



## **Concept paper for strengthening the Institute for Public Administration and increasing its role in modernizing the state administration – 2014 – 2016**

\*The concept paper has been discussed and approved in the regular meeting of the Council for Administrative Reform/20.12.2013/, as well as in the meeting of the Board of Directors of Institute of Public Administration, held on 23.01.2013 in the Council of Ministers

Since the creation of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) two strategies for training have been developed as well as several reviews which define the role of the Institute in the system of public administration in Bulgaria. The strategies feature analysis, which present the current state and make relevant recommendations for reform. Alongside this, the training practice is very rich, which allows for an evaluation for the impact of IPA on the process of modernizing the state administration.

The present concept paper provides an overview of the ideas for strengthening the Institute and formulating new roles and functions in its activities.

### **1. Evaluation of the current state of IPA**

Despite the activeness and scale of training, unsatisfactory quality and therefore failure to fulfill the mission of IPA can be accounted: to contribute to increasing the skills and qualifications of civil servants with the aim of developing an effective system of public administration in the country. Several indicators reveal that IPA does not fulfill its role as a training institute, which supports the better management and performance of administrative activities:

1. There is low quality in training services for career development. A significant number of new employees and managers do not complete the compulsory training courses within the legally required deadline. The content of the two courses needs to be adapted according to the changes in the administration's activities/ duties.
2. The lack of training managers in the Directorate for specialized administration in IPA has led to the decreased ability of the Institute to develop adequate and up-to-date programmes and training courses. Those were repeated without any amendments for the 2009 - 2013 period.
3. Professional development training lacks in focus and has unspecified impact on the knowledge and skills of the employees. There is a large number of courses that differ in their titles but offer almost identical content.
4. The development of practical skills for working with employees has been significantly underestimated, and this is why the professional training courses offer predominantly theoretical knowledge.
5. The design and offering of training courses is not linked with any preliminary analysis of the target groups' needs. These are broadly formulated in the courses on offer, which is why



## **INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

employees often take part in courses with no immediate connection to their job specification.

6. There is no feedback evaluation of the completed training courses and therefore there is no information about their effectiveness.
7. The Institute does not maintain a centralized data basis of training course and information materials, which employees could access freely. No materials and publications that could increase employees' competencies are developed.
8. There are no training initiatives, which would motivate managers and employees to develop and implement best practices in their work/ activities. What is more, the forums that were initiated a few years ago (conferences, annual meetings of experts, best practices competitions) have been abandoned and lost as training opportunities.
9. There is a trend of monopolizing the trainings by a small number of trainers. The evaluations of completed training courses done by lecturers have been ignored. There is no systematic effort to expand the list of trainers at the Institute.
10. There is weak coordination between the Institute and the administration at the Council of Ministers and more specifically, the "Modernisation of the public administration" directorate. For this reason there have been missed opportunities for introducing new courses and featuring new elements into the existing ones.
11. The Institute has not established effective communication with the management team of the "Administrative capacity" Operational Programme. According to the plan of the Operational programme, the Institute was going to be a partner in delivering the projects and adopting the best practices from the projects into the trainings. IPA was not able to fulfill this role and therefore to guarantee sustainability of the projects under the Operational Programme. At the same time, IPA has been beneficiary on two projects under the "Administrative capacity" Operational Programme, without a real evaluation of its capacity for successful delivery. One of the projects has been cancelled with negative consequences for the Institute, while the second one has not achieved the desired outcomes of the training.
12. IPA has one training venue in Bankya, which is not convenient enough for trainings of the civil servants from Sofia because of the transport expenses and loss of time in travel. The hiring of unsuitable venues has additional negatives impact on the Institute's activities.

In conclusion: IPA does not effectively perform its delegated function – to run training courses, which increase the competencies of civil servants, strengthens institutions' administrative capacity and increases the effectiveness of their work.

## **2. Proposals for reform**

In the last 15 years there has been an evolution in the development of civil service towards the model of good governance. It is a broad concept, based on the system of commonly accepted principal for organizing the work of the administration: lawfulness, effectiveness, efficacy, transparency, accountability, care for citizens. Good governance has become a dominant understanding of the practices that ought to guide governments and their administrations.



# INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with the concept and practices of good governance as well as taking into account the unsatisfactory state of the Institute, it is necessary to reconsider its activities and to assign new functions and responsibilities. It is necessary to:

First: Re-formulate the mission, vision and strategic objectives of the Institute.

Second: Assign new functions in the Institute's activities that would increase its role for developing and implementing innovations and best practices in administrative activity.

