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Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement to Support to the National Agency for Civil Servants on Human Resource Management Reforms in Romania (P503309)

Deliverable 1: Report with proposal for a Capacity Enhancement Program for senior management civil servants

March 2025 (revised July 2025)



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGWP	Annual Government Work Plan
DG	Directors General
EDP	Executive Development Program
EU	European Union
GoR	Government of Romania
GSG	General Secretariat of the Government
HLCS	High-Level Civil Servants
HRM	Human Resources Management
ISP	Institutional Strategic Plan
L&D	Learning & Development
MICS	Managerial Internal Control System
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MICS	Management Internal Control System
MWDPA	Ministry of Works, Development and Public Administration
NACS	National Agency for Civil Servants
NIA	National Institute for Administration
NRRP	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBB	Program and Performance Budgeting
PM2	Program Management Methodology of the European Commission
RAS	Reimbursable Advisory Services
SCS	Senior Civil Servants

Glossary of terms

Action learning	A process where participants work on real-time challenges within the organization, reflecting and learning from their actions and outcomes.
Coaching	Understood in the context of HRM as an employee development intervention, characterized by multiple one-to-one conversations between a coach and the respective employee which focuses on supporting the latter to define and accomplish specific development objectives which enable improved performance in the workplace. ¹
Corporate governance (of state-owned enterprises)	The framework of rules, practices, and processes by which these government-owned entities are directed and controlled. According to the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises, this governance aims to ensure that SOEs operate efficiently, transparently, and in an accountable manner, contributing to sustainability, economic security, and resilience while maintaining a global level playing field and high standards of integrity and business conduct.
Executive development programs	Structured learning and development initiatives aimed at enhancing the leadership capabilities (or specific competencies) of senior managers and executives to perform in their role. These initiatives are primarily experiential and anchored in action learning.
Succession Planning	A strategy for identifying and developing future leaders within an organization to ensure continuity in key positions.
Strategic foresight (in the public sector context)	A structured and explicit exploration of multiple plausible futures to inform decision-making. Rather than predicting a single outcome, it involves analyzing various potential scenarios to anticipate and better prepare for change. ²
Workforce planning	A strategic human resources management process to align an organization's human capital with its current and future objectives by forecasting workforce needs and developing strategies to meet them.

¹ Jones, Rebecca J., Woods, Stephen, A. and Guillaume, Yves R. F. (2015) *The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching*, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (2016), 89, 249–277.

² OECD (2021) *Foresight and Anticipatory Governance in Practice Lessons in effective foresight institutionalisation*, Strategic Foresight Unit.

Executive Summary

The World Bank is providing technical assistance through Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) to the Government of Romania (GoR) to support its efforts, led by the National Agency for Civil Servants (NACS), to improve human resources management (HRM) in the public administration³, to support the implementation of measures, objectives and results provided for in Pillar V. Health, as well as economic, social and institutional resilience, Component C14. Good governance, Reform 3. High-performance human resource management in the public sector, Milestone 419 - Operational competence frameworks in the central public administration of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). The current technical support builds on previous reforms developed by the NACS⁴ aimed at professionalizing, consolidating and improving the meritocracy and performance-orientation of the civil service in Romania. These include the introduction of a general competency framework for all civil servants in the public administration, and a new national recruitment system and selection process for civil servants, based on the general competency framework. Under the current project, the Bank is supporting the NACS in operationalizing and expanding the use of the competency framework in various critical HRM processes for the Romanian public administration,⁵ as follows:

- Consolidating the corps of high-level civil servants (HLCS) in the public administration, through improved HRM frameworks, policies and instruments, so that they are anchored in the requirements of the general competence framework.⁴
- Designing, developing, implementing and evaluating an executive development program (EDP) for consolidating specific competences of Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General (SG and deputy SG) and of senior civil servants i.e., directors general (DG) in the central public administration, as part of the initiative to introduce the general competence framework in learning and development (L&D) activities applicable to HLCS and management functions in public administration, in complementarity with the specialized training program for HLCS, led by the National Institute for Administration (NIA).⁵
- Improving core HRM functions for the public administration, with a focus on recruitment and selection and strategic workforce planning, through a better integration of the general competency framework and enhanced use of data.⁶

³ Through the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement to support the National Agency of Civil Servants on Human Resources Management Reforms in Romania (P503309).

⁴ This activity is covered by the upcoming Deliverable 4 – *Report on options for reforming the corps of senior civil servants in the Romanian public administration and, partially, by the upcoming Deliverable 5 – Report on ex-post impact assessments of selected HRM reforms, procedures and coordination frameworks and on the evaluation of the implementation of the Capacity Building Program.*

⁵ This is covered through the current deliverable and partly through the upcoming Deliverable 5.

⁶ This is covered through the upcoming Deliverable 2 *Report on using strategic workforce planning for fiscally sustainable staffing in priority/selected areas* and partly through Deliverable 5.

- Developing the strategic framework to be focused on the development of fit-for-purpose human resources in the public administration and on the use of data for HRM through coherent and functional data governance arrangements.⁷

This report represents Deliverable 1 of the current RAS and provides a detailed proposal and substantiation for an executive development program for deputy SGs, SGs and DGs. This report provides the structure and main design elements for the proposed EDP, which would target specific training needs linked to the competencies necessary for deputy SGs, SGs and DG. As such, it outlines the EDP's envisaged objectives, target audience and learning outcomes, and defines specific learning objectives and a curriculum. The proposed content, learning applications (e.g. case studies and exercises) and the regulations and procedures necessary to implement and subsequently regulate the program will be finalized by the Bank team in the upcoming Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

Under this RAS, the Bank and NACS teams will pilot the proposed EDP for a pre-defined number of participants and will evaluate it ex-post on several dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness. This piloting of the EDP aims to deliver all the modules and training activities (including mentoring activity) identified by the project teams as necessary for the development of a subset of competencies defined as priority for the target group, namely SGs (deputy) teachers and DGs with substantial experience in the position. The piloting has as its main objective the consolidation of these competencies among the participants, but will also allow (i) to assess the extent to which the proposed EDP achieves its training objectives and to review and adapt the EDP content based on the evaluation, and (ii) to precisely define the financial costs and operational challenges to be managed by the EDP coordinating institution in case it is regulated as a training tool in the Romanian public administration. The pilot will include an initial cohort of twenty-one participants from the target group, selected through a procedure corresponding to participation in professional training programs organized and carried out within externally funded projects⁸

The proposed EDP was designed through a multi-dimensional approach to incorporate international best practices and practitioner insights within the broader context of the Romanian public administration. First, the Bank team used a methodological approach that would adapt international best practices from EU and OECD countries on EDP to the current and, to the extent possible, future needs and constraints of the Romanian public administration in terms of L&D for DGs. Second, this approach also introduced a substantial co-design element with the intended beneficiaries of the EDP, to ensure that the proposed design adequately and realistically addresses and reflects their L&D priorities.

International experience with EDP in EU and OECD member states

Developing leadership competencies for senior civil servants is a key priority in modern public administration. Across OECD and EU countries, governments are shifting from traditional hierarchical management approaches to transformational leadership models that emphasize collaboration, adaptability,

⁷ Covered by the upcoming Deliverable 3 *Report with technical input and recommendations for the Strategy for the Civil Service, including on developing a comprehensive data governance framework for the public administration.*

⁸A proposal for the procedure will be finalized in Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

and strategic foresight. Senior civil servants are now expected to act not only as managers but as leaders capable of navigating complex governance environments, fostering innovation, and enhancing public trust in government institutions.

