



## **SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP/TOP MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS IN 2025**

This research aims to identify leadership/top management training programmes available for senior civil servants in the ReSPA members and Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup>. The survey is based on desk research. Detailed information about the leadership training offered to top managers in the public sector is presented in the table below.

Leadership training is crucial for strengthening governance, enhancing managerial competencies, and fostering public sector innovation. Despite variations in legal frameworks, institutional responsibilities, and training methodologies across the Western Balkans, leadership development is increasingly recognised as a key component of civil service reform.

At the time of writing this report (February 2025), specialised programmes for senior civil servants are available in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. These programmes are provided by institutions such as the Albanian School of Public Administration, the Civil Service Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA). In Montenegro, a specialised training programme for senior management exists, but it is not offered annually, as participation depends on the interest of eligible participants. In other analysed administrations (North Macedonia and Kosovo), no specialised leadership training programme for senior civil servants has been developed by publicly available training institutions. However, both administrations provide general training for civil servants, with some elements relevant to managerial roles.

In **Albania**, the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), as an autonomous administrative body, is the key institution responsible for civil service training. According to Law No. 152/2013 on Civil Servants, high-level managers must complete a six-month training program. This programme, developed with EU/INSP/SNA project support, employs workshops, online training, and coaching to enhance leadership capabilities.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, legal provisions at different levels do not explicitly mandate training for high-level managers, but specialised training programs have been developed for top management.

**Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Civil Service Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina offers training for top management personnel of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions through the Sector for Training and IT, covering leadership, strategic planning and reporting, human resource management, ethics, development of social skills, EU integration and digital transformation. In 2025, a programme for senior managerial positions will also include training on mental health, performance appraisal of civil servants, gender equality and anti-discrimination, strategic communication in public administration, and the responsibility of senior civil servants in making decisions on legal expenditure of funds.

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\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

**Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Department for Advanced Training and Civil Service Development of the Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina oversees civil service training, including top management. A specialised programme consists of seven thematic areas: public policy process and legislative process; financial management and control and internal audit; leadership skills and solving of ethical dilemmas; change management in crisis; public speaking, public relations and online communication; strategic approach to management and development of human resources based on competencies; and EU accession processes and preparation of specific documents for using the EU accession funds. A 10-day leadership training programme initiated in 2017 with ReSPA support includes mentorship for the final thesis. Additionally, the Department for Advanced Training and Civil Service Development of the Civil Service Agency developed, under the 2025 programme, a new leadership training programme consisting of two thematic units: DNA of leadership and Policy and Service innovation.

**Republika Srpska:** The Department for Training, Improvement of Service Delivery and Analytical Affairs within the Civil Service Agency of *Republika Srpska* is responsible for training all civil servants, including managers. As regulated by the Law on Civil Servants, all civil servants, including those in senior positions, are obligated to participate in professional training and development. The Civil Service Agency is responsible for developing and implementing an annual training program, while administrative body heads, in cooperation with the Agency, may establish specialised training programs tailored to their specific needs. While there is no specialised structured program exclusively for senior managerial employees, specific training topics specifically focus on developing leadership skills and knowledge, with participation limited to managers. Additionally, the Agency conducts an annual training needs analysis, which includes a section designed to assess and identify the training needs of managerial positions.

**Brčko district:** The Department of Expert and Administrative Affairs district (sub-department for human resources) is responsible for training but lacks budgetary support to implement programmes.

In **Montenegro**, under the Law on Civil Servants and Employees, civil servants, particularly those in senior management positions, must engage in continuous professional development to maintain and improve their competencies. The Sector for Training and Development of the Human Resources Management Administration (HRMA) provides training, but specialised training programmes for managers are organised in cycles rather than annually. It is designed for newly appointed leaders, focusing on leadership, management abilities, and team efficiency, though its content is not publicly available.

In **North Macedonia**, the Law on Administrative Servants categorises managing administrative servants into four levels, with State Secretaries (Category A) at the highest rank. While administrative servants (Category B) receive specialised training, no dedicated programmes exist for top management. The Law mandates that all civil servants complete five generic training sessions annually. Proposed amendments to the Law aim to reduce this requirement to two generic training sessions per year. The Academy for Professional Development of Administrative

Employees, a sector within the Ministry of Public Administration, oversees civil service training, but the leadership programme remains undeveloped.