Third: Improve the thematic content and the quality of training in order to increase its impact on employees' competencies and effectiveness.

## **2.1 . Re-formulating the mission, vision and strategic objectives of IPA**

The hitherto existing mission of IPA "to deliver training for employees of the public administration as a means to contributing to modernizing the administrative system of the country" needs to be reformulated and adapted to the changes that have occurred in its development: membership in the EU and public policy harmonization; delivered projects under the "Administrative Capacity" Operational Programme which have increased the capacity of many institutions; increased monitoring by non-governmental organizations of the administration's work, and the high expectations of Bulgarian society for effectiveness and ethics in the dealings of the administration.

***Mission: to conduct surveys and trainings for adopting and recognizing good governance and carrying out administration's activities.***

In accordance with the new mission statement it is necessary to also change the vision for development of IPA, i.e. what trainings to develop in order to increase the administrative capacity of the institutions and enhance their effectiveness, transparency and the quality of their administrative work?

***Vision: by the means of training on innovative and best practices, to increase the competencies of civil servants in order to achieve good governance and delivery of administrative work.***

The new mission statement and vision presuppose a re-formulation of the objectives in IPA's work:

- to survey innovations and practices of good governance and delivery of activity of EU national administrations, which can become the basis of developing new training courses and other training formats;
- to develop and promote the introduction of innovative solutions and practices for modernizing the administration by setting up specialized groups of qualified experts in important areas;
- to select and include best practices developed under the "Administrative Capacity" Operational Programme and "Good Governance" Operational programme in its trainings so that they could be applied to the work of the administrative units;



## **INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

- to run courses for professional development, which increase the competencies of managers and experts from the administration;
- to design trainings in new developments, which would increase the capabilities of the administration to develop projects and programmes for effective planning and delivery of the administrative activities;
- to support increasing the quality of personnel selection for the administration by organising and carrying out centralized competitions for appointing personnel on expert position with analytical and/ or controlling functions that do not require professional experience;
- to provide assistance in implementing systems for managing quality in administration by setting up a CAF centre within IPA, increasing the expert capacity of employees in the realm;
- to use the analyses of studies and trainings with employees for formulating proposals for reforms and changes in the legal framework for the work of the administration.

### 2.2. Adopting new functions in the activities of IPA

There is a high enough number of managers and civil servants in the administration who know the tenants of good governance in terms of policies and practices. They, depending on their position of employees or consultants, also make proposals for reforms in the organization and management of the administration. Within the Council of Ministers there is an institutionalized body – the Council for administrative reform, which develops measures and solutions for the modernization of the administration. An online portal for public consultations has been in existence for several years and it allows for surveying the opinion of experts on discussed pieces of legislation. On management and expert level there have been opportunities for monitoring and adopting innovations from countries with high standards for the management and organization of the administration. As a whole, however, there is no unified system for monitoring and adopting best practices from the countries of the EU. The Institute for Public Administration is a suitable unit, which can undertake this function.

In the state administration there is a group of highly-qualified experts in different areas. Their expertise, however, remains confined to their home institution. IPA could integrate them by forming groups on topic areas such as strategic planning, human resource management, quality of administrative work, impact assessment, management of projects under the “Good governance” Operational programme, programme budgeting, public contracts in the area of e-governance, and others. They could provide professional support for the specific development of policies and projects by the state institutions. By undertaking consulting duties, IFA would increase its role as an institution, which supports effective reforms in the administration, as well as participates in European projects for administrative reform with the Western Balkan countries.

The functions for collecting and disseminating best practices in the work of IPA could be further developed by initiating competitions for sharing best practices. The outstanding ones would be submitted for the European competition for best practices, which is organized by EIPA – Maastricht every year. This way, Bulgaria would demonstrate on European level that the country



## **INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

has the capability of creating innovations and reaching effective solutions in different areas of the administrative activities. Additionally, administrative reform requires regular reviews of achievements and sharing the results with all stakeholders and the wider public. Hence, IPA will begin organizing regular national forums (conferences), annual meetings of specialized teams within the administration, e-forums between employees , and others aimed at sharing knowledge and adopting best practices.

