

THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL NETWORK OF TRAINING PROVIDERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

*Alexandra IANCU**

Faculty of Public Administration, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

Effective human resource management enables the organisation to meet its strategic objectives and build on people's strengths and capabilities. Successful human resource management promotes the engagement, motivation, development and retention of people. The organisation needs to manage the skills and full potential of its people at an individual level to ensure organisational agility.

Improved leadership development, talent management and strategic workforce planning are essential as people are the organisation's biggest investment. Under these circumstances the paper addresses the following issues: the need for the creation of the National Network of Training Providers in Public Administration, the importance of implementing mentoring as a way of training and development of public administration staff.

Respect and fairness, open dialogue, empowerment, political neutrality, reward and recognition, caring and ensuring a safe and healthy environment are fundamental to building people's commitment and participation in the organisational journey to excellence.

KEYWORDS: *staff, public sector, mentoring, training providers, public administration, vocational training.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the importance of creating a quality standard in the field of vocational training that will lead to the improvement of the programs provided by public and private training providers, as well as the establishment of selection criteria for training and development providers and their offers, and the creation of a Network of Training Providers in Public Administration at national level. Training and development is the foundation for strengthening a competency framework which, together with new recruitment, career development and performance management policies, forms the basis for a sound human resource management framework in public administration.

Training' is understood to mean the provision of a process of continuous training aimed at the development of defined competences and skills to improve the quality of individual professional activities carried out by employees.

According to the legislation in force, "vocational training" comprises: "initial vocational training and continuing vocational training organised in forms other than those specific to the national education system", with initial training providing the necessary preparation for the acquisition of minimum vocational skills for employment, while continuing vocational training is subsequent to initial training and provides for the development of vocational skills already acquired or the acquisition of new skills. The general regulatory framework governing the field of vocational training for public administration staff includes: the Administrative Code, adopted by Government Emergency Ordinance No 57/2019, as amended and supplemented (Romanian Government, 2019); the Labour Code, adopted by Law No 53/2003, republished (Romanian Parliament, 2011); Government Decision No 1066/2008 approving

* Corresponding author. E-mail address: a_cristescu02@yahoo.com

the rules on vocational training for civil servants (Romanian Government, 2008a); Government Ordinance No 129/2000 on vocational training for adults, republished (Romanian Government, 2014); Government Decision No 611/2008 approving the rules on the organisation and development of the careers of civil servants, as amended and supplemented (Romanian Government, 2008b).

The professional training of civil servants is defined as "the process of continuous training aimed at developing specific competences and skills with a view to improving the quality of individual professional activities carried out in the exercise of public authority" (Art. 3 of G.D. no. 1066/2008 for the approval of the rules on professional training of civil servants) (Romanian Government, 2008a).

At the same time, the following principles apply to the training system for public administration: efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, equal treatment, decentralised management of the training process, free access to training services, planning, transparency (art. 4 of G.D. no. 1066/2008 for the approval of the rules on the training of civil servants) (Romanian Government, 2008a).

In the particular case of civil servants, specialised training is defined as "designed to develop those competences and skills necessary for the performance of a highly complex function requiring specific skills and abilities, carried out in an organised framework, over a relatively long period of time, with defined and limited target groups, usually on a selection basis, and dealing with a multiple subject matter, linked in a logical sequence and focused on achieving the main goal" (G.D. 1066/2018, art. 3, letter c) (Romanian Government, 2008a). According to the provisions of the same normative act, specialised training programmes are organised and carried out by vocational training providers and are completed with a certificate of participation or diploma of graduation (G.D. 1066/2018, art. 5-6) (Romanian Government, 2008a).

We must also take into account the new regulations in the Administrative Code concerning the rules on general and specific competence frameworks set out in Annex 8 of the Administrative Code as amended. According to it, "competency framework" means "a reference model for the organisation and development of the career of civil servants, expressed by the totality of standards, indicators and descriptors used with reference to a person's ability to select, combine and use knowledge, skills and other acquisitions consisting of values and attitudes, for the successful performance of the tasks set in the exercise of a public function, as well as for professional and personal development, under conditions of effectiveness and efficiency" (Art 3 lit. e of Annex 8, Administrative Code adopted by Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2019, as amended) (Romanian Government, 2019).