Successful EDP incorporate several essential elements. First, they utilize modular and experiential learning approaches, blending in-person training sessions with applied learning methods such as case studies, peer coaching (mutual learning and teaching between colleagues through reflection and feedback), and leadership simulations. These interactive methodologies allow participants to develop competencies in a practical, hands-on environment. Second, selection processes for such programs are typically competency-based, ensuring that candidates demonstrate leadership potential and a commitment to public service excellence. Third, these programs are designed to be integrated into broader HR frameworks, aligning with performance evaluations, career progression pathways, and talent management systems. Finally, a key feature of effective leadership development is institutional ownership and sustainability, with training initiatives embedded within civil service agencies or training institutes to ensure long-term viability. Table 1 below summarizes findings from a review of country experience with EDP in Finland, France, the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland, conducted for this RAS.

Table 1. Elements of EDP for senior civil servants in selected EU and OECD countries

Elements	Commonalities
Institutional Set-Up	Dedicated department or agency which oversees the group or corps of top-level managers in the public administration (generally in the civil service or central public administration).
Target Audience	The highest and second highest echelons of non-political leadership (Secretary General or Director General). In some cases, the target group included those who had just been promoted to this level.
Objectives	Ensure that there is a cohort of leaders ready to step up to the highest level, by: 1. Developing leadership skills and capacity 2. Developing a culture of performance and delivery 3. Developing an ‘esprit de corps’ and community or practice 4. Cultivating a set of common public sector (leadership) values
Selection	Rigorous selection process (nomination from the institution, a written application from the candidate, strict eligibility criteria, and interview by a high-level selection panel) The Netherlands program starts with a Development Centre, used to assess baseline competencies and goals, run by an external agency.
Structure	Between 20-30 participants Over the period of several months (6-10) Modular, with activities between the modules (“homework” such as leadership challenges; coaching etc.) Residential or mixed (but with significant residential component)

Contents	Leadership (including systems approaches and collaborative leadership, communications, influencing, change management, systems thinking, decision-making, negotiation and having personal impact). Leadership models are used to practice addressing public sector challenges e.g. focus on creation of public value. Personal development, including individual coaching. Sometimes specific topics added (such as digitalization, environment, diversity etc.). Strong future orientation ('solving challenges of the public administration')
Modes of delivery	Interactive, applied/experiential, and participative Practical focus through public service-specific case studies (using the case study method), working on some challenge from their organization, presenting the results of their challenge to an external panel made up of senior public servants and experts; elements that require participants to work or engage with front-line services (the Netherlands - Hackathon to design innovative solutions for community-based organizations, French program - citizen participation).
Training providers	Highly skilled facilitators and inputs from experts on specific topics (including through involvement of current practitioners or those with extensive public service experience). In some cases, the development and delivery of training providers are completely contracted out to private providers and academic institutions (e.g. UK)
Cost	€8000 to €20,000 per participant Attendance is generally financed by the employing organizations of the senior managers or by their respective dedicated HRM structure.
Participant and Program Evaluation	Program evaluations are a rare practice due to the difficulties of measuring and isolating the effects of improving leadership skills. Generally, program evaluations are conducted on operational criteria (e.g., costs) or perceptions of program participants' performance.

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on interviews with officials responsible for EDP in Finland, France, the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland.

Learning and development activity for HLCS and DG in public administration in Romania – performance factor

The currently applicable L&D ecosystem for HLCS and senior civil servants, including DGs, is characterized by fragmentation and limited strategic focus and differentiation. While a general competency framework exists, the competencies outlined are not sufficiently articulated for specific L&D

needs for HLCS and DG, limiting the effectiveness of targeted training interventions. Additionally, there is limited strategic coordination among key institutional players overseeing the L&D activity for HLCS, namely the NACS, the NIA, and employing public institutions⁹.

Another critical gap is the inadequacy of the existing performance appraisal system to systematically identify and address specific L&D needs for HLCS. A previous Bank analysis documents the ineffectiveness of the civil service performance management system to set, monitor and evaluate performance and competency expectations, as well as to identify and enable to achievement of L&D needs and, respectively, outcomes.¹⁰ This has meant that the bottom-up learning needs assessment process has generally led to unsystematic and perfunctory outputs. The newly introduced general competency framework can be expected to help define structured learning needs for specific categories of staff, although only in the coming years will it be mainstreamed into the performance management process.

The EDP as an instrument for enhancing L&D activities for (deputy) SG and DG

The EDP aims to support the transition of HLCS from their predominantly operational and administrative functions to roles emphasizing strategic and transformational leadership. Currently, (deputy) SGs primarily perceive themselves – and are perceived by their political leaders – as administrative managers rather than strategic leaders. This perception has resulted in training programs that overlook critical leadership competencies essential for effective governance.

To address these issues, the EDP proposes three core objectives. These are: first, to enable (deputy) SG and DG to mainstream and enhance the culture of performance and accountability for delivering results for citizens in the public administration; second, to foster a robust community of practice and *esprit de corps* among these top and senior managers through shared learning experiences; and third, training DGs to be integrated into succession planning policies for (deputy) SGs roles.

To design the proposal for the EDP, the Bank and the NACS teams organized collaborative workshops to identify current and future job expectations and L&D needs for (deputy) SGs. The project teams organized three full-day workshops, attended by more than forty stakeholders, including representatives of the main institutions responsible for HRM policies for HLCS in the public administration,¹¹ HRM experts, senior public administration officials in HLCS and management roles, private-sector trainers, academia, and civil society representatives. Participants assessed roles,

⁹ The challenges associated with the existing L&D system for civil servants in the Romanian public administration are described in Chapter 2 of this report and analyzed in detail in the World Bank (2022) Deliverable 1 - Report on Identifying Enabling Conditions for Training. Prepared under the Agreement on Reimbursable Technical Assistance Services for Strengthening the Capacity of the National Institute of Administration (INA) to Improve the Training Policy Framework in Public Administration in Romania (P169456).

¹⁰ See World Bank (2020). Deliverable 5 *Performance Management System – Analysis of the performance management system*. Developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration (P165191). Accessible here: <https://documents.worldbank.org/>.

¹¹ Namely, the National Institute of Administration, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, the General Secretariat of the Government, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

responsibilities, and competency requirements of (deputy) SGs in the public administration, and explored anticipated changes influencing these roles. Box 1 provides a summary of these roles. The workshops also identified essential competencies and determined appropriate L&D methods to effectively develop these skills. These findings and recommendations were subsequently discussed and validated in a working group established under the RAS with the aforementioned institutions responsible for HRM in the public administration.

Box 1. Summary of roles (deputy) SGs perform in the public administration in Romania, as defined through the visioning workshops

Each profile is designed to represent distinct facets of HLCS roles and responsibilities, providing a framework to identify the specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for excellence in these areas.

1. **Policy entrepreneur:** coordinates systemic change by translating vision into action, mobilizing key actors, and ensuring accountability for generating results.
2. **Strategic catalyst:** coordinates strategic planning and strategic policies and enables the organization of the program, from concept to implementation, ensuring collaboration and accountability.
3. **Institutional reformer:** coordinates institutional reform efforts to establish and sustain a performance-oriented culture in the institution, focused on generating results for citizens.
4. **Explorer:** coordinates institutional improvement through experimentation, the use of new technologies and pilot projects.
5. **Diplomat:** represents the organization in national and international forums, promoting strategic interests and managing key communications.
6. **Control tower:** ensures institutional efficiency and profitability of operations by maintaining order, optimizing resources, ensuring compliance with internal control conclusions and alignment with strategic objectives.
7. **Treasurer:** manages budget planning and execution, ensuring efficient allocation of resources while maintaining fiscal discipline.
8. **Team leader:** ensures that structures within the organization collaborate, have the necessary resources, and are accountable for achieving results for citizens.
9. **Mediator:** anticipates, prevents and reduces risks for the institution and manages urgent and complex situations by providing coordinated responses and solutions.
10. **Advisor/Legal Endorser:** analyzes and approves regulatory acts, ensuring compliance with legal, technical and financial standards.