In **Serbia**, the Law on Civil Servants (Article 45) mandates that newly appointed managers complete a Leadership Training Program within their first year. The National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA), an autonomous administrative body, provides training to all civil servants, including senior managers, through **Orientation Programme** which is mandatory for all newly appointed civil servants immediately upon their appointment, and **Leadership Training Programme** which is divided into three main components: (1) Training for Newly Appointed Senior Managers, (2) Training for Current Senior Managers, and (3) Training for Civil Servants Preparing for Managerial Positions (for civil servants transitioning to or currently holding mid-management roles). These programs aim to equip participants with leadership skills, strategic planning capabilities, and an understanding of public administration management. The competencies covered in the program include leadership, planning, performance monitoring, financial management, public policy design, EU integration, and digital transformation.

In **Kosovo**, senior civil servants' training and professional development are primarily regulated by the **Law on the Civil Service (Law No. 03/L-149)**. Under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Institute of Public Administration of Kosovo (KIPA) implements civil service training programmes. KIPA provides training for all civil servants, and under the Strategy for Modernising Public Administration (2023–2027), leadership training is emphasised as a key priority for enhancing senior managers' capacities. According to the Law, newly appointed civil servants must undergo a specialised training program during their first year. However, a detailed regulation outlining the specific content and duration has yet to be developed.

**Leadership programs for senior civil servants in the Western Balkans** play a crucial role in strengthening governance, enhancing managerial competencies, and fostering public sector innovation. Despite variations in legal frameworks, institutional responsibilities, and training methodologies across the region, a common trend is the growing recognition of leadership development as a key element in civil service reform.

In several administrations, legal mandates define the requirements for leadership training, ensuring that senior civil servants acquire essential skills in strategic planning, financial management, human resources, digital transformation, and EU integration. Institutions such as academies, civil service agencies, and public administration institutes play a central role in delivering these programs, often with support from international organisations. Training methodologies are diverse, incorporating classroom learning, online courses, coaching, mentorship, and experiential learning, reflecting efforts to modernise civil service education. However, there are notable discrepancies in the depth, structure, and availability of leadership training programs. While some administrations have well-structured and mandatory programs for high-level managers, others lack standardised curricula or clear implementation mechanisms. In certain cases, leadership training remains sporadic or optional, which may hinder the development of a consistently skilled and capable senior civil service.

Overall, leadership development initiatives in the Western Balkans demonstrate a positive trajectory, aligning with broader public administration reforms and European integration goals. Strengthening these programs through harmonised regional approaches, continuous curriculum improvements, and systematic evaluation mechanisms would further enhance their effectiveness, ensuring that senior civil servants are well-equipped to navigate complex governance challenges and drive institutional progress.

#### Key findings and trends:

- Several administrations, including Albania and Serbia, mandate leadership training for senior managers, while others offer optional or evolving programs.
- Academies/schools/departments in charge of training play a central role in delivering leadership programs, often with international support.
- Programs use diverse methodologies, including classroom sessions, online courses, coaching, mentorship, experiential learning, and working visits.
- Some administrations have well-structured, mandatory programs, while others lack standardised curricula or implementation mechanisms. In some cases, leadership training is sporadic or dependent on participant interest.
- New training topics include digital transformation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, strategic communication, and gender equality, reflecting modern public administration needs.

#### Recommendations to strengthen leadership training across the region:

- Continue to exchange knowledge and best practices.
- Expand training to include emerging governance challenges such as digital transformation and sustainability.
- Ensure leadership programs are available regularly and tailored to the evolving needs of senior civil servants.
- Introduce mechanisms to assess training impact and adapt content based on participant feedback and administrative requirements.

Leadership development initiatives in the Western Balkans are progressing in alignment with public administration reforms and European integration objectives. While challenges remain in standardisation and accessibility, ongoing improvement in training methodologies and content fosters a more competent senior civil service. Strengthening these initiatives through regional cooperation and continuous refinement will further enhance governance and institutional effectiveness.