By "general competences" we mean "the totality of competences required by all civil servants to work effectively at any hierarchical level and irrespective of specialisation", and by "specific competences" we mean "the mandatory competences comprising the knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities, established at the level of public authorities and institutions for each individual post, required to hold a public office".

<i>General skills</i>			<i>Problem solving and decision making</i>
			<i>Initiative</i>
<i>Elementary level</i> (minimum requirements for public office) involves:	- the ability to understand and possess basic knowledge in order to carry out current tasks; - application of competence requires guidance and supervision	Personal efficiency	Planning and organisation

<i>The operational level</i> (optimal requirements to perform the public function) implies:	- the ability to understand and possess detailed knowledge in order to carry out current tasks; - application of competence requires minimal guidance and supervision; - ability to provide support in the application of the competence.	Interpersonal efficiency	Communicate
<i>Extended level</i> (complex requirements necessary for the performance of the civil service) involves:	- the ability to understand and possess in-depth knowledge in order to carry out current tasks; - ability to provide guidance and coordination in the application of competence		Teamwork
<i>Strategic level</i>	- the ability to understand and possess in-depth knowledge to apply the competence; - ability to work cross-functionally; - the ability to evaluate the impact of long-term decisions; - the ability to ensure coordination and act strategically to apply the competence.	Social responsibility	Citizen orientation
			Integrity
		Management skills	Performance management
			Team development.
		Leadership	Generating commitment
			Promoting innovation and initiating change
<i>Specific skills</i>	communication skills in foreign languages required to perform the duties of the post;		
	communication skills in the language of the national minority, where appropriate, in accordance with the law;		
	information technology skills;		
	other specific skills required for the post, depending on the requirements of the post.		

The Labour Code regulates, under Title IV - "Vocational Training", issues that are relevant to the training of contractual staff, namely: objectives and typology of training, obligatory training programmes, vocational training plan, regulation of training activity, training expenses and rights of the employee, obligations of training beneficiaries, training at the initiative of the employee, benefits in kind for vocational training (Labour Code, Art. 192 - 200) (Romanian Parliament, 2011).

1. MANUSCRIPT

Training programmes for public administration staff are provided by public and private providers, which have a defined and explicit object of activity in the act of establishment, organisation and delivery of training programmes.

Public training providers are: institutions and authorities whose object of activity is defined in their act of establishment, among other activities, the organisation and delivery of training programmes, higher education institutions, public or private organisations established under public law and public authorities and institutions whose object of activity is explicitly defined in their act of establishment, the organisation and delivery of training programmes.

Accredited higher education and lifelong learning institutions are key training providers for continuing vocational education and training. Accredited higher education institutions offering postgraduate lifelong learning programmes are not subject to the licensing process regulated by GL 129/2000102, as this type of programme falls outside its scope. Postgraduate programmes are subject

to registration in the National Register of Postgraduate Programmes, which is part of the National Register of Higher Education Qualifications managed by the National Authority for Qualifications. Private training providers are companies established under Law no. 31/1990 on companies, republished, as amended and supplemented (Romanian Parliament, 2004), or, where applicable, non-governmental organisations established under Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations, approved as amended (Romanian Government, 2000) and supplemented by Law no. 246/2005, whose object of activity is explicitly defined in the act of establishment, organisation and functioning, including the organisation and running of training programmes (Romanian Government, 2005).

The parties involved in the public administration training system are divided into the following categories: the Parliament, the Government/Secretariat General of the Government (SGG), the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDLPA), the National Civil Servants Agency (ANFP), the ministries and the regulatory authorities managing specific functions.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MMSS) does not have specific competences in the field of training in public administration, but ensures the coordination and control, at national level, of the authorisation of adult vocational training providers and the management of the national registers of adult vocational training providers (i.e. the National Register of Authorised Vocational Training Providers, the National Register of Non-Authorised Vocational Training Providers and the National Register of Cross-Border Vocational Training Providers).