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the outputs of the visioning workshops, November 2024.

The proposed EDP adheres to principles emphasizing practicality, relevance, demand-driven content, and sustainability. It is structured around six modules (four of which are mandatory and two are optional), based on the roles (deputy) SGs were found to generally perform in the central public administration and the corresponding competency requirements. These modules cover:

- (i) Generating impact in public administration through transformational leadership and corporate governance,
- (ii) Managing and accelerating public investment programs,

- (iii) Achieving digitalization and reorganization in public institutions,
- (iv) Applying performance-based budget management in the public sector,
- (v) Modeling institutional strategies for results for citizens (elective) and
- (vi) Resolving crises and complex situations in public institutions through anticipation and negotiation (elective)

Each module addresses specific competencies directly aligned with the identified roles of (deputy) SGs, ensuring practical relevance and immediate applicability. The modules revolve around experiential and interactive learning methods, incorporating private sector leadership practices and executive coaching and mentoring activities, adapted to the public sector's unique context. Participants will engage in an active learning project designed to combine theoretical knowledge with practical applications and will have access to executive coaching activities, both in module 1 of the program, as well as in the dedicated technical mentoring session which aim to deepen learning from the modules. These will be complemented by knowledge exchanges with international practitioners. In total, the proposed EDP will involve up to 114 hours of training through the developed modules, up to a total of 30 hours of experience exchange with practitioners and mentoring, and up to 18 hours of self-study.

Implementation arrangements for the EDP

The EDP should be limited to manageable groups and priority of participants to allow for personalized and applied training activities. Smaller groups improve engagement, interaction and learning in training activities. The size of the groups should be adapted to the available resources and funding models, prioritizing individual learning outcomes over standardization or efficiency gains. Initially, priority for participation will be given to (deputy) SG from the central public administration, and by eligible DGs, within the limits of the remaining available places. In this regard, participants could be prioritized as follows:

- (i) (Deputy) SG from central public administration in office who have accumulated at least 3 years of professional experience in HLCS and/or DG positions in the last 5 years. Priority will be given to those who have passed the first stage of the national competition for occupying a HLCS position; followed by
- (ii) DGs from the central public administration in office who have accumulated at least 3 years of professional experience in HLCS and/or DG positions in the last 5 years. Priority will be given to those who have graduated from the specialized training program for occupying a HLCS position, and to those who held or hold the position of coordinator of investments and reforms of the NRRP at the time of registration with the EDP.

The participant selection process must be rigorous, credible, and aligned with the program's objectives. The selection procedure for the EDP should include a first stage of CV screening and an interview with a specially established evaluation committee, composed of (i) HLCS from the NACS, NIA, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA), the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as institutional leaders for HRM in the civil service, and (ii) the EDP program coordinator. At a later stage of the EDP evolution, once it has been integrated into

the L&D framework, the selection process should also include a written application from the nominated candidates, between the CV screening and interview phases, to further calibrate the suitability of the group to the program objectives.

The EDP pilot implemented under this RAS will be governed by a simplified selection procedure and will be limited to twenty-one participants. The implementation of the EDP pilot will be financed by this RAS, and the selection procedure may be simplified both functionally and administratively and in terms of the necessary regulation. Thus, the simplified selection procedure will be adapted to the rules on professional training programs organized and carried out within externally funded projects¹². The procedure will consist of a nomination by the participant institution and an analysis by the designated NACS team of the submitted CVs and an individual registration form, in order to assess the eligibility of the participants, as well as to make a ranking of them, according to the aforementioned criteria, in case the application for participation exceeds the maximum number of available places.¹³ At the same time, for this EDP pilot implemented under this RAS, the maximum number of participants will be limited to twenty-one, selected with priority from among the (deputies) SG, to which are added the eligible DG from the central public administration.

An adequate communication plan and strategy are essential elements in building awareness, engagement, and credibility among employees in public administration for the EDP. Such a strategy should clearly articulate the program's benefits to both potential participants and political decision-makers, ensuring sustained support and practical application of learned competencies. A structured approach, including a consistent branding strategy aligned with existing governmental and institutional guidelines, ensures recognition and reinforces trust. The communication strategy must incorporate a replicable communication plan, clear branding, and robust evaluation metrics. This deliverable proposes the main directions of a communication strategy and plan, as well as a roadmap for their implementation in the EDP pilot.¹⁴

EDP evaluation

The EDP should continuously align with the L&D needs and strategic HR objectives for the target group to remain relevant. To achieve this, the proposed EDP design incorporates adaptive mechanisms such as feedback and debriefing sessions, allowing participants to internalize program updates based on evolving priorities and practical requirements. While the comprehensive approach used includes feedback loops to integrate participants' insights into future content, a full alignment with broader civil service strategies will be achieved through periodic evaluations using structured methodologies, reflecting national strategic goals.

Evaluation mechanisms based on recognized frameworks, such as the Kirkpatrick Model, should be embedded into the EDP to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness measurement. The evaluation process should encompass multiple stages, starting with initial reactions among participants and

¹² Article 9(1) of Government Decision No. 1066/2008.

¹³ A proposal for a selection procedure will be finalized as part of Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

¹⁴ The communication materials will be finalized under Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

learning assessments immediately following training sessions. A more developed evaluation stage would assess behavioral changes by measuring participants' ability to apply newly acquired skills within their professional environments. Follow-up surveys and structured interviews are utilized to capture insights into these changes. The final evaluation stage should focus on organizational impact, employing performance metrics and institutional effectiveness indicators to assess the extent to which participant learning has positively influenced public administration operations.

The EDP pilot carried out under this RAS will be evaluated operationally and in terms of the degree of achievement of the proposed training objectives. Under this RAS, within Deliverable 5, the Bank and NACS teams will evaluate the EDP pilot in an operational matter at the end of the pilot implementation period in terms of financial, administrative and logistical needs and challenges. At the same time, for this EDP pilot, the operational evaluation will be complemented by the assessment of the degree of achievement of the training objectives, namely the degree to which participants perceive and prove through assessment that they have acquired and can apply the competencies targeted by the EDP. The methodology and results of the evaluation will be presented in Deliverable 5 of this RAS. For evaluation, representatives from NIA and academic institutions will be invited to the delivery of the modules as active observers.

Sustainability arrangements for future iterations of the EDP

The EDP should be integrated into the broader L&D and talent management framework dedicated to HLCS. To develop a sustainable L&D culture in Romania's public administration, the EDP should be embedded in the career development of HLCS as a specialized training initiative for mid-career job holders. This requires a policy anchor (i.e., in the Administrative Code), sponsored and sustained by the NACS and the MDPWA, as well as a robust operational coordination with the NIA, to deliver it sustainably in the long-term.

Operationally, the EDP will require a dedicated coordination and management team to oversee content quality, maintain program standards, and manage logistical and administrative functions. Moving forward, the program will require a dedicated core team, ideally housed within the NIA, responsible for management, financial oversight, stakeholder engagement, and quality assurance. This team should consist of up to five permanent staff, supplemented by external subject-matter experts.

