single monthly sessions over 6 to 12 months. Internal trainers and coaches also use coaching skills and tools during team interventions.

Group coaching

Group coaching was introduced in the European Commission through the “Management duel” program. The intention was to help two managers from the same department develop co-leadership skills. Group coaching is typically done in a group comprised of 6 pairs of managers who regularly meet so that they can work on their leadership development skills, issues they are facing and their goals in a coaching environment.

Next steps:

The HR department has a clear vision of what the next steps are in the strategic development of coaching within the EC. The main lines of development are in: introducing more solid, longer term evaluation processes that would help track the impact of coaching; aligning the individual development and benefits of coaching with the organisational goals development strategy; and strengthening the internal capacities for coaching through regular supervision. Specific steps would include:

1. Introducing evaluations that would measure long term impacts (what are the changes that have been put into place/sustained after 6 months), so that the ingredients of the coaching process that lead to the long-lasting transformation can be established.
2. Establishing a centralised assessment for anyone who would like to be coached, in order to decide which kind of coaching would be the most efficient for them.
2. Introducing a tripartite meeting, so that the benefit for the organisation is more strategically emphasised.
3. Introducing co-developmental groups, so that the people can stay in the coaching mode.
4. Introducing regular obligatory supervision for all internal coaches, as well as yearly supervision for peer coaches.

Main takeaways:

1. Position coaching as a development, not a corrective tool

Originally, coaching was used as a last resort, a kind of a fixing tool for those who are having a difficult time. Now, coaching is seen as a developmental path, and this change has been the result not only of the vision of the HR department, but also of the change in the perception of coaching in the managers themselves. While senior managers rarely request coaching, middle management (mostly due to age and perception) are keen to be coached.

2. Make a connection with the L&D strategy

In order for coaching to be mainstreamed and credible, it needs to be linked to an existing HR policy. It is very difficult to connect coaching to an overall development strategy, if coaching is disconnected from the strategic development path. Natural places where coaching can be brought in are, for example, a transition from one level of hierarchy to another, and managing a team.

3. Top down approach

For coaching to take roots in the culture, it needs to come from the top, or to be embraced by the top leadership. It is crucial for the top management to share the language of coaching, so that it can become a mode of communication in everyday work.

4. The impact of coaching needs to be measured

Although coachees unanimously rate coaching as useful in the questionnaires sent after coaching, it is important to measure the longer-term impact of coaching and its benefits both for the individual as well as for the team and the organisation. The value of coaching is largely spread by word of mouth and therefore remains mainly anecdotal. It is important to consistently use relevant tools so that progress can be measured. In order to create clarity in the marketplace regarding the benefits of coaching, it is important to have clear evaluation tools.

France

Public administration in France has been open to coaching and all its modalities. A testimony to this is the document published by The Directorate for Public Administration and the Civil Service, which serves as a guide for the use of coaching in public administration. The document was published in 2011 under the title of “Professional Coaching in Public Administration – Definition, methodology, best practices and guide for action” (“Le coaching professionnel dans la fonction publique – Definition et method, bonnes pratiques ministerielles, outils pour agir”, referred to as the PCPA in the further text).

This document is important as an excellent example of a guide for implementing coaching. It explains what coaching is, who the target audience is, and what the instances and indications are for its use.

Additionally, this guide validates the second wave of coaching referred to above in that it does not consider coaching as a correction tool, but as a development methodology that is used for support and evaluation.

It also refers to a variety of coaching modalities (individual, team and group), which demonstrates a great understanding of the coaching methodology and promotes a coaching culture within an organisation.

When to use coaching?

One important question for PA that considers implementing coaching is to consider when to use coaching rather than other interventions.

The PCPA outlines four main instances when coaching can be used:

- a) development of individuals (for professional development and reach of professional objectives).
- b) relational skills – focused on the development of relationships in all directions (manager, direct report, peer to peer).

c) management and team development (for example in the instances of restructuring or forming new entities).

d) leadership development (development of strategic goals as they relate to the whole organisation).

The focus in all of the above, in line with the understanding of coaching as a methodology, is on development. Coaching is in all instances used to bring an individual or a team to the next level of their performance, broaden their skillset and widen their understanding and awareness.

It is also important to note that individual, team and group coaching are all referred to and used.

Significant emphasis is given to distinguish coaching from consulting, mentoring, tutoring and training. We believe that this is extremely important, as in the countries where coaching is not widely used, there is still confusion between coaching and these other methodologies of development, particularly mentoring and consulting.

Another important element of this guide is that it requires that coaching is delivered by trained and accredited professionals, whether they work as internal or external coaches. It also emphasises the need in certain instances to have two coaches working together at the same time, (such as with the teams).

The PCPA also emphasises that coaching has to be chosen either by the beneficiary (coachee), or in the agreement between the sponsor and the beneficiary (for which a tripartite meeting is suggested), but cannot be imposed on them. Coaching is seen as an “investment in the (beneficiary’s) talent”.

The document also contains examples of coaching contracts (both bi-partite and tri partite), an ethical charter for coaches and a bibliography.

Below are some further examples of the best practices suggested by the ministries of agriculture, ecology, and home affairs.

Ministry of Ecology

Coaching has been used, in the form of external individual coaching in the French Ministry of Ecology since 2005.

There is a pool of external coaches (approximately 30), and a network of internal coaches. Both external and internal coaches are accredited. Internal coaches have gone through various coaching trainings, but different methodologies and approaches are seen as a plus, as they offer variety of profiles that might fulfil different needs. However, consistent with the EC model, alignment with the organisational vision and HR strategy is also required. Internal coaches have regular supervision and abide by a Code of Ethics. The key criteria for a selection are: experience and knowledge, motivation, skills and personal suitability, values, and how he or she fits within the rest of the team (in terms of diversification).

Treasury

Another useful example given is how coaching is used at the Treasury. In this particular instance, coaching is used during the evaluation process and this process is seen as a development tool rather than a corrective tool. Thirty top managers are entitled to an hour and a half of coaching to go over the bottom-up 180° feedback that they receive annually. Coaching is very much seen as an opportunity to develop managers, not to measure their performance.

Main takeaways:

1. Position coaching as a development, not a corrective tool

Similar to the EC example, the French PA emphasises the importance of using coaching as a development tool. They also strongly emphasise that working with a coach has to be a coachee's choice, even if the suggestion for coaching can come from their manager. Coaching does not work if it is imposed.

2. Make a connection with the L&D strategy

The PCPA, like the EC, emphasises the alignment of coaching strategy with the overall L&D strategy in the furtherance of the organisational vision. When used outside of this context, the impact and effect of coaching are not leveraged and in some cases can even work against an organisation's vision and benefits.

3. Top down approach

For coaching to take its roots in the culture, it needs to come from the top, or to be embraced by the top leadership. Coaching is offered to the top managers who are in the best position to promote and utilise it and spread the coaching language within the organisation.

4. One of the places where coaching can be easily implemented are performance reviews

AF, the French Treasury, for example, top managers are entitled to an hour and a half of coaching to go over their bottom-up 180° feedback that they receive annually - this is very much seen as an opportunity to develop managers, not to measure their performance.

2.4 Lessons learned from best practices

Similarities between the approaches to coaching in the EC and in the French Public Service are very apparent, and they can serve as a guide for establishing coaching policy and way to develop coaching as an HR methodology in the WB countries.