The County and Bucharest Municipal Authorisation Commissions are responsible for the authorisation of vocational training providers, which operate under the MMSS. In addition to the authorisation of training providers, the commissions monitor the work of training providers and the organisation of graduation exams. The commissions also coordinate the organisation of graduation examinations on completion of induction, qualification, retraining, further training and other specific courses.

The National Qualifications Authority (NQA) is a public institution under the coordination of the Ministry of Education and has several tasks relevant to continuing vocational training and the development of qualifications. The ANC has tasks such as quality assurance in continuing vocational training for adults, including the development and application of specific methodologies, standards and procedures in collaboration with interested institutions, the approval of occupational standards, and the authorisation and monitoring of vocational competence assessment centres.

The National Institute of Administration offers specialised training programmes for civil servants, contractual staff (staff employed under an individual employment contract or a management contract), persons elected or appointed to a position of public dignity or assimilated to them, local elected officials, public managers and other categories of persons established by law. It organises the following specialised training programmes for:

- a) filling positions corresponding to the category of senior civil servants...
- b) development of the skills required to hold a public management position or a contractual management position,
- c) appointment to a position of public dignity of prefect and sub-prefect.

The National Institute of Administration also organises professional development programmes for:

- a) strategic target groups, established by normative acts, programmatic documents or other documents issued by the Government and communicated to the Institute through the National Civil Servants Agency;
 - b) public administration staff, based on the training needs identified at public administration level and centralised by the National Agency for Civil Servants; and
 - c) interested institutions and authorities or public persons.
- The theme of the professional development programmes is approved by the President of the NAI, with the opinion of the NAI Coordination Council.

- The National Institute of Administration has taken all steps to set up the National Network of Training Providers for Public Administration "ReForm", which was established under Specific Objective 4 of the Strategy on Training for Public Administration 2016-2020, with the aim of ensuring a unified approach to the training process in public administration by creating a minimum standard of quality in training and encouraging the exchange of experience in the field.

Why is it necessary to set up a Network of training providers?

The creation of this Network of Training Providers aims to:

- to develop a quality standard for vocational training in this field, because in Romania, there is no uniform approach to the training process for public administration and the quality of the programmes offered by training providers differs widely;
- to develop a set of evaluation criteria for the procurement of training services;
- creating a mechanism for collecting feedback from different training providers;
- developing a comprehensive training reform through the development of a benchmark programme for public administration and a platform for the exchange of best practices among network members, research activities and access to government grants.

The National Institute of Administration has created a special ReForm page on its website (<https://ina.gov.ro/reform>), which is the channel for communicating and disseminating the necessary information. The dedicated ReForm page (<https://ina.gov.ro/reform>) provides at least the following functionalities: links to the web pages of network members; uploading documents, studies, reports, guides; archiving and/or deleting information or documents that are no longer relevant; access to a virtual library; use of a search engine; browsing and downloading of documents; filling in registration forms, questionnaires, mini-surveys. During the first 5 years of the network's operation, the dedicated ReForm page is hosted by the INA website.

The National Network of Training Providers for Public Administration "ReForm" is a formal entity, without legal personality, constituted by agreement of will of the following entities: the National Institute of Administration, the National College of Internal Affairs of the Police Academy "A.I. Cuza", the Romanian Banking Institute, the Romanian Diplomatic Institute, the European Institute of Romania, the National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics -ICI Bucharest, the School of Public Finance and Customs of the Ministry of Finance and the National School of Public Health, Management and Health Professional Development.

The establishment of such a network aims to:

- a) Cooperation within and between working groups;
- b) Cooperation with other networks or organisations;
- c) Transfer of knowledge and good practice;
- d) Meetings, workshops, conferences (organisation of the ReForm Summer School and ReForm Network Day -20 September).

The structure of the National Network of Training Providers for Public Administration "ReForm" consists of the President, the Steering Board, the Technical Secretariat and two permanent working groups. The Steering Board meets twice a year in plenary meetings and the working groups meet twice a semester.

Universities are providers of higher education/training programmes oriented towards public administration.

Public authorities and institutions at all levels of public administration (central, territorial and local) employing civil servants and contract staff have responsibilities for their professional development.