The sustainability of the EDP should be based on adequate regulation as a training instrument in L&D and on a stable cost-sharing model between participants, their institutions and the institution responsible for implementing the program¹⁵. On the one hand, the EDP must be adequately regulated in order to be capitalized as an official L&D instrument in public administration. In this sense, EDP can be transposed into legislation related to training and development in Romanian public administration as a specialized training program. Withal, EDP can be rolled out by the institution designated to coordinate EDP in partnership with one or more academic institutions, shaped as a post-graduate program for continuous

¹⁵ Deliverable 5 under this RAS will develop proposals for regulating the EDP.

professional training and development.¹⁶ From the point of view of financial sustainability, initial costs of EDP could be covered by participant tax (subsidized by the hiring institution) and from state budget allocations. Moving forward, the EDP should become a L&D requirement for HLCS and be delivered fully subsidized, to the nominated job holders, by the institution responsible for L&D or broader HRM for HLCS. To support transparency and effective resource management, the EDP, together with all L&D initiatives for HLCS, should be part of a distinct budgetary measure under the Institutional Strategic Plan of the MDPWA, allowing rigorous monitoring of L&D expenditures and outcomes for HLCS.

¹⁶ An example in this sense is the postgraduate program "Public Administration for Sustainable Development", developed and carried out through a collaboration between the Department for Sustainable Development of the Government of Romania and the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1. **The World Bank is providing technical assistance to the Government of Romania (GoR) to support its efforts, led by the National Agency for Civil Servants (NACS), to improve human resources management (HRM) in the public administration.**¹⁷ The current technical support builds on previous reforms developed by the NACS aimed at professionalizing, consolidating and improving the meritocracy and performance-orientation of the civil service in Romania. These include the introduction of a general competency framework for all civil servants in the public administration, and a new national recruitment and selection process for civil servants, based on the general competency framework. Under this RAS the Bank is supporting the NACS to enhance and expand these reform efforts through four inter-connected workstreams, as follows:
 - Consolidating the corps of high-level civil servants (HLCS) in the public administration, through improved HRM frameworks, policies and instruments. This includes reforming the learning & development (L&D) function for HLCS to enable it to achieve its intended learning outcomes and build the capabilities of HLCS.¹⁸
 - Design, development, implementation and evaluation of an executive development program (EDP) to strengthen the skills of secretaries general/deputy secretaries general and senior civil servants at the level of directors general (DG) in the central public administration, as part of the initiative to introduce the general competence framework in learning and development (L&D) activities applicable to HLCS and management functions in public administration, in complementarity with the specialized training program for HLCS, coordinated by the NIA.¹⁹
 - Improving strategic workforce planning in public administration, through better integration of the general competence framework and better use of data.²⁰

¹⁷ Through the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement to Support to the National Agency for Civil Servants on Human Resource Management Reforms in Romania (P503309).

¹⁸ This is covered through the upcoming Deliverable 4 *Report on options for reforming the corps of high-level civil servants in the Romanian public administration*, and partly through the upcoming Deliverable 5 *Report on the ex-post impact assessments of selected HRM reforms, procedural and coordination frameworks and on the evaluation on the implementation of the Capacity Enhancement Program*.

¹⁹ This activity is covered by the present deliverable and, partially, by the future Deliverable 5.

²⁰ This is covered through the upcoming Deliverable 2 *Report on using strategic workforce planning for fiscally sustainable staffing in priority/selected areas* and partly through the upcoming Deliverable 5.

- Developing a strategic framework focused on the development of fit-for-purpose human resources in the public administration and on the use of data for HRM through coherent and functional data governance arrangements.²¹
2. **This report represents Deliverable 1 developed under this RAS Agreement and includes a detailed proposal and rationale for piloting and subsequently introducing into the civil service L&D framework an EDP for SGs (deputies) and DGs.** The report presents the structure and main elements of the proposed EDP, which will target specific competencies for SGs and DGs. As such, the report includes the intended objectives of the EDP, the target audience and learning outcomes, and defines specific learning objectives and a curriculum. At the same time, this deliverable develops preliminary propositions for the agenda, the learning applications (e.g. case studies and exercises) and the regulations and procedures necessary to implement and subsequently regulate the program; these will be finalized by the Bank team in the upcoming Deliverable 5 of this RAS.²²
 3. **Under this RAS, the Bank and NACS teams will pilot the proposed EDP for a pre-defined number of participants and will evaluate it ex-post on several dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness.** This piloting of the EDP aims to deliver all the modules and training activities (including mentoring activity) identified by the project teams as necessary for the development of a subset of competencies defined as priority for the target group, namely HLCS and DGs²³ with substantial experience in the position. The piloting has as its main objective the consolidation of these competencies among the participants, but will also allow (i) to assess the extent to which the proposed EDP achieves its training objectives and to review and adapt the EDP content based on the evaluation, and (ii) to precisely define the financial costs and operational challenges to be managed by the EDP coordinating institution in case it is regulated as a training tool in the Romanian public administration²⁴. The pilot will include an initial cohort of twenty-one participants from the target group, selected through a procedure corresponding to participation in professional training programs organized and carried out within externally funded projects, preliminarily described in Chapter 3 of this report and which will be finalized in Deliverable 5 of this RAS. At the same time, Deliverable 5 will develop proposals to regulate the selection procedure of participants in future editions of the EDP, so that this procedure meets the requirements of training and development activities financed from the state budget.

²¹ Covered by the upcoming Deliverable 3 *Report with technical input and recommendations for the Strategy for the Civil Service, including on developing a comprehensive data governance framework for the public administration.*

²² Under the upcoming Deliverable 5 – *Report on ex-post impact assessments of selected HRM reforms, procedures and coordination frameworks and on the evaluation of the implementation of the Capacity Building Program.*

²³ As detailed in Chapter 3 and Annex 1 of the report.

²⁴ These recommendations and evaluations will be developed under the upcoming Deliverable 5 – *Report on ex-post impact assessments of selected HRM reforms, procedures and coordination frameworks and on the evaluation of the implementation of the Capacity Building Program.*

1.2 Methodological approach

4. **The EDP proposal was designed through a four-pronged approach to incorporate international best practices and practitioner insights within the broader context of the Romanian public administration.** The Bank team used a methodological approach that would adapt international best practices from EU and OECD countries on executive development programs to the current and, to the extent possible, future needs and constraints of the Romanian public administration in terms of L&D for senior civil servants. This approach also introduced a substantial co-design element with the intended beneficiaries of the EDP, to ensure that the proposed design adequately and realistically addresses and reflects their L&D priorities. Thus, the proposed design of the EDP (i.e., curriculum, content, structure, learning instruments and delivery methods) is based on the findings from three streams of analysis, outlined below.
5. **First, the EDP proposal incorporates best practices in executive development programs from EU and OECD member states and academic and practitioner literature.** The Bank team designed the EDP based on a desk research of academic and practitioner literature on adult learning and L&D for senior civil servants, and based on primary research conducted through structured interviews on executive development programs in five EU and OECD members states, namely Finland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, and Ireland.²⁵ The country cases were selected based on the maturity of their respective L&D function for the senior civil service, on their experience with EDP for senior civil servants, and based on availability of information concerning L&D and EDP practices. This analysis helped establish the core principles and practices that should underpin the design of the EDP as part of an L&D function dedicated to senior managers in the Romanian public administration.
6. **Second, the design of the EDP proposal relied heavily on a co-design work with stakeholders and direct beneficiaries.** The Bank developed the proposed curriculum, and learning objectives and instruments for the EDP following a series of three co-design and visioning large-scale and approximately full working day workshops held in November 2024. These were co-led by the Bank and the NACS teams and were attended by more than forty stakeholders from the public and private sector, non-governmental organizations and, most importantly, by the intended beneficiaries of the EDP, namely (deputy) SGs and DGs from the central public administration. Each of the three workshops achieved a specific objective, namely (i) describing the profiles of HLCS, anchored in the current and future needs of public administration, (ii) identifying and validating key competencies in relation to these profiles, and, respectively, (iii) defining the architecture of an EDP that could support the development of the identified competencies.²⁶
7. **Third, the EDP proposal draws on a combination of practitioner insights and desk research to ensure alignment with the applicable institutional, regulatory and strategic framework for the public administration.** The Bank team conducted an in-depth analysis of the legal framework

²⁵ See Annex 2 for the complete country case studies.