The main lessons learned from the examples of the use of coaching in the European Commission and public administration at the ministry level in France are the following:

1. **Implement coaching as a development rather than correction tool and clearly communicating of interest.**
2. **Use professionally trained and accredited internal and external coaches.**
3. **Connect coaching with the overall HR strategy and organisational culture and vision.**
4. **Develop a coaching culture through different modes of coaching – individual, group and team, and training managers in coaching skills.**
5. **Apply coaching top down so that the culture of coaching can trickle down and be constantly supported.**
6. **Creating evaluation tools that will measure both the short and long term benefits of coaching**

All the above recommendations are in line with the main obstacles to successful implementation of coaching, as stated in the PricewaterhouseCoopers study for the ICF:

1. Untrained individuals who practice coaching; and
2. Market place confusion as to what coaching is and how it can be used as well as the greatest two opportunities in the near future:
 1. Increase awareness regarding the benefits of coaching and improve general perception; and
 2. Create credible data on ROI and ROE.

The following checklist of things to consider can be useful when implementing coaching:

Strategy:

- What is the reason for implementing coaching?
- What are the situations when it will be used?
- How is it aligned with the organisational vision and L&D strategy?

Management process:

- Who manages the process?
- How are coaches selected?
- How are coachees selected?
- What are the expectations/assumptions of people who are coached?
- What are the expectations/assumptions of the managers/organisation?
- What does the process look like?
- What is the feedback loop?

Evaluation:

- What is the methodology?
- Who is included in it?
- Does it measure alignment with L&D strategy?

3 Comparative analysis of the results of the coaching survey in the Western Balkans countries

3.1 Overview of the research and analysis undertaken

This study was conducted in two parts. The first part was conducted as desk research and in the form of semi-structured interviews with the heads and representatives of the relevant institutions, and representative coaching providers in each of the WB countries.

The findings of the first part of the study, as outlined below, were consistent across the countries, and informed the second part of our study.

With the exception of the Human Resource Management Service (HRMS) in Serbia, coaching has not been present as a systematically used HR capacity building methodology in any of the institutions of the other countries. There were instances of sporadic coaching interventions that were mostly one-off and funded from external donations. Some of these examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

- a) In Albania, in 2003, a former UK minister conducted a coaching session with Albanian ministers
- b) The Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) had a one day training delivered by the Serbian HRMS on the differences between coaching and mentoring.
- c) In Macedonia there has been some coaching at the local level organised through donor Projects and delivered through external coaches in the area of preparing EU Projects.
- d) In Serbia, coaching appears occasionally in training modules of EU funded projects, such as the two projects currently ongoing at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) on the topics of strategic management and HR strategic management.

On the whole, the coaching market is in the initial phase of its development. For the most part, coaching is poorly spread and almost unknown in the WB countries outside of Serbia. Different perceptions and understandings of coaching exist across the WB countries, and very often coaching is confused with consulting and mentoring. Part of that confusion comes from the fact that the term “coaching” is sometimes transcribed or translated as ‘mentoring’, ‘training’ or ‘consulting’.

While our initial research shows that coaching is almost non-existent and in some instances a misunderstood HR development tool, at the same time, most of the interviewees showed great interest in coaching and a belief that it could be a useful tool in the development of public administration.

The second part of our study was compiled through an online survey conducted in January and February 2017. The survey returned 82 responses in total, which gives a valid overall basis for conclusions. While the number of respondents in the individual countries did not fulfill the validity criteria; the results give a good overview of the state of awareness about coaching and the assumed needs and benefits. (The number of respondents in each individual

country was: Albania 9, Bosnia 19, Kosovo* 21, Macedonia 7, Montenegro 10 and Serbia 16.)

Below, we outline the policies and capacities framework research by country, and then give an overview of the online survey responses, followed by the outline of the practice of coaching in HRMS, Serbia.

Policies and Capacities Framework by country

Albania:

The first civil service law was adopted in Albania in 1996 and was followed by the creation of the Training Institute of Public Administration (TIPA) in 1998 which was aimed at providing capacity development for civil servants. In 2000 a second law civil service was adopted which required senior civil servants to mentor junior members, but the senior civil servant mentor was not involved in the evaluation of his or her junior mentee. This changed in 2013 with further changes to the civil service law and senior civil servants are now formally required to follow the progress of their younger colleagues in probation and write written assessments of their progress-- including whether they should be granted permanent positions. As a result of this change, the relationship between the senior and junior civil servant has become a mentor/mentee relationship. While this does not constitute a coaching relationship, we believe that coaching is a tool that can best meet the requirements of the current law.

With respect to the Competencies Framework, there is a set of four behavioral competences determined by a government decree related to job evaluation.

- i. Problem solving with two criteria: Complexity and Impact, or Consequences;
- ii. Decision making with two criteria: Type of Decision Making and Freedom to Act;
- iii. Management Environment with two criteria: Operational Focus and Management Relationship; and
- iv. Technical Environment with one criteria: Requisite Education.). Although these competencies are defined in a detailed manner in the regulation, in practice, most of the institutions use a simpler, benchmarking system for job evaluation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH):

Consistent with the organizational structure of the BiH government, the PA in BiH exists and is governed at three different administrative levels - the state level (BiH), the FBiH level and the RS level. The position rules relevant to civil servants varies according to applicable laws, but they largely cover the same areas, including the training of civil servants. While details on the specific responsibilities are sparse under the civil service law, they all provide that civil servants have the right and obligation to attend relevant trainings. Moreover, the relevant ministries in each part of the BiH have described in greater detail the training required and we believe coaching is well-suited to aid the BiH in meeting its stated goals in this respect.

A new protocol which defines ways and modalities of training and development realisation in BiH institutions and recognises coaching as a method for development of civil servants has recently been introduced. According to the information given by the Civil Service Agency (BiH CSA), which operates at the state level, (defined below) this protocol has not been adopted yet, but it has been approved for official adoption.

The Public Administration Reform Strategy for the BiH (adopted in 2006, with the Action Plan revised in 2014) recognises a need to introduce a Competences Framework for positions in the PA. It emphasises the importance of the use of competencies (knowledge, skills, personal characteristics etc.) during the candidate selection procedure and the need to amend relevant legislation (where necessary) in order to introduce competency based assessment into job interviews in practice.

The BiH CSA at the state level implements a Hiring Guideline which recognises the following set of competencies: Integrity, Problem Solving, Initiative, Change Management, Team Work, Communication, Result Orientation, Leadership, Planning, Strategic Steering and Human Resource Development (HRD). The BiH CSA also has internal core competencies set out on the same basis as in the State regulation. In addition the CSA conducts trainings for the members of the recruitment commissions aimed to enhance their ability to access competencies of the candidates.

Kosovo*:

The Civil Service Law (CSL) of Kosovo*, which came into force in 2010, requires training programs be put into place for all members of the civil service and makes participation in capacity building events mandatory for all members. Training programs include: career development; adjustment in case of changes in responsibility; task specific matters; professional knowledge; and preparation for mandatory tests contemplated by the current law. Since the introduction of the CSL, the Ministry of Public Administration, which oversees the implementation of the CSL, has introduced two strategy papers aimed at increasing the level of professionalism of the civil service. We believe these initiatives are a ripe opportunity for the introduction of coaching.