The first programme period of EU funding was related to the intense build-up of administrative capacity at the managing and intermediary bodies for management. To an extent part of the issues were addressed in the previous period post-2009. A weak point in the process of utilizing the funds remains beneficiaries' capacity. Alongside this, there is a process of experts on managing the operational programmes leaving the state administration, which requires that new ones are selected and appointed. Therefore it is necessary to create a centralized system for regular trainings of contracting authorities and beneficiaries on the operational programmes. At present, this is done by many institutions without sufficient coordination and effectiveness. The draft partnership agreement between Bulgaria and the EU 2014 – 2020 features a negotiated agreement for the creation of an Academy for training on utilizing EU structural funds. IPA has already established traditions in trainings along these lines and therefore it can incorporate the Academy within its structure. Work in this direction would significantly increase the role of IPA as a training hub for Bulgaria's full-scale integration into the EU.

IPA can also undertake some functions related to the centralized management of human resources. The Institute is delegated the role for organizing centralized selection competitions for civil servants on expert positions with analytical and/ or controlling functions, that do not require professional experience. After a test for general competence, the successful applicants are entered into a data base that acts as the first filter for selecting candidates for advertised vacancies at the state institutions. In this aspect, IPA will create an online platform for managing the centralized competition, thus making the system more accessible and effective. A similar model for creating a data base could be developed for selecting managers in the state administration. This is a project proposal under a PHARE project for IPA, delivered in the 2006 – 2008 period.

The creation of a resource centre, supporting the selection of prospective employees in the state administration as well as their career, presupposes the creation of an online library with training and information materials that would be accessible to the administration. It will be integrated in the online platform, through which IPA will be developing its online trainings from 2015 onwards.

The introduction of new functions into IPA' realm could be summed up to the following:

- creating a unit within IPA that would conduct studies on European practices in the field of good governance, their inclusion in trainings, and proposals to the Council for administrative reform for their application;
- creating a unit within IPA that would integrate groups of experts from several areas, who would train and support the implementation of innovative practices in the activities of individual administrations;



## **INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

- organizing competitions for best practices and initiatives that encourage managers and civil servants to seek innovations for good governance and share their achievements;
- creating a CAF centre within IPA that would support the introduction and application of the model of the Common framework for evaluation in the state administration;
- re-introduction of the centralized competition approach for hiring employees for expert positions with analytical or controlling functions that do not require professional experience, and the maintenance of a data base with successful candidates;
- creating and maintaining an online library with training and information materials to be used by civil servants;
- creating a unit within IPA that would deliver systematic training on the utilization of EU funds in coordination with the managing and intermediary bodies of the operational programmes.

The delivery of some of the above mentioned functions does not require changes in the legislative framework, additional funds or personnel. They could be introduced with an appropriate restructuring of the personnel at the specialized directorate of IPA. For other proposals, however, it would be necessary to initiate changes in the bill governing the work of civil servants, the Organic rules of the Institute and additional resources.

### **2.1 Updating the topical range and quality of training**

The IPA currently offers a variety of courses and seminars ranging across several topics. Generally speaking their content is not well developed and they do not lead to the desired training impact. A professional updating of the existing courses needs to be performed, to update their content to correspond to training needs and the formation of new skills for good governance and administration. IPA will take a new approach to the development of its new programmes and courses:

1. Regular training needs analysis of the two major administration groups – managers and experts. New curricula and syllabi will be developed based on the analysis. The first steps have already been made in the Catalogue of Training 2014.
2. The strategy of administrative reform 2014-2020 and the plan for its implementation define IPA's particular commitments and implementation timeframes.
3. The study and analysis of European good practices, similarly as in the OPAC programmes, and their inclusion in training courses offered.
4. Expert analysis on various topics, enabling the formulation and updating of curricula of training programmes and the courses and seminars included within.
5. Increasing the interactivity of training and developing modules for presenting good administrative practices.
6. Analysis of the efficiency of training and respective follow-up changes to courses.



7. On-demand training based corresponding to the needs of individual institutions.

Existing surveys and analyses will be used towards the development of the training catalogue for the next year which would enable the updating of the content and relevance of course syllabi.

To this end the following will apply:

- curriculum development of induction courses for newly appointed experts and managers;
- development of a new training programme for senior staff on “Leadership for Good Governance”;
- updating the professional development courses through modular training aimed at more comprehensive knowledge and skills formation;
- development of a dedicated training programme for senior leaders in cooperation with major European institutes for public administration;
- development of a new training programme on Sharing Good Practices and Benchmarking, to include good practices from OPAC projects;
- organising competitions for good practices to stimulate innovation in good governance in administrative process.

Conventional methods of training are limited within the available resources. To overcome the shortage IPA will develop over the coming year an e-learning platform. It will include several courses relevant across the board of staff (e.g. on pay system), the development of courses for individual learning and assessment, blended learning through electronic material sharing and face-to-face seminars on key topics etc. With reference to these, setting up a resource library with relevant materials on good governance will turn IPA into a knowledge hub for administration across the country.