²⁶ See Annex 4 for the detailed description of the process for the three workshops and Annex 5 for the resulting profiles and required competencies for HLCS.

governing the L&D activity for senior civil servants in management roles to ensure the EDP's institutional fit, relevance and suitability within the broader context of the public administration. This legal review was complemented by desk research of (i) previous relevant analytical work conducted by the Bank in Romania, and (ii) all applicable national strategies in Romania, to map L&D priorities identified through them for HLCS and DG. Additionally, the Bank team conducted a series of thirty-nine structured interviews with executive and leading staff, managers, HLCS, and political leaders in the central public administration, to explore and map the priorities and challenges related to L&D for (deputy) SGs and DGs.²⁷

8. The report is structured into four parts, which set out the identified problems and proposed solution for addressing competency gaps at the HLCS and DG level . The deliverable is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the L&D program for the HLCS in the Romanian public administration and an assessment of the degree to which the completion and graduation of the program can achieve its intended outcomes. The chapter includes an analysis of the current and expected competencies that HLCS and DGs would require to perform effectively in their role.
- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the design and implementation of the proposed EDP and describes the EDP piloted under the RAS. The chapter includes specific recommendations on ensuring the EDP's sustainability over the long term, from a financial and functional perspective.
- Chapter 4 provides general recommendations on enabling more effective L&D in the HLCS tier, as part of broader HRM interventions. These recommendations would be further elaborated in Deliverable 4 of the current RAS.
- The Annexes contain detailed content or methodological explanations for the abovementioned chapter. Annex 1 provide the complete structure, curriculum and learning plan for the proposed EDP, which will be further developed and piloted under the upcoming Deliverable 5 of the RAS. Annex 2 contains the complete review of international experience of EDP and the series of five case studies in the selected OECD and EU member states. Annex 3 provides a summary of the thirty-nine interviews conducted by the Bank team for this report with civil servants from across the central public administration. Annex 4 and Annex 5 provide the detailed description of the process and, respectively, of the results, from the co-design workshops held in November 2024 to inform the design of the EDP.

²⁷ See Annex 3 for a summary of the findings from the interviews and for descriptive statistics for the sample of interviews.

2. Learning & development ecosystem, challenges and needs for HLCS and DGs in the public administration in Romania

2.1 General context pertaining to human resources management for HLCS and DG

9. **High-level civil servants in Romania are the most senior level of civil servants responsible for ensuring the strategic direction, managerial continuity and operational functioning of organizations in public administration at both central and territorial levels.**²⁸ Their roles involve exercising public authority at the management level, with appointments and other employment decisions made by the prime minister. There are four HLCS categories: (i) secretary-generals and deputy secretary-generals of central public authorities, who ensure and are responsible for organizational development, oversee and are accountable for administrative, legal operational functions, and liaise between politically appointed officials and institutional operations; (ii) secretary-generals of the Prefect's institution in Romania's counties, who support prefects in governance and administrative coordination; (iv) the State Inspector General of the Labor Inspectorate, a unique position overseeing labor regulations; and (v) government inspectors, who, in nearly all cases, are former permanent HLCS from the same categories who have not been reappointed into a specific HLCS posting but have been invested through mobility among HLCS and, de jure, have responsibilities for coordinating EU-related projects and institutional development, while, de facto, are generally inactive.²⁹
10. **The second highest level of non-political management in the civil service are DG and deputy DG roles, who can have responsibilities of similar complexity and scope as HLCS.**³⁰ At the central level, DGs typically report to political appointees, such as state secretaries, overseeing specific public policy areas. In many cases, DGs occupying administrative and operational roles are directly subordinated to HLCS. Key responsibilities of DGs consist of strategic management and policy implementation in their respective areas of policy and managing substantial financial and human

²⁸ An in-depth analysis of the status quo and challenges in the senior civil service in Romania will be provided in the upcoming Deliverable 4 of this RAS.

²⁹ See Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration, signed between the World Bank and the NACS, and based on information from interviews conducted under this RAS.

³⁰ This analysis refers to general civil service positions of DGs. At the local level, the Secretary-General of administrative-territorial units is classified at a director-general level, ensuring legal compliance in administrative acts, maintaining stability and continuity in the operations of mayoral or county council departments, and facilitating functional links within these departments. Additionally, there are other specific civil service roles at the director-general or director-general levels across central, regional, or local administrations, which, while similar, have more specialized responsibilities compared to general directors-general or their deputies.

resources. DGs are classified as “management-level civil servants”, together with line managers in the civil service (i.e., “șef serviciu” and their equivalent), with whom they share similar competency requirements as per the applicable general competency framework. However, previous Bank analysis have found large overlaps between (deputy)³¹ DG and HLCS roles in terms of the nature of the work, job responsibilities, competency requirements and job complexity,³² thereby prompting recommendations to formally treat and classify DG roles as high-level civil service positions.³³

- 11. The HLCS roles are regulated by the Administrative Code (AC)³⁴, to various degrees of detail, as specific jobs in the broader civil service.** The AC does not establish and define a distinct “corps” of HLCS. Rather, it treats HLCS jobs as part of the general civil service, albeit governed by distinct HRM arrangements, despite there being no functional and administrative linkages with the other categories of civil servants.³⁵ Additionally, the legal responsibilities of each category of HLCS are outlined in the AC in various degrees of detail and clarity. For instance, the AC does not provide a clear distinction exists between the legal responsibilities of the secretary-generals and deputy secretary-generals, and for the former, the AC provides a detailed description of their responsibilities, whereas for the job responsibilities for the latter are to be set by the head of institution.
- 12. The NACS developed and introduced a general competency framework (CF) for civil servants, which is expected to be embedded in all HRM functions, including L&D.** The use of the CF is legally mandated in the recruitment and selection for all civil servants. Moving forward, the CF would be used in all other HRM processes, including performance appraisal and L&D. In its current form, the CF defines the general competency requirements that different categories of general civil servants must observe. Moreover, it currently reflects the job classification of the civil service and distinguishes only between HLCS, managers and execution-level staff, with no distinction between the different types of managers or job responsibilities. Thus, customized L&D policies and programs for HLCS and, in particular, for DGs, can build on the CF, but require complementary and more specific input.
- 13. Management-level civil service positions are served by similar L&D function and arrangements, where HLCS benefit from distinct, albeit approximately similar, ones.** The different categories of

³¹ There is no functional distinction between deputy DGs and DGs, per the Administrative Code.

³² For instance, secretary general and deputy secretary general roles are primarily concerned with the overall functioning, coordination, and supervision of public authorities/institutions, regardless of the policy direction set by politically appointed decision-makers. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of director general and deputy director-general civil servant positions are focused on policy development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and service delivery, but exclusively on their policy area of responsibility, as directed by political decision-makers, under the direct authority of their corresponding politically appointed dignitaries and process coordination of the HLCS

³³ Based on a comparative analysis of regulations of organization and functioning, job descriptions, interviews and focus-groups organized by the Bank team in April-June 2019 and as reflected in the World Bank (2020). Deliverable 3: Report on competencies and jobs in the Romanian public administration of the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration.

³⁴ Emergency Ordinance No. 57 of July 3, 2019, regarding the Administrative Code, with further modifications and revisions.