No PA Competencies Framework is used by any institution in Kosovo*. The one relevant document available in this area is the Handbook for Managerial Level in the Civil Service. This manual provides an easy access to repository of expertise and experience that managers can refer to when facing particular situations. Usually, they contain defined sets of behaviours that are required to perform the tasks and functions of a job effectively.

Macedonia:

In 2014 Macedonia adopted a new Law on Administrative Servants (LAS), which led to the adoption of By-Laws which addressed training and mentoring and established a framework of general competencies and assigned responsibility for HR management. The Ministry of Information, Technology and Administration (MISA) was given responsibility for the effective and efficient development of administrative servants and the training and professional development of civil servants, which includes the organisation and implementation of training of public administrators and the development and coordination of relevant government policies. Further, the LAS provides that the MISA shall provide an academy for professional training of administrative servants-- which has recently been

formed. We again believe that coaching can be a valuable tool in helping the MISA to meet its goals.

Although the LAS provides that a framework of competencies shall be established by secondary legislation, and the Bylaw on the Framework of general competencies of administrative servants was enacted in September 2014, so far the implementation of the Framework of competencies has been limited to training on the general competencies, which have been provided as a part of micro learning (e-learning) and classroom learning provided by the MISA.

The competencies framework has not been fully implemented in all its capacities and it is currently limited to a general understanding of the competencies framework. However, it has been a part of the annual programme for training for civil servants and some training has been undertaken since its inception.

Montenegro:

In Montenegro, the key role in human resource development of the public sector has been assigned to the Human Resources Management Authority (HRMA). The HRMA covers a wide range of institutions and is responsible for: recruitment; training; administration; and legal compliance. Further, every public institution under the HRMA's authority is required to appoint a contact person who is responsible for HR matters within a specific government company.

The legal basis for the L&D processes in Montenegro are based mainly on the Law on Civil Servants and Employees and in particular The Training Decree from 2013. The Training Decree envisages general as well as specific professional training and development programs. The decree further provides in the definition of development processes that they can be based on "coaching" principles, tools and techniques, thus providing a legal basis for the implementation of coaching.

The HRMA has started the first phase of a Competency Framework (CF) for development of Public Sector. The CF will cover the managerial level only, and the exact strategic orientation is yet to be defined. An Estonian team of consultants from SIGMA is performing a series of exploratory interviews and a legal framework analysis in order to define the present situation, and to set the guidelines for further phases. It is envisioned that the CF will be developed by 2018.

Serbia:

The professional development and training of civil servants is governed by the Civil Servants Act (Serbian CSA). Civil servants have the right and obligation to improve professionally through professional development programs established pursuant to the Serbian CSA. Coaching is not formally recognized as a method or development tool by the Serbian CSA or the related Decree of professional development of public servants.

However, coaching has been used as a personal development tool for civil servants in Serbia since 2007 and, as such, is well developed.

Human Resource Management Service (HRMS, Serbia) defines competency as a set of knowledge, skills and personality traits that shape the behavior of the person and lead to the achievement of expected results in the workplace. The HRMS, Serbia has defined a behavioral competencies framework for managerial and not-managerial positions, however, they currently exist as a guideline rather than an adopted policy and, therefore, are not legally binding. The HRMS, Serbia is moving towards defining a framework of behavioral and functional competencies by official policy that would be binding for each PA position, and become a part of the PA strategy.

Example of the Use of coaching in a PA: HRMS, Serbia

Coaching has been part of the professional development programs in HRMS since 2007. Eight employees of HRMS, Serbia attended a one year coaching training based on the GROW methodology in 2007 and became part-time internal coaches (investing up to 10% of their time).

The training consisted of several three-day modules, combining theory and practice. Further training has not been organized by the HRMS, Serbia since 2007, but some of the coaches have continued their education on their own (REBT, NLP...). Some coaches are more active than others with the most active ones having more than 30 coachees.

Coaching is used as a personal development tool for managers, as part of the General Program of Professional Development. It is also being used for competency development of internal trainers. Moreover, in 2017, it will also be used as a personal development tool for the development of future managers under new program currently being rolled out by the HRMS, Serbia.

The HRMS, Serbia programs that include coaching are:

1. **Introduction to coaching** – a one-day training/workshop as part of a General Program for Professional Development (GPPD). Any employee can sign up for this training. The main goal of this workshop is to introduce coaching as a concept and the ways it can be used for personal or team development. (150 participants in 3 years).
2. **Training program for managers** – this is a nine-day training program (2-3 months in total) aiming to enhance the efficiency of managers in areas of personal development, organisational development, conflict management, etc. Participants have an opportunity to choose a mentor, a coach, or both. Should they decide to have a coach, they have an opportunity to choose among eight internal coaches (all coaches are internal, from HRMS) and work with him or her during six coaching sessions. Process-wise, managers apply to be part of this program and are accepted after their manager's approval. Once they join the program, they are required to fill-in a self-assessment questionnaire, which is then used as basis for their first coaching session.
3. **Training program for future managers** – this is a new program starting in 2017, as part of the GPPD. Participants will be nominated by their superiors. They will have an opportunity to choose a coach and have six coaching sessions.

4. **Coaching for internal trainers.** Coaching sessions are being used to help with the development of internal trainers' competencies. Currently this program is in a pilot project phase.

HRMS, Serbia also offers team coaching as part of its portfolio of development opportunities. According to HRMS, Serbia employees, there is currently no demand for this kind of development, due to the lack of understanding of what coaching really is.

Most coachees accept the coach offered by HRMS Serbia, while some of them selected a coach on their own. In most cases, there were 4-6 coaching sessions and most coachees say that coaching helped them with resolution of their concrete problems/challenges. Improved communication with others and self-confidence were also rated high by the coachees. Coachees feel that coaching can help them the most in professional development efforts, but can also be very useful when starting at a new job position.

After each coaching session, the coach fills in a report about the session. Part of our survey participants confirmed that coachees also have an opportunity to give feedback to the coach - informally after each session and formally by filling-in a feedback questionnaire following the last coaching session, which covers cooperation with the coach, achieved changes, goals and other effects, how coaching improved the coachee's work etc. Some of respondents reported that feedback was not part of the process. Based on the data available, our conclusion is that participant's feedback is still not a standard part of the coaching program.

Both coaches and coachees agree that the biggest challenge at this moment is lack of understanding of coaching, both by the legal framework and the employees (most employees are not aware of the concept at all). The number of available coaches is also a challenge and will need to be increased in the future in order to build more effective coaching programs.

As for the potential for future development, coaches feel that a universal methodology has to be reintroduced and maintained and continuous education development organized for internal coaches. Moreover, greater funds for paying coaches must also be made available in the future to build a program.

The example of the use of coaching in the Serbian PA, represents a good basis for the further development of coaching in Serbia and can also serve as an example for the other WB countries as the Serbian PA continues to implement coaching into its training programs.

The second part of our study focused on assessing the opportunities and obstacles for the implementation of coaching through a questionnaire disseminated to a wider sample of representatives of the same organisations that had previously been interviewed. We wanted to find out what the attitudes towards coaching are and if, and in what instances, the PA feels coaching could help in HR development. This, we believe, represents valuable information in understanding how ready the market is for coaching, and if it is, what interventions are necessary to prepare the ground for the successful implementation of coaching. The overall results of the survey are stated below.