## Examples of Leadership/Top Management Training in the Public Sector of the Western Balkans

Albania	
<b>Training institution:</b>	<b>Albanian School of Public Administration</b> ( <a href="https://aspa.gov.al/en/">https://aspa.gov.al/en/</a> )
<b>Main elements:</b>	<p>In Albania, there is a dedicated program exclusively for senior officials or top management (HLMs). These include five modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EU Policies and International Affairs</li> <li>– Strategic Planning and Policy Drafting</li> <li>– Competencies in Strategic and Organisational Management</li> <li>– Public Finances</li> <li>– Innovation in Public Administration</li> </ul> <p>A leadership training module has also been developed, focusing on an in-depth analysis of leadership theories and forms, particularly situational and organisational leadership. The training aims to equip participants with practical tools and knowledge to lead effectively in various contexts within public service.</p> <p>Various institutions in Albania offer these training modules, including the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), which provides comprehensive and administration-oriented programs.</p>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	
<b>Training institution:</b>	<b>Civil Service Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina</b> ( <a href="https://www.ads.gov.ba/bs-Latn-BA/">https://www.ads.gov.ba/bs-Latn-BA/</a> ); ( <a href="https://www.ilearn.gov.ba/">https://www.ilearn.gov.ba/</a> )
<b>Main elements:</b>	<p>The Agency offers a specialised training programme for senior managerial positions (secretary and secretary with a special assignment; assistant minister; assistant director; chief inspector), which includes the following thematic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Leadership</li> <li>– Strategic Planning and Reporting</li> <li>– Human Resources Management</li> <li>– Ethics</li> <li>– Development of Social Skills</li> <li>– EU Integration</li> <li>– Digital Transformation</li> </ul>
<b>Training institution:</b>	<b>Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</b> ( <a href="https://www.adsfbih.gov.ba/">https://www.adsfbih.gov.ba/</a> )
<b>Main elements:</b>	<p>The Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina offers a special training programme for civil servants in senior managerial positions: <a href="https://hrm.adsfbih.gov.ba/blog/preview/8">https://hrm.adsfbih.gov.ba/blog/preview/8</a>. The professional development program for managerial civil servants is intended for persons who, in the performance of tasks within their competence, perform tasks within the category of managerial-expert personnel and for other civil servants who report interest in the development of a professional career to improve managerial skills for work in management positions in the civil service. Following the Decision of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and</p>

Herzegovina" No. 29/17), all leading civil servants, except for heads of civil service bodies, are obliged to attend this professional development program. The 2025 Programme comprises two thematic units.

**1. DNA of leadership:** This unit focuses on competencies essential for effective leadership, including self-management, team leadership, and organisational direction.

Topics:

- Leadership Role
- Introducing Changes and Organisational Development
- Coaching Sessions

**2. Policy and service innovation:** This unit addresses core competencies required for leadership and management roles in public administration.

Topics:

- Public Policies and Legislative Process - Role and responsibility of leading civil servants
- Financial Management and Control - Basics of managerial responsibility
- The Role of Digitisation in Public Administration
- Development of Digital Strategies
- Cybersecurity and Data Protection
- Artificial Intelligence

**Training Methods:**

The program utilises various training methods, including classroom sessions, webinars, experiential learning, study tours, and other approaches.

**Final Paper and Certification:**

Participants who opt for the entire program can prepare a final paper with mentorship. To obtain a public document (diploma), participants must attend at least 75% of the total program duration and prepare a final paper after completing all thematic units. The final paper analyses a case study relevant to the strategic or functional-organisational needs of the participant's civil service body and aligns with the thematic units covered. Participants select a mentor from the program's instructors, who provide guidance for the final paper. The completed paper is submitted in written form and presented orally before the Expert Evaluation Committee.

**Training institution:**

**Civil Service Agency of Republika Srpska**  
(<https://adu.vladars.rs/>)

While there is no structured program specifically developed for the training of managerial positions (Assistant Minister, Secretary of the Ministry, Head of the Republic Administration, Head of the Republic Administrative Organization, their Deputies and Assistants, Chief Republic Inspector, Secretary of the Agency), several training courses have been developed and implemented, including:

- Public Finances for Senior Civil Servants
- E-Government for Senior Civil Servants
- Leadership for Senior Civil Servants
- Webinar: Training for Remote Managers

	– Discussion on Selected Dilemmas Regarding Senior Civil Service in Bosnia and Herzegovina
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## Montenegro

**Training institution:** Human Resources Management Administration (<https://www.gov.me/uzk>)

**Main elements:** HRMA has developed a special training programme for managers. However, this programme is not offered yearly and depends on the participants' interests. The content of the programme is not publicly available.

It is designed for newly appointed leaders to improve their knowledge and skills in leadership, management abilities, and efficiency in leading teams in the public sector.