To expand the training opportunities in good governance and performance for territorial administration, IPA will start delivering training in several locations across the country. IPA will work in collaboration with regional EU project information centres on delivering trainings on EU programmes and funding.

All IPA trainings need to include courses on effective budget management. This would lead to some extent duplication with the School of Public Finance. To address this and ensure integration, training will be offered in collaboration with the latter. The process would involve a range of possible approaches – from blending to coordinating of existing syllabi.

#### **2.4. Collaboration with Bulgarian and European training institutions**

IPA is part of the network of European institutes of public administration. Agreements for cooperation and sharing experiences have been signed with the European Institute of Public Administration EIPA in Maastricht, the École nationale d'administration ENA in France, and the Institute of Public Administration of Ireland. IPA will select courses offered by these partner institutes



which are relevant to Bulgarian public administration staff and ensure enrolment. In partnership with the institutions we will organise benchmarking events between Bulgarian and European specialised units and institutes, to share experience in good management and performance.

IPA needs to improve its dialogue and coordination with other institutions in the country which offer corporate trainings. This will avoid duplications as well as access to qualified trainers and resources. IPA will develop training opportunities on generic competencies for public administration, while other training institutions will offer specialised courses within their respective areas of expertise. The coordination of these is of great significance considering future challenges like sharing experiences with the Western Balkan states during their process of EU integration, and the upcoming presidency of the EU in 2018.

### **3. Implementation measures**

#### **3.1. Role of IPA in OP Good Governance**

The EC insists in its partnership agreement for 2014-2020 for a more distinctive role of IPA in the new Good Governance OP (GGOP). To address this the communication and coordination between IPA and GGOP need to improve through:

Firstly, the development of projects by the Institute towards sustaining its training capabilities and other learning opportunities. IPA is currently developing a project for OPAC funding the results of which will create administrative capacity over the coming years. The new project envisages the development of innovative knowledge in: implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) recommended by the EC as an efficient method of self-assessment and quality assurance in administration; updating the methodology for impact pre-assessment including of business regulations, development of methodology for post-assessment of regulations and programmes and therefore establishing a comprehensive system of evaluation; development of practical guidelines and trainings for the distribution of government grants; development of institutional performance assessment methods.

To enable the implementation of these new functions IPA should become beneficiary under the OPGG. Potential projects to be developed include:

- a) setting up an EU Funding Training Academy
- b) Benchmarking in good governance (sharing and discussing practices with appropriate institutions of excellence) for ministries and agencies. IPA would be organising benchmarking of managerial and expert staff with the respective foreign institutions as part of this project;
- c) Benchmarking in good governance at local level. IPA will be in the position to identify European local councils of high standard of performance and those working on smart city agendas. These would be recommended to Bulgarian local counterparts for benchmarking seminars on good governance;
- d) 1-3 month internships for public administration at appropriate EU member state institutions. The EC is making provisions for this tool within the new 2020 programme period.



## **INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Secondly, implementation of results from other OPGG projects (innovation in governance, administration, e-governance etc), recruiting lecturers from trained teams to cascade training and share good practices across public administration units. These interactions would demand changes to prescribed duties of OPGG beneficiaries to also make new, efficient proposals to the IPA training programme. This will ensure sustainability for OPGG projects and therefore enhance their effectiveness.

### **3.2. IPA Management**

According to its Statutes IPA is managed by an executive director. A management board was set up to warranty the interests of the direct beneficiaries of IPA trainings, and the Chief Secretary at the Council of Ministers is member of the Board, along with the deputy ministers of finances, of labour and social policy, of education and science, and the executive director of IPA. The decision is aimed providing IPA with the support it needs in its key initiatives. The Management Board needs to get the support to effectively perform its duties in managing the Institute and sustaining its capacity. It is recommended that the IPA work plan and the report of its activities to be entered for consideration by the Administrative Reform Council at the Council of Ministers.

### **3.3. Amendment to the Civil Service Act and adoption of a new Organic Rules of IPA**

The implementation of some of the proposals prerequisites amendment to the Civil Service Act and the Organic Rules of IPA.

### **3.4. Training facilities of IPA**

The lack of training premises is an important while certainly not insurmountable issue. The current status – remote facilities in Bankya and rented venues in Sofia which do not correspond to the standards for training premises, is a barrier towards IPA's performance. The Institute needs to be provided with adequate premises.

**Executive Director:**

**Assoc. Prof. Georgi Manliev**