3.2 Needs and Opportunities for coaching in the Western Balkan Countries

When asked how familiar they are with coaching as an HR development tool, the respondents across the board mostly answered that they are either somewhat or fairly familiar. In Albania and BiH, there are 22% and 26.32% respondents respectively who are not familiar with coaching at all. The highest percentage of the respondents not familiar with coaching at all are from Kosovo*. Some of the respondents were coaches, which is also reflected in the answers.

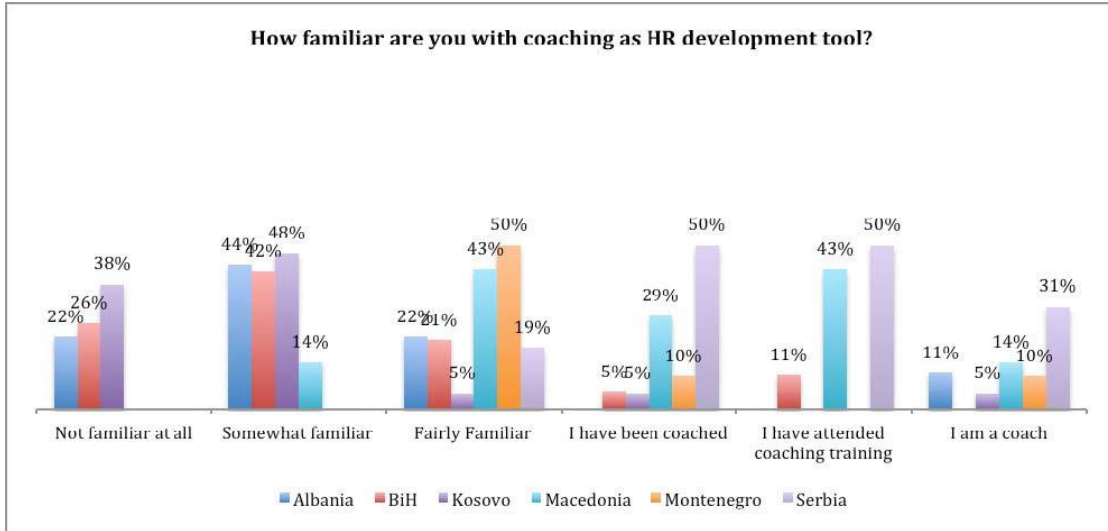
This indicates that one of the first steps that needs to be undertaken in implementing coaching is raising the awareness and disseminating knowledge on coaching. Different countries are at different levels when it comes to familiarity with coaching, and future activities should be pitched to the right level. It is important to note that the initial interviews and research have shown that even those familiar with coaching might not fully understand what it is, or might confuse it with mentoring, training or consulting.

How familiar are you with coaching as HR development tool?	Not familiar at all	Somewhat familiar	Fairly Familiar	I have been coached	I have attended coaching training	I am a coach	Total number respondents
Albania	22%	44%	22%	0%	0%	11%	9
BiH	26%	42%	21%	5%	11%	0%	19
Kosovo*	38%	48%	5%	5%	n/a	5%	21
Macedonia	0%	14%	43%	29%	43%	14%	7
Montenegro	0%	30%	50%	10%	0%	10%	10
Serbia ³	0%	0%	19%	50%	50%	31%	16

³

Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	3
Serbia 2	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	8
Serbia 3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	5

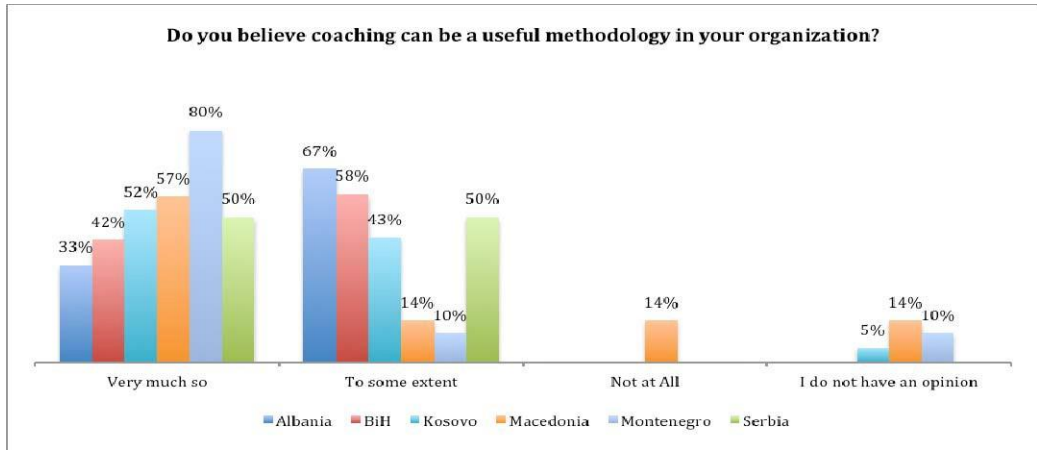


When asked if coaching can be a useful methodology in their organisation, a substantial majority across the countries have answered positively, either to a great or to some extent. That information is very encouraging, as it shows that despite relatively low general awareness, and still existing confusion around what coaching exactly is and how it is different from other modalities, that there is still belief that coaching could be useful. It is also very encouraging that the respondents who have experienced coaching (namely from HRMS, Serbia) strongly believe that coaching can be useful for the organisation.

Do you believe coaching can be a useful methodology in your organization?	Very much so	To some extent	Not at All	I do not have an opinion	Total number respondents
Albania	33%	67%	0%	0%	9
BiH	42%	58%	0%	0%	19
Kosovo*	52%	43%	0%	5%	21
Macedonia	57%	14%	14%	14%	7
Montenegro	80%	10%	0%	10%	10
Serbia ⁴	50%	50%	0%	0%	16

⁴ Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	0%	100%	0%	0%	3
Serbia 2	63%	38%	0%	0%	8
Serbia 3	60%	40%	0%	0%	5

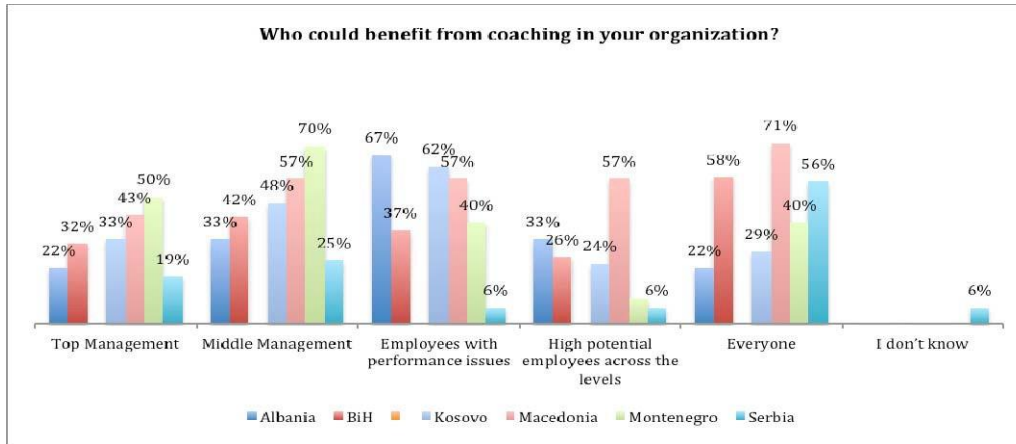


The answers to the question “who could benefit from coaching in your organisation” were informative in many respects. On one hand, a high percentage of respondents, especially in Albania, Kosovo*, and Macedonia, answered that employees with performance issues would benefit from coaching. While this answer is not inaccurate, it also indicates the danger of the misconception of coaching as a correction tool. As emphasised in the previous chapter, the second wave of coaching, currently present in the Western Europe and the United States, promotes coaching as a development tool focusing on potential rather than issues. It is encouraging that in HRMS, Serbia, those who have experienced coaching do not see it at all as a correction tool. That points out the importance of exposure to coaching for the proper understanding of it. An encouraging number of respondents across the board see coaching as a useful methodology for everyone. It is surprising that in Serbia, where coaching is used, the respondents do not see it to a high extent as a leadership development tool which it certainly is. It would be worth exploring if this is a consequence of the specific understanding of the concept of leadership or coaching per se.

Who could benefit from coaching in your organization?	Top Management	Middle Management	Employees with performance issues	High potential employees across the levels	Everyone	I don't know	Total number respondents
Albania	22%	33%	67%	33%	22%	0%	9
BiH	32%	42%	37%	26%	58%	0%	19
Kosovo*	33%	48%	62%	24%	29%	0%	21
Macedonia	43%	57%	57%	57%	71%	0%	7
Montenegro	50%	70%	40%	10%	40%		10
Serbia ⁵	19%	25%	6%	6%	56%	6%	16

⁵ Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	67%	67%	33%	0%	33%	0%	3
Serbia 2	0%	13%	0%	13%	63%	13%	8
Serbia 3	20%	20%	0%	0%	60%	0%	5

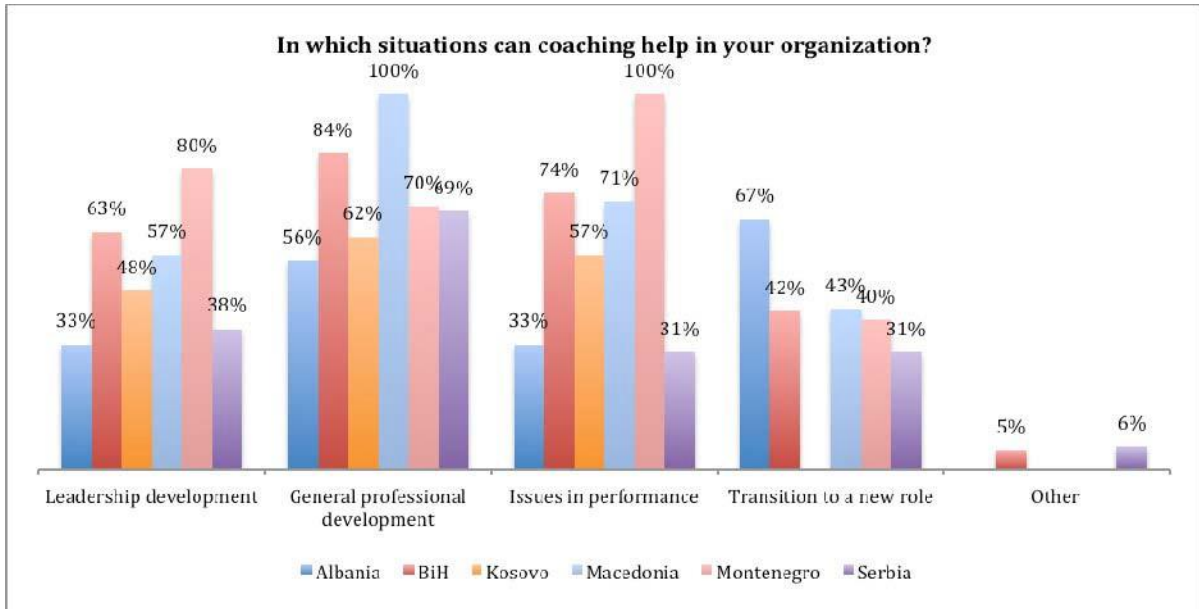


The opinions about in which situations coaching can help in your organisation are spread across the range of answers, with the highest percentage believing that it can help with general professional development, and then strongly believing it can help with issues in performance and leadership development, and then slightly less with transition to a new role.

In which situations can coaching help in your organisation?	Leadership development	General professional development	Issues in performance	Transition to a new role	Other	Total number respondents
Albania	33%	56%	33%	67%	0%	9
BiH	63%	84%	74%	42%	5%	19
Kosovo*	48%	62%	57%	0%	0%	21
Macedonia	57%	100%	71%	43%	0%	7
Montenegro	80%	70%	100%	40%	0%	10
Serbia ⁶	38%	69%	31%	31%	6%	16

⁶ Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	100%	33%	100%	67%	0%	3
Serbia 2	0%	75%	0%	13%	13%	8
Serbia 3	60%	80%	40%	40%	0%	5

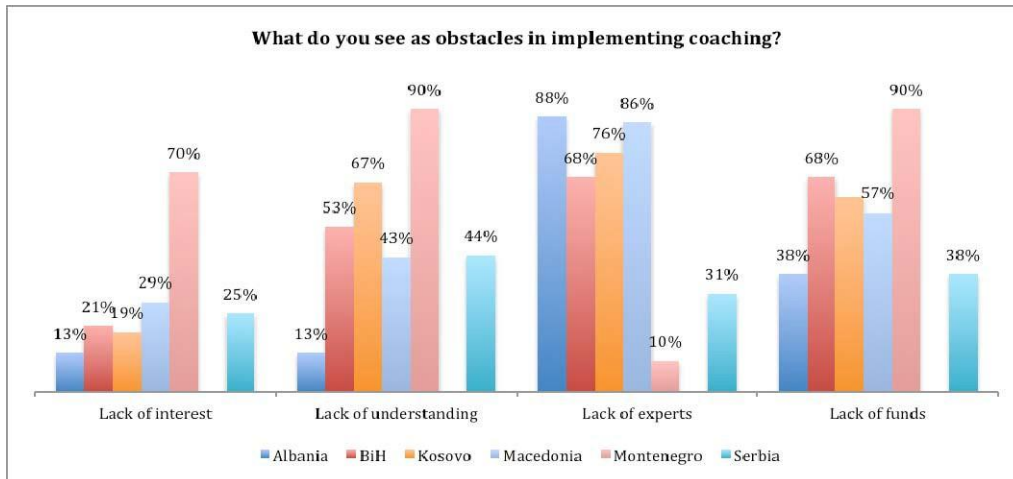


When asked what they see as obstacles in implementing coaching, the respondents overall stated that the lack of experts is the biggest impediment. The one aberration here is Montenegro, where the lack of interest, the lowest scoring obstacle in all the other countries, scored very high. That is useful information for addressing the Montenegrin market. Lack of funds and lack of understanding follow closely behind the lack of experts, and the lack of interest is also seen as a potential impediment. When asked if there are any other obstacles, not listed, one respondent mentioned a lack of time, and another respondent listed no possibilities for coaching.

What do you see as obstacles in implementing coaching?	Lack of interest	Lack of understanding	Lack of experts	Lack of funds	Other	Total number respondents
Albania	13%	13%	88%	38%	13%	9
BiH	21%	53%	68%	68%	0%	19
Kosovo*	19%	67%	76%	62%	0%	21
Macedonia	29%	43%	86%	57%	0%	7
Montenegro	70%	90%	10%	90%	10% (lack of time; no possibilities)	10
Serbia ⁷	25%	44%	31%	38%	0%	16

⁷ Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	33%	0%	33%	67%	0%	3
Serbia 2	13%	37%	25%	25%		8
Serbia 3	40%	80%	40%	40%		5

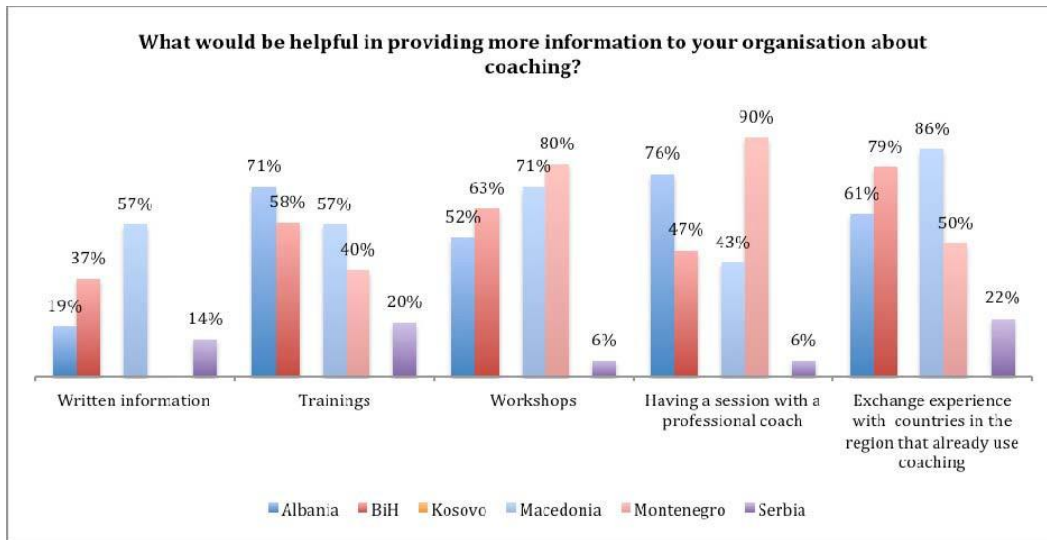


An important question for the possible activities that ReSPA can support was what would be helpful in providing more information to your organisation about coaching. There is a great variety in answers, but the lowest scoring option is providing written information. Interactive and experiential modalities are more appealing, especially exchange of experience, having a session with a professional coach and training. ReSPA can look into different ways of supporting the creation of engaging experiences for the introduction of coaching to the WB countries.

What would be helpful in providing more information to your organisation about coaching?	Written information	Trainings	Workshops	Having a session with a professional coach	Exchange experience with countries in the region that already use coaching	Other	Total number respondents
Albania	19%	71%	52%	76%	61%	0%	9
BiH	37%	58%	63%	47%	79%	5%	19
Kosovo*	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21
Macedonia	57%	57%	71%	43%	86%	0%	7
Montenegro	0%	40%	80%	90%	50%	0%	10
Serbia ⁸	14%	20%	6%	6%	22%	0%	16

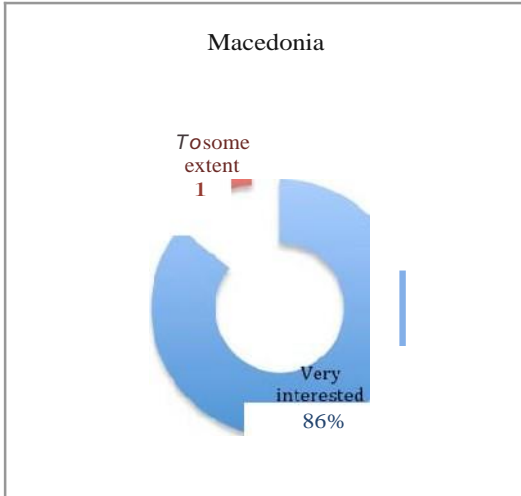
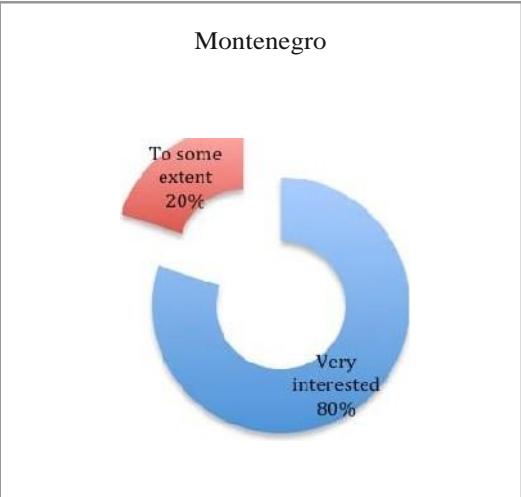
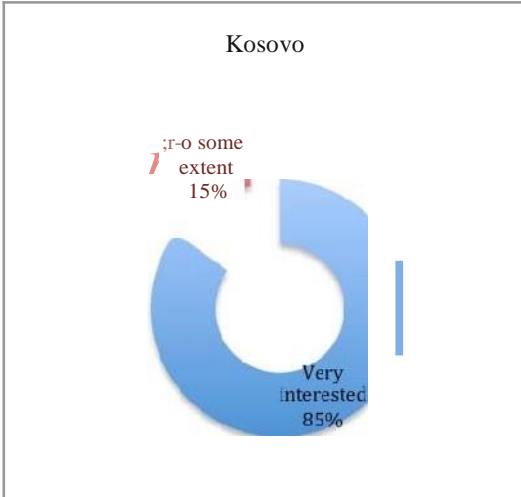
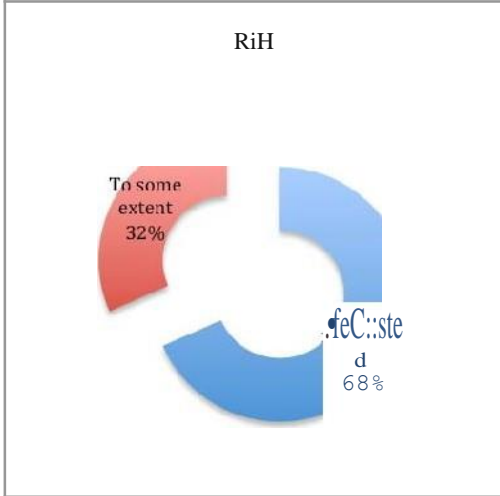
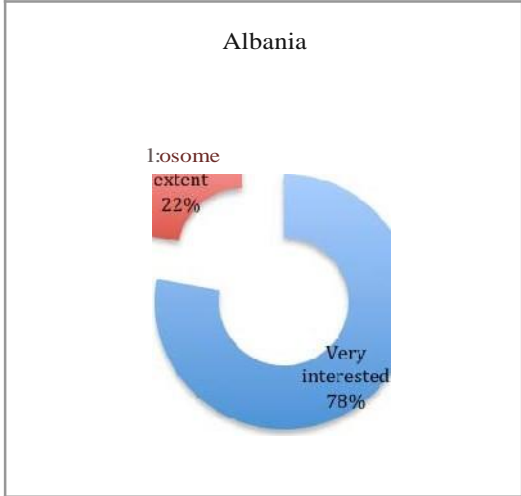
⁸ Serbia 1=general respondents; Serbia 2=HRMS coachees; Serbia 3=HRMS coaches

Serbia 1	33%	67%	33%	33%	33%	0%	3
Serbia 2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8
Serbia 3	25%	25%	0%	0%	50%	0%	5



It is very encouraging that all of the respondents have an interest in finding out more about coaching, with the majority declaring themselves as very interested. This shows great curiosity and interest that can be leveraged in the first steps of the potential introduction of coaching in the public administration.

How interested are you in finding out more about coaching?	Very interested	To some extent	Not at all	Total number respondents
Albania	78%	22%	0%	9
BiH	68%	32%	0%	19
Kosovo*	85%	15%	0%	21
Macedonia	86%	14%	0%	7
Montenegro	80%	20%	0%	10
Serbia	38%	12%	0%	16



When coachees in the HRMS, Serbia program were asked if they would use coaching services again if they had an opportunity, they unanimously said “yes”.

The interviews and the survey have shown that while coaching is almost not present in the PA as an HR development tool, there is a great interest in finding out more about coaching and considerable openness to trying out coaching. The nature of coaching and the benefits gained from it are not fully understood in the WB and there is a great deal of work to be done in educating the market about what coaching is, when it can be used and what the benefits of it are for the individuals, teams and organisations.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Relevance of coaching for capacity building in public administration

European economies and society are facing constant dynamic changes, and, as a consequence, public authorities need to be agile enough to respond to these changes. Strengthening administrative capacity in today's Europe means not only developing the level of skills and expanding the skill range of employees, but also building their capacity for decision making, independent thinking, accountability, leadership capacity and agility. Coaching is a development methodology that can help with these aspects. Coaching can be both included into a capacity framework as a distinctive skill for managers and leaders, and used as an important methodology for developing all of the other capacities in the framework.

The quality of PA in each European country depends considerably on the human resources capacity of that country. And strengthening the capacity of human resources has to be a long term, strategic process.

“Empirical evidence suggests that 20 per cent of increased efficiency and productivity in public organisations can be explained by the introduction of new technologies, while the remaining 80 per cent depend more on the quality of management, leadership and innovation. How people are engaged, treated and developed in the change process will ultimately determine whether staff is productive or not.”

Hugh O'Doherty, Center for Public Leadership, Harvard University

On individual level, coaching can improve performance and productivity, increase self-awareness and confidence, positively influence relationships with others, develop leadership skills and decision making, improve flexibility and the ability to manage change and develop clear goals, both for performance and professional development.

On the organisational level, coaching can improve positivity and productivity, team-work, employee engagement and retention. It can also help develop a learning culture and improve feedback loops and performance management.

4.2 Gaps and Possibilities

As stated in the previous chapter, on the whole, the coaching market is in the initial phase of its development.

In summary, overall findings by country are as follows:

Albania – Coaching is not a common practice in the Albanian civil service. It is very difficult to identify real examples of coaching in PA. Furthermore, there is confusion regarding the differences between mentoring, peer learning and coaching. Proper coaching is not even used in the private sector.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Coaching is only sporadically present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even then, there is confusion about what coaching is and how is it different from mentoring or training. Fortunately, there is general openness towards coaching and its implementation.

Kosovo* – Coaching is almost unknown in Kosovo*. Different perceptions and understanding of coaching exist and most of the time coaching is not distinguished to consulting and mentoring. Moreover, there is low awareness regarding the benefits of coaching.

Macedonia – Coaching is not a common practice in the Macedonian civil service. At the central level there is no formal or informal coaching and it is only sporadically present at the local level - always as a one-off experience. There is general confusion between what is coaching and mentoring

Montenegro – Coaching is not used in the Montenegrin civil service. There is a general belief that coaching can be an important tool, however, there is skepticism about the feasibility of the coaching processes, particularly in light of the present organisational, financial, legal, and cultural framework in the Public Sector.

Serbia – Serbia is the only one of the ReSPA countries where, in one of its institutions, coaching is systematically used. There is also a generally clear understanding of what coaching is, its applications, and the difference between coaching and mentoring. There is also a widespread use of coaching in the private sector.

Our findings show that the existing gaps are at the level of awareness, understanding, education and implementation. While such low level of the development might seem discouraging, it, at the same time, represents a huge opportunity for the strategic implementation of coaching.

Generally, the awareness of coaching and its possible uses in capacity building is very low. Very often, coaching is confused with consulting and mentoring. It is worth reiterating that part of the confusion comes from the fact that the term “coaching” is sometimes transcribed or translated as ‘mentoring’, ‘training’ or ‘consulting’. Although the awareness and knowledge of coaching are low, the interest and openness to learn are high, and the role of ReSPA can be leveraged to positively influence the market. Promotional and educational materials can be disseminated both among the HR professionals and the future coaching experts, but equally amongst future coachees, so that both sides can make fully informed decisions in which situations to use coaching as opposed to other HR development methodologies.

The number of trained internal coaches in public administration is very low across the WB countries. According to the information we gathered, no internal coaches are accredited by international bodies. If coaching is to be used in a sustainable way within public administration, this gap in internal capacity building must be closed. This can be done through establishing accreditation pathways, both internal and external, that currently do not exist. This will then further lead to the development of supervision and evaluation. The progress towards coaching culture could be mapped as following:



4.3 Recommendations

The study has shown that for the most part coaching is not used in the PA in the WB countries, yet there is a general openness to the idea of the use of coaching as an HR development tool. Therefore, this represents an outstanding opportunity to develop the use of coaching in a strategic manner across the ReSPA countries.

Recommendations for countries

Our general recommendations for how to introduce and/or develop the use of coaching in the ReSPA countries are as follows:

1. Do it strategically – decide what are the main outcomes desired for the introduction of coaching and then decide target groups and methods accordingly. Without a very clear long-term overall objective, any specific plan for implementation will be lacking. A coaching strategy must be aligned with the overall strategy for the development of the PA.

2. Do it systematically – avoid sporadic, one off uses, as they have shown to have no effect on the organisational level. Create replicable processes where cumulative effect can be generated over time.

3. Set standards and create quality control – create benchmarks, both external and internal, so that progress can be monitored. Implement rigorous professional compliance so that integrity and professionalism in coaching are not compromised.

4. Align globally, act locally - create specific plans for local development with the view of the current political, economic and cultural context of each country, within the framework of an overall strategy for the region.

5. Evaluate –create feedback loops and monitoring practice to track the benefits and allow for continuous adjustment and improvement.

6. Connect to Universities – the coaching profession started being much more regulated once coaching entered post-graduate, and subsequently undergraduate studies. University education is a great way to help regulation, set the standard and spread the practice.

Recommendations for ReSPA

ReSPA's role in the development and implementation of coaching as an HR methodology in the WB countries can be very important. While ReSPA cannot and should not be the overarching sponsor and the activity holder, it can serve as a supporter and an anchor. Having a regional hub that can support and monitor development can help in guiding and accelerating the implementation of coaching in each of the countries. We suggest that ReSPA takes an active part in the following activities:

1. Aligning the terminology

There is no consistency across the ReSPA countries as to how the term “coaching” is transcribed or translated. Coaching is sometimes translated as “training” or “mentoring” which adds to the confusion of what coaching is and what it is used for. Our recommendation is to unify the use of coaching through transcription rather than translation, as that would separate it from other methodologies and allow for a unified definition. We also suggest providing a one page explanation that would include a definition of coaching together with how it is different from other methodologies. This could be disseminated by ReSPA at the appropriate occasions.

2. Process of education

One of the most striking common findings in our study was a general lack of clarity (with exception of Serbia to a certain extent) around what coaching exactly is as a methodology, around its aims and its uses. ReSPA can play an important role in disseminating knowledge on coaching, and providing continuous professional development in the field. We suggest this can be done in the following ways:

a) Creating a short video with an expert talking about coaching and conducting a coaching demonstration.

A number of respondents in the survey said that they would learn the best from experiencing a coaching session. While that would be ideal, logistically and financially, it likely would be prohibitive. Having a short video with a demo of coaching might be an alternative way to experience a coaching session.

b) Organizing initial workshops.

Experiential learning workshops can provide an opportunity to experience coaching in a group environment. The participants can work, in a coaching environment, on the topics that are relevant for them, and experience one to one coaching, either as coachees or as observers.

The workshops can be designed to focus on some of the skills and competencies relevant for their work. For example, there can be a workshop on coach like feedback giving, or delegating, or on improving communication, etc...

c) Organizing an initial training.

One experiential coaching training can be organized for a selected number of participants, where the managers and HR officers can be trained in coaching skills. The benefit of this can be two-fold. They can start using basic coaching skills immediately at their everyday work, and they can also become ambassadors for coaching, recognising who in their immediate work environment might benefit from it.

3. Supporting strategy drafting

The successful implementation of coaching will to a large extent depend whether countries can develop clear coaching strategies. Without a very clear long-term overall objective, any specific plan for implementation will be lacking. A coaching strategy must be aligned with the overall strategy for the development of PA.

- a) ReSPA can share best practices of other EU countries through translation and dissemination of relevant documents. For example, ReSPA can translate the guideline on use of coaching in public administration in France (*La coaching professionnelle dans la fonction publique*, Ministère de la Fonction Publique)
- b) ReSPA can support the design and organisation of a two-day workshop for coaching strategy development in one of the local countries, run by external experts. The HR officers from other countries can participate in creating exchange of experience. At the moment, we suggest that the first workshop is organised in Serbia, where there is already active coaching practice in PA.

4. Creating a network

The implementation of a new paradigm in HR development cannot be completely smooth and without setbacks. Through supporting a network of practitioners and experts on the regional level, ReSPA can boost both local and regional development of coaching. A network can provide both peer to peer and top down support as well as create an invaluable resource for the successful implementation of coaching. This cannot be expected to be the sole responsibility of ReSPA, but rather the individual countries. Where ReSPA can potentially help is using its model platform for the initiation of the network.

- a) Exchanges of experience and conferences

The Majority of respondents in the survey, across the countries, suggested that one of the most useful ways of learning for them would be exchange of experience. ReSPA can organise and support these exchanges. There is already a great opportunity to learn from the Serbian experience and the representatives from the other countries could benefit from attending HRMS, Serbia one day introduction to coaching, as well as from discussions with HRMS's internal coaches. Equally, ReSPA can support organizing regional conferences on coaching.

b) Coaching training program

One of the issues of the WB market is a general lack of accredited coaching training schools, and a lack of coaches accredited by the ICF or EMCC. We believe that one of the most beneficial interventions that ReSPA can undertake for the development of coaching in the WB countries is to provide one-off training for the coaching accreditation path, with the help of external experts.⁹

c) Supervision program

In order to maintain the quality of coaching and coaching training, and provide the support needed for local coaches, ReSPA can support creating a pool of supervisors that would work with practitioners across the region. Those supervisors can either be external experts at first, or experienced local coaches. Such support is invaluable for the practitioners when the market is new and the practice is just being established. Later on, the supervision can be organised locally, in the respective countries and institutions, while it would still be useful to have one overarching regional supervisory and accreditation body.

d) Peer network – Virtual hubs and coaching circles

Collaborative learning is one of the most effective ways to raise the skill level of the entire group. Facilitating ways in which peer-to-peer learning can happen is an important activity that local countries can undertake for the development of coaching in the region. We suggest creating coaching hubs, both on ReSPA's virtual platform (moodle), and through face-to-face circles initiated by countries. Creating a virtual hub, in the form of an online platform where there could be coaching forums, coaching SIGs, best practices corner, etc, can be hugely beneficial. In the instances where the local market is not grown enough to provide for the professional support, virtual hubs can make all the difference. Face-to-face coaching circles can be organised for the region, in the form of seminars or practice away days – once a quarter, or in a rhythm that the resources would allow.

5. Creating a platform for quality control

One of the specific tasks of the network that ReSPA can potentially support, would be to create a platform for quality control and monitoring. Having a system of commonly set standards for the region and then a system of maintaining those standards would allow for the gradual improvement of results and raising the level of coaching and HR capacities in each individual country. ReSPA can help with connecting the WB countries to the relevant experts.

⁹ For the ICF accreditation path please look at <https://www.coachfederation.org/credential/landing.cfm?ItemNumber=2199>

What is needed, according to the ICF website, is: Sixty (60) hours of coach-specific training with robust documentation. Ten (10) hours of Mentor Coaching to be documented on the online application. Coaching log demonstrating 100 hours (75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of your coach-specific training. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential. Performance evaluation (audio recording and written transcript of coaching session to be uploaded with your application). Complete the Knowledge Assessment.

a) External experts

Initially, having external experts to help with setting the standards for the coaches and for the coaching training programs, would be of the utmost importance. The WB countries can follow either the ICF or EMCC accreditation standards, or create an internal accreditation path based on the expert advice. As the very first step, the external experts can be used to create a short video (see section 2 a) to facilitate education about coaching as well as written documents to be disseminated across the region. External experts can also take part in creating a strategy document for coaching.

In the second phase, external experts can help in creating an accreditation path for the coaches and creating an accreditation path for their supervisors.

4.4 Conclusion

Having suggested the value of coaching as an advanced HR development methodology, ReSPA has decided to conduct a baseline analysis of coaching in the WB countries. In line with the three pillars of the ReSPA strategy for public administration, it was recognised that coaching can help the development of the PA by addressing the particular targeted areas of development for each individual, team or institution, as well as supporting the development of all the competencies in the relevant competencies framework.

The baseline analysis of coaching in the Western Balkans, conducted between November 2016 and March 2017, has shown that coaching as a methodology for HR development is, with an exception of Serbia, practically non-existent. Other than sporadic cases of one-off coaching interventions by external donors, or equally sporadic private initiatives of senior managers, systematic coaching interventions are present only in one institution, namely HRMS, Serbia.

While current state can seem discouraging at first, it in effect offers great potential for the strategic development of the use of coaching in public administration across the region.

The process of implementation of the use of coaching in the PA has to be owned and guided by the individual countries themselves. The role of ReSPA as a supporter in the implementation of coaching methodology is of great importance, as having one centralised platform for the dissemination of information, education, training of experts and quality monitoring, can allow for the successful strategic development, regional cooperation and exercising high level of professional standards.