³⁵ With the exception of temporary appointments into HLCS roles, for which the appointee must be a civil servant.

civil servants (management, execution and HLCS) are governed by distinct HRM frameworks, rules and processes.³⁶ However, in terms of the L&D function, the delivery and operating models are similar across categories, with slight variances in terms of institutional responsibilities. In summary

- L&D for civil servants should be anchored in the general and, where available, specific competencies. General competencies are defined by law for all categories of civil servants, while defining specific competencies for civil service positions is in the remit of each institution and must be approved by the NACS.
- By law, the hiring authority/institution must ensure annual mandatory participation of civil servants in L&D programs and must allocate the necessary funding. It identifies the L&D priorities and needs, as part of the individual appraisal process and it develops, approves, monitors and evaluates the annual L&D program. The NACS centralizes the training needs submitted by public authorities/institutions and submits it to Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA) to initiate the approval of the L&D by Government Decision and to the NIA for information. The NIA defines together with NACS, the specific topics and offer of L&D programs for civil servants. For HLCS only, the process differs in that L&D needs are defined jointly by the job holder and the central Appraisal Committee for HLCS, during their respective annual performance appraisal.

2.2 The learning and development activity for HLCS and DGs as an enabler of individual performance

14. A fit-for-purpose L&D activity is a key enabler and driver of effective leadership and management in senior roles in the civil service in Romania. A previous large-scale and representative survey conducted in 2020 across the civil service in Romania found that the quality of managers and leaders is strongly correlated with high levels of staff motivation.³⁷ On the other hand, the survey found large variances in the quality of management as reported by canvassed staff from the lens of “people management” competencies. These findings, corroborated with the high frequency of responses highlighting the lack of relevant, adequate and regular training opportunities, even across all management-level categories of staff, suggests that the L&D activity for the civil service, in general, and for managers, in particular, is not effective in developing management and leadership competencies

³⁶ As explained in Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration. The document can be accessed here: <https://documents.worldbank.org/>. A more targeted, in-depth and updated analysis of HRM for HLCS will be provided in the upcoming Deliverable 4 of this RAS.

³⁷ The survey was conducted in 81 central, territorial and local public institutions across Romania, between June 2019 and January 2020, with over 3300 in-person and 2700 on-line interviews completed. See World Bank (2021). Selecting the right staff and keeping them motivated for a high-performing public administration in Romania – Key findings from a public administration employee survey. Developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration. Accessible here: <https://documents.worldbank.org/>

(among others). Similar findings, through qualitative or mixed methods research, resulted from subsequent Bank analysis.³⁸

15. The legal, regulatory and policy framework for L&D in the civil service does not differentiate functionally among categories of staff.³⁹ The L&D of public administration staff is considered a particular type of adult vocational training.⁴⁰ As such, it is governed by the general legal provisions on adult L&D, inasmuch special legal and regulatory provisions public administration staff, i.e., civil servants and contractual staff do not provide otherwise.⁴¹ Eligible L&D interventions are grouped into three categories, namely professional learning, specialized professional learning and professional development – these are explained below in Box 2. Both civil servants and contractual staff are entitled participate to any of these L&D programs, financed by the employing institution. The process is more structured and centralized for civil servants, with clear legal guidelines and reporting requirements, whereas for contractual staff, the process is more flexible and depends on individual institutional policies. In addition, the L&D policy for civil servants does not distinguish between different categories of civil servants. Specifically, it applies uniformly to all civil servants, including high-level civil servants (HLCS) and (deputy) DGs, as well non-managerial civil servants.

Box 2. Types of L&D interventions in the Romanian civil service

In the context of Romania’s civil service, the L&D interventions are defined as follows:

- (i) **Professional learning (“formare profesională”).** It aims to develop specific competences and skills with a view to improving the quality of individual professional activities carried out in the exercise of public authority prerogatives. It targets the needs of all civil servants and contractual staff.

³⁸ For a focused analysis on the general civil service, see the deliverables produced under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration, signed between the World Bank and the NACS, and the RAS on Strengthening INA’s Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration. Accessible here: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentlist?qterm=P169456>.

³⁹ World Bank (2022). Deliverable 1.3 Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Current Legal Framework on Training in the Public Administration. Quality Standards and Quality Assurance Mechanisms in the Training and Development Process of the Public Administration in Romania. Delivered within the framework of the RAS on Strengthening INA’s Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration.

⁴⁰ Two main regulations define the Romanian legal framework for adult professional training: GO 129/2000 regarding adult professional training and GD 522/2003 for approving the rules for implementing the provisions of GO 129/2000 regarding adult professional training.

⁴¹ The Administrative Code provides the special and common legal framework applicable to the L&D of both civil servants and contractual staff within the public administration. The main common provision requires that both civil servants and contractual staff benefit from L&D. GD 1066/2008 further provides the special regulatory provisions concerning the L&D of civil servants, without differentiating between categories of civil servants. For HLCS, but not for civil service directors-general and deputy directors-general the provisions of GD No 832/2007 apply. For public administration staff, less strict requirements are set through the Labor Code.

- (ii) **Specialized professional learning (“formare specializată”).** For the current analysis, this related to the Specialized professional learning course for occupying a HLCS position, organized by the NIA. It targets the L&D needs of HLCS, and management-level public administration staff, of persons aiming to become HLCS, who are civil servants – or have held civil service positions for at least one year, hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent and meet the general conditions to hold a civil service position –, and of persons elected or appointed to public office or equivalent and local elected representatives, as well as other specialized management roles in Romania's public administration. It is carried out in an organized framework, over a relatively long period of time, with defined and limited target groups, usually on a selection basis, and covering a wide range of subjects, linked in a logical sequence and focused on the achievement of the main learning objective. Graduating the Specialized professional learning course organized by the NIA is an ex-ante conditionality for holding a HLCS position. This seems to imply that the legislators wanted it included in the *professional learning* category only. However, participation to it being open to both persons that hold a HLCS position and those that do not but aim to hold it, allows for its classification, at least theoretically, as a *professional development* activity. Nevertheless, its current design seems to put an emphasis on the *professional learning* aspect only.
- (iii) **Professional development (“perfecționare”).** As part of professional L&D, it aims *to develop* those competences needed to improve the quality of results obtained in the performance of specific duties, carried out in an organized framework, over a relatively short period of time, with broadly defined target groups, usually on the basis of self-evaluation, assessment and recognition of the need for training, and covering a single theme, pertaining to a specific area of activity. It targets all categories of public administration staff and interested persons, without particular focus on the development needs of the HLCS and management-level public administration staff.

Source: Based on the provisions of the Administrative Code,⁴² GD No 832/2007,⁴³ and GD 1066/2008⁴⁴.

16. The L&D activity for the civil service lacks a structured, strategic approach to set L&D priorities for HLCS (and the broader civil service) and articulate them in L&D initiatives. Currently there is no government-level strategic initiative in place that defines long-term competency building objectives for HLCS or for other categories of civil service staff. Moreover, the civil service does not benefit from a functioning mechanism that can reliably and regularly translate strategic objectives, from existing policies or reform initiatives, into L&D or other capacity building programs and interventions.⁴⁵ Rather, high-level L&D needs for HLCS derive directly from their aggregated individual learning plans, developed in their respective annual performance appraisal process.

⁴² GEO 57/2019 on the Administrative Code with subsequent amendments and supplements.

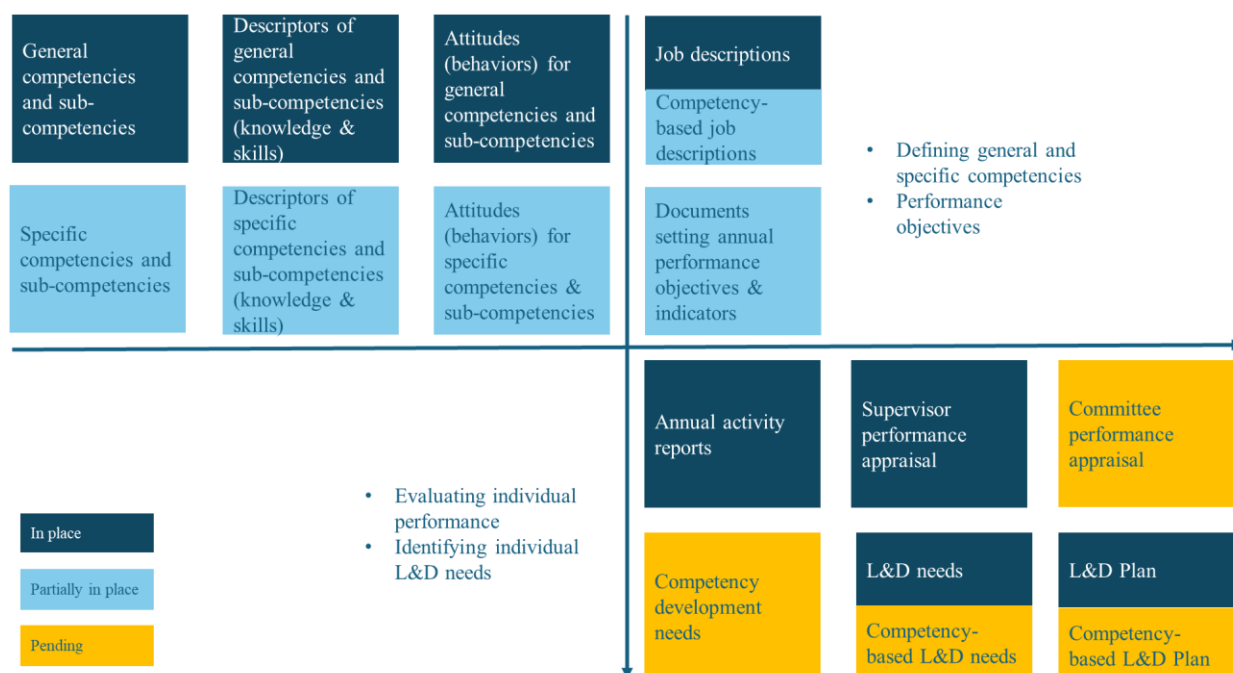
⁴³ GD No 832/2007 for the approval of the Regulation on the organization and conduct of the specialized training program for the occupation of a public function corresponding to the category of senior civil servants.

⁴⁴ GD 1066/2008 approving rules on the professional training of civil servants.

⁴⁵ Strategic initiatives have been initiated by the NIA and the NACS through the (Draft) Strategy on Professional Training in Public Administration 2023 - 2029 and, respectively, (Draft) Strategy for Civil Service 2022-2027 but these have yet to be formally approved.

17. The performance appraisal process for HLCS is not sufficiently effective to act as a main channel for identifying and setting L&D needs and priorities. Previous Bank analysis have documented the ineffectiveness of the civil service performance management system to set, monitor and evaluate performance and competency expectations, as well as to identify and enable to achievement of L&D needs and, respectively, outcomes.⁴⁶ For HLCS, annual performance appraisals have been suspended, as the HLCS Evaluation Committee has been inactive for several performance evaluation cycles; even so, the Committee generally played a compliance role, as opposed to having a leading role in the appraisal process. This has meant that the bottom-up learning needs assessment process has generally led to unsystematic and perfunctory outputs. An additional underlying cause has been the absence, until recently, of a competency framework to help define structured learning needs for specific categories of staff. The newly introduced general competency framework can be expected to address this problem, although only in the coming years will it be mainstreamed into the performance management process. Figure 1 below highlights the main elements required for the performance appraisal process for HLCS to contribute effectively to the L&D activity.

Figure 1. Fundamental elements for effective bottom-up learning needs assessment for HLCS



Source: Authors' elaboration. Based on applicable legal framework and interviews conducted under this RAS.

⁴⁶ See World Bank (2020). Deliverable 5 *Performance Management System – Analysis of the performance management system*. Developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration (P165191). Accessible here: <https://documents.worldbank.org/>

- 18. The current governance framework for establishing and implementing L&D priorities for HLCS cannot contribute towards achieving the intended learning outcomes.** The Government, the NACS, the NIA and employing public authorities and institutions share the responsibility of setting the L&D priority areas and for specific topics for the specialized L&D programs targeting HLCS and all other civil servants (including DG). In practice, the operating model is incomplete, lacks clarity and does not ensure the systemic L&D needs are properly identified. For HLCS, the Government must approve the priority areas for HLCS L&D programs through GD, as proposed by the NACS, based on the information collected from the relevant authorities, institutions and bodies.⁴⁷ In practice, such GD could not be identified. Together with the NIA, the NACS also has the responsibility of defining the specific topics for the specialized L&D programs for HLCS, but this is currently done as part of the prioritizing process for all civil servants (including DG).⁴⁸ Moreover, the delivery model for L&D interventions based on any identified L&D needs for HLCS is not sufficiently comprehensive and robust, as only the NIA currently has a dedicated and explicit institutional role in this, articulated in its HLCS eligibility program.
- 19. The supply of specialized L&D programs customized for addressing HLCS competency gaps is insufficient and not embedded in the HRM functions.** Currently, the only available L&D program which targets HLCS competencies is the one led by the NIA for eligibility in HLCS positions. Box 3 describes the program in detail. However, this program, from a functional and administrative perspective, is directly tied to the recruitment and selection activity of occupying a HLCS position and, only to a limited extent, to the career management and continuous L&D functions for appointed HLCS, since its focus is on preparing (prospective) HLCS candidates for entering such a role. At the same time, the link between this program, its training objectives and the general competence framework applicable to HLCS and DG is not demonstrated in practice, is not methodologically explained and is not regulated by the laws and norms applicable to the program,⁴⁹ which reveals that the program is not designed to address the competences defined by law for HLCS and DG.⁵⁰ For senior managers (such as DG), the NIA also has a dedicated and formal role to provide specialized training, materialized through the specialized L&D program for management roles in the public administration. In this case as well, the program objectives do not distinguish among categories of staff (i.e., DG from heads of service) and do not target specific and fully articulated competency gaps or HRM functions applicable to civil service staff (i.e., mobility and promotion or, if implemented in the future, succession planning).

⁴⁷ For HLCS, NACS proposal rests on the L&D needs information provided by (i) by the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) for the positions of secretary general and deputy secretary general within central public administration, and of governmental inspector, (ii) the minister of interior affairs for the positions of secretary general of the prefect's institution, (iii) by the committee in charge of appraising the individual professional performance of high-level civil servants.

⁴⁸ According to Article 401(1)(h) of GEO 57/2019 on the Administrative Code.

⁴⁹ The specialized training program for HLCS is organized according to GD no. 832/2007, most recently revised in 2012; thus, GD no. 832/2007 is not adapted to the new regulations on the use of HRM competency frameworks in the civil service, established by GEO no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code.

⁵⁰ GEO no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code.

Box 3. The NIA's specialized training program for occupying a HLCS position

The current mandatory L&D program for aspiring HLCS consists of nine knowledge-based modules on Romanian public administration legislation, structure and procedures, as well as managerial skills. Each module is 18 hours long, delivered face-to-face over three days, leading to 162 hours total over a period of 8 months (April to November, for the 2024 cycle). The training does not cover leadership as distinct from management, and, by the topics covered, it focuses mainly on transmission of knowledge/acquisition of facts rather than development of competencies, i.e., skills and attitudes needed to apply the knowledge and lead in the public sector. The modules of the 2024 program are listed below.⁵¹ At the end of the program, candidates are evaluated and graduates finish with a program graduation diploma that can be used to prove one of the conditions for occupying a public position in the HLCS category.

The modules of the most recent program include:

1. Legal Framework for the organization and functioning of the public administration
2. The Romanian Public Administration in the European context
3. Managerial skills
4. Strategic Management in the public administration
5. Performance Management in the public administration
6. Financial and Budget Management
7. Management and development of human resources
8. Strategic Management of Programs and Projects
9. The administration of the future.

The program is open to anybody who (i) is already appointed to a HLCS role or (ii) is/was a civil servant for at least one year and fulfills the eligibility criteria stipulated in the Administrative Code.

To attend the program, interested civil servants must submit an application folder and pass an interview with a commission. The interview assesses general knowledge of public administration, as well as skills and competencies needed to fill a high-level civil service position, such as communication skills, managerial skills, the capacity to make decisions and assess their impact, motivation.⁵² However, the exact criteria for assessing these competencies and their link to the general competency framework are not clear. The NACS is not involved in the selection of participants. A summary of the HLCS program regarding the number of program participants and their distribution by positions held in the period 2018-2024 (and, partially, 2025) is presented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

⁵¹ NIA (2024). Specialized L&D program for HLCS. and NIA (2025). Specialized L&D program for HLCS.

⁵² The evaluation criteria for the interview are listed in Article 18(2) of the Annex to GD 832/2007.

Table 2. Enrollment statistics HLCS Program 2018-2024 (2025 only partially)

Year	National admission contest for HLCS program			Program development					Enrollment costs (RON)	
	Approved tuition figures	No. people enrolled	No. People admitted	No. Modules	No. hours training	No. participants	No. groups	No. graduates	Admission costs	Enrollment fee
2018	100	136	100	8	144	100	4	97	40.800	370.000
2019	50	103	57	8	144	57	2	57	30.900	218.880
2022	100	140	92	9	150	92	4	92	49.000	506.000
2023	75	134	77	9	162	77	3	78	67.000	423.500
2024	50	59	45	9	162	45	2	45	29.500	247.500
2025	50	48	44	9	162	44	2	0	24.000	242.000
Total	425	620	416	-	-	416	-	369	241.200	2.007.780

Table 3. Distribution of participants in HLCS Program by occupied roles, 2018-2024

Year	HLCS	Politically appointed	Management civil servants	Executive civil servants	Secretary Generals	Other	No. Participants
2018	38	7	27	15	0	13	100
2019	28	6	12	6	0	5	57
2022	25	8	33	14	3	9	92
2023	17	6	24	19	8	3	77
2024	8	2	18	17	0	0	45
Total	116	29	114	71	11	30	371

Source: Based on applicable legal and regulatory framework and the NIA website.

20. Academic institutions provide development opportunities that could be useful for civil servants, but are not linked to the general competency framework nor customized for management roles in the public administration (HLCS and DG). Several universities in Romania offer various shorter-term development opportunities for public administration staff in general but mostly focus on higher-education bachelor and masters-level courses in public management and leadership.⁵³ The top Romanian universities in the field, according to the Ministry of Education⁵⁴ are University Babes Bolyai in Cluj (UBB), the SNSPA⁵⁵ (Bucharest), and the Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest. They offer both bachelors and master's in public administration which, some of which include courses in leadership,⁵⁶ HRM,⁵⁷ and other relevant competencies. While some also offer post-graduate courses, these are not designed as executive development programs are not customized to the specificities of HLCS jobs.

21. Private training providers in Romania do not systematically and comprehensively address the competency development needs of HLCS or DG. Private training providers have the largest market

⁵³ UBB Cluj (2024). Programs.

⁵⁴ UEFISCDI (n.a.). Ranking of study programs organized by accredited universities of the national education system, p. 35.

⁵⁵ SNSPA (n.a.). Public administration program.

⁵⁶ UBB Cluj (n.a.). FSPAC Leadership in public administration: Bachelors-level program.

⁵⁷ ASE Bucharest (n.a.). HRM program: Bachelor's program.; ASE Bucharest (n.a.). Postgraduate programs.

share for L&D services provided to public administration staff,⁵⁸ yet they do not offer, under an established, structured and regular offer, L&D programs customized for HLCS and management positions in the public sector. This is due to the absence of a common strategic framework for such programs and lack of uniformly applied quality standards for public administration training, combined with the decentralized nature of the L&D public procurement process at the level of employing institutions.

- 22. The delivery of L&D programs for HLCS (or broader civil service) is not generally accompanied or follow by evaluations of immediate or longer-term learning outcomes.** Although the evaluation of the impact of L&D programs on HLCS (and on all other categories of civil servants) is acknowledged in the applicable legal and regulatory framework as an important process stage,⁵⁹ currently there are no legal or regulatory provisions elaborating on its scope, methodology, outline or on the responsibilities related to it. At a system level, data on public expenditure on and results of L&D for HLCS or other civil service personnel is scarce, unreliable, fragmented and unamenable for disaggregation by institutions, type of programs, and categories of beneficiaries. The current data gaps are prohibitive for conducting any cost-benefit, impact or efficiency evaluations of L&D programs.

2.3 Current and predicted L&D needs for HLCS and DG

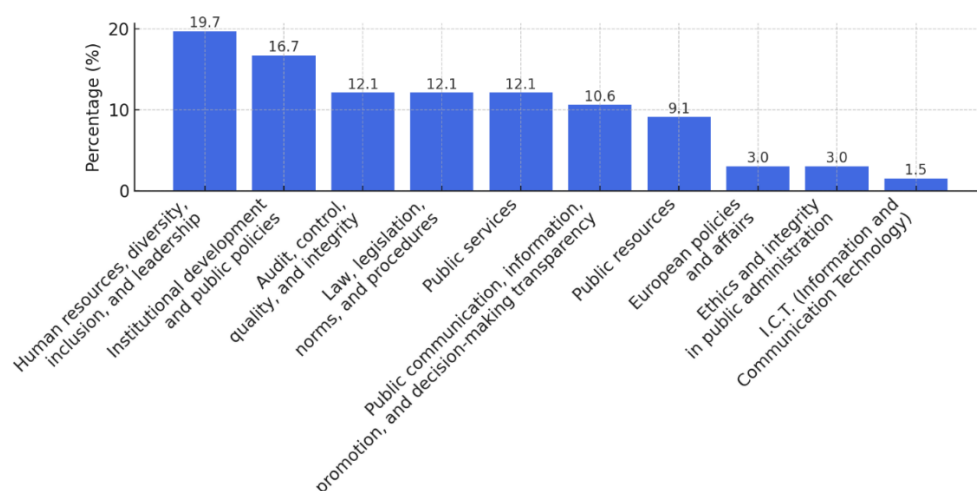
- 23. The general competency framework is the only instrument that provides a unitary and structured reference for identifying and addressing L&D needs for HLCS and senior managers in the public administration.** The general competency framework provides a standardized and comprehensive referential for understanding HLCS job expectations and competency requirements. The competency framework cannot differentiate these elements for senior managers, such as DG in general civil service positions, despite previously identified functional overlaps with HLCS. At the same time, as described in the previous sub-chapter, the L&D operating and delivery models applicable in the civil service does not reliably and effectively identify, define, prioritize and articulate into L&D interventions the specific L&D needs for HLCS and DG. Various incoherent processes exist, used primarily for internal purposes by the respective institutional leads, and which are either fully disconnected from the competency framework or inadequately leveraging it.
- 24. The annual bottom-up reporting process for L