The program covers topics in the areas of:

- Public Administration Reform
- Strategic Thinking and Planning
- Managerial Responsibility
- Communication and Organisation
- Leadership and Management
- Human Resource Management
- Ethics and Integrity

The program was established in 2019 following the adoption of a secondary act for assessing the capabilities of candidates during recruitment. This secondary act defined the framework of competencies for senior management, which includes five competencies:

- Leadership
- Results Orientation
- Collaboration
- Communication, and
- Innovation

## North Macedonia

**Training institution:** Academy for Professional Development of the Administrative Servants of the Ministry of Public Administration

**Main elements:** There is no dedicated programme exclusively for senior officials/top management. Nevertheless, there are several training courses developed, *inter alia*, for senior managerial positions (for category B of administrative servants- managers B1-B4):

- Strategies and Innovation
- Leadership and Development
- Change Management
- Creating and Defining Policy
- Communication Skills
- Results Achievement
- Equality and Non-Discrimination
- Teamwork

**Training institution:**

**The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA)**  
(<https://www.napa.gov.rs>)

**Main elements:**

NAPA offers specialised training programmes tailored for senior civil servants in managerial positions (*državni službenici na položaju*) and mid-management officials.

**Objectives of the training program:**

- Increase the interest of senior civil servants in continuous learning and their commitment to professional development;
- Make them feel they belong to the "top management team", which creates a common ethical and cultural basis for this group;
- Ensure better daily cooperation and successful teamwork;
- Ensure a better reputation and increased attractiveness for senior managerial jobs.

**Target groups:**

- Civil servants in senior managerial positions (*državni službenici na položaju*)
- Civil servants in mid-management positions (*rukovodioci užih unutrašnjih jedinica*)
- Civil servants preparing to assume managerial duties

**Training programmes offered:**

**1. Training Program for Newly Appointed Senior Managers:**

- Orientation: An optional introductory module for newly appointed civil servants in senior management positions without previous experience in public administration.
- Basics - essential issues: a mandatory set of training programs aimed at building a common way of thinking, developing competencies for the new role of a senior civil servant, and strengthening self-awareness about the role of managers and the importance of continuous learning.

The concept of the Basics module - essential questions consists of six areas, which are structured as follows:

- On the path to EU membership
- Public policy system management
- Creating and providing quality public services
- Digitalisation for higher-quality public services
- Human resource management
- From competencies to goals
- Leading a team toward results

**2. Training for Current Senior Managers:**

- Innovation and transformation in management
- Leaders driving change
- Crisis management
- Manager as a driver of institutional integrity building

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leader as a coach</li> <li>- Self-management</li> <li>- Public policy management</li> <li>- Improving public services</li> <li>- Challenges of EU membership and utilisation of EU funds</li> <li>- Security culture</li> <li>- State protocol</li> <li>- Resolving ethical dilemmas</li> <li>- Dsp meetings</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Training for Mid-Managers and Aspiring Managers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public policy management</li> <li>- Public finance management</li> <li>- Basics of managerial responsibility</li> <li>- Modern concept of human resource management in public administration</li> <li>- Role of leaders in job analysis and defining competencies</li> <li>- Performance monitoring and evaluation of work success</li> <li>- Leading innovative changes</li> <li>- Information security</li> <li>- Project cycle</li> <li>- Building organisational culture</li> <li>- Five ways to create psychological safety at work</li> <li>- Learning organisation</li> <li>- Financial management and control in the public sector</li> </ul>
<b>Kosovo</b>	
<b>Training institution:</b>	<b>Institute for Public Administration of Kosovo</b> ( <a href="https://mpb.rks-gov.net/ap/page.aspx?id=2,13">https://mpb.rks-gov.net/ap/page.aspx?id=2,13</a> , <a href="https://ikap.rks-gov.net">https://ikap.rks-gov.net</a> )
<b>Main elements:</b>	<p>There is no separate training programme for senior officials/top management. The program is currently being developed. Nevertheless, there are several training courses developed, <i>inter alia</i>, for senior managerial positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Planning and Management</li> <li>- Organisational Behaviour</li> <li>- Staff Motivation</li> <li>- Human Resources Management and Development</li> <li>- Ethics and Integrity in Public Service</li> <li>- Admission and Career (Movement within the Category and Promotion) in the Civil Service</li> <li>- Public Finance Management</li> <li>- Risk Management</li> <li>- Leadership Skills Development</li> <li>- Performance Management and Evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>Program for middle management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designing Effective Public Policies</li> <li>- Strategic Planning and Writing Effective Strategic Documents</li> <li>- Public Finance Management</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Performance Management System and Oversight Agencies</li><li>- Management and Leadership</li><li>- Human Resources Management</li><li>- Ethics and Integrity in Public Service</li><li>- Staff Motivation</li><li>- Public Finance Management</li><li>- Risk Management</li><li>- Leadership Skills Development</li><li>- Performance Management and Evaluation</li></ul> |
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