- a) The European Institute of Romania is a public institution, under the authority of the Romanian Government (more precisely, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which has, among other things, the task of carrying out short and long-term training activities and programmes in the field of European affairs, aimed at civil servants and other employees

- of the central and local administration, as well as other interested socio-professional categories. The Institute is financed from the state budget and from its own income.
- b) The Institute for Public Order Studies is a specialised educational structure, subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI), which carries out training activities training of MAI staff and provides managerial training for the management staff of MAI. The Institute is funded from the state budget.
 - c) The National Institute for Cultural Research and Training is a public institution, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, which carries out research and specialized training in the field of culture. It is financed by its own income and by subsidies from the state budget.
 - d) The National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics - ICI Bucharest is a legal entity, under the coordination of the General Secretariat of the Government, which carries out, inter alia, training and professional specialisation activities in its field of activity (i.e. Information and Communication Technology [ICT]). It is financed from its own revenue.
 - e) The National Institute of Magistracy is a public institution under the coordination of the Superior Council of Magistracy, which carries out the initial and continuous professional training of judges and prosecutors, as well as the training of trainers. It is funded from the state budget.
 - f) The National Centre for Railway Qualification and Training is a public institution under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. Its tasks include the training, qualification, further training and periodic professional inspection of staff carrying out activities specific to safe rail transport,
 - g) The School of Public Finance and Customs is a structure within the Ministry of Finance through which professional training programmes for staff of the Ministry of Finance are developed and implemented. The School of Public Finance and Customs is financed from the state budget.

The third category of training providers for public administration consists of private training providers established as companies regulated by Law no. 31/1990 or as associations or foundations (Romanian Parliament, 2004) constituted under OG no. 26/2000 (i.e. non-governmental organisations) and include (Romanian Government, 2000):

- training providers registered in the National Register of Authorised Training Providers who organise training programmes in fields for which there are approved occupational standards and their training programmes must be authorised in accordance with the provisions of OG No 129/2000 (Romanian Government, 2014).
- training providers registered in the National Register of non-authorised vocational training providers or in the National Register of cross-border vocational training providers who organise training programmes in fields for which there are no approved occupational standards and/or which are not completed with nationally recognised certificates.
- centres for the assessment of professional competences obtained through other than formal channels, which are subject to authorisation by the National Qualifications Authority.

CONCLUSIONS

The creation of the Network of trainers aims at developing and implementing public policies in the field of training of public administration staff, matching the demand and supply of training for public administration, research and dissemination activities and cooperation between the members of the network, as well as adopting a binding standard on the quality of training in public administration because there is a lack of uniformity in the quality of training organised by the different providers of training for public administration. This unevenness can be observed both in terms of training programmes organised by training providers authorised according to the provisions of GC 129/2000 and in terms of training programmes organised by training providers not authorised according to the provisions of GC 129/2000 (Romanian Government, 2014).

The network can play an important role in the implementation of the new competence framework and the dissemination of relevant information. Training programmes must respond to the new framework of competences adopted in general and specific. The training needs assessment should inform the process of developing or adapting training programmes to meet identified needs.

REFERENCES

- Romanian Government (2000). *Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 39/31 January 2000.
- Romanian Government (2005). *Law no. 246 of July 18, 2005 approving the Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 656/25 July 2005.
- Romanian Government (2008a). *Government decision no. 1066/2008 approving the rules on the training of civil servants*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 665/24 September 2008.
- Romanian Government (2008b). *Government Decision no. 611/2008 on the approval of the rules on the organization and career development of civil servants*, with subsequent amendments and additions, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 530/14 July 2008.
- Romanian Government (2014). *Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on vocational training for adults, republished*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 110/13 February 2014.
- Romanian Government (2019). *Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2019 regarding the Administrative Code*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 555/5 June 2019, with subsequent amendments and additions.
- Romanian Parliament (2004). *Law no. 31/1990 on companies, republished, as amended and supplemented*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 1066/17 November 2004.
- Romanian Parliament (2011). *The Labour Code, adopted by Law non 53/2003, republished*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 345/18 May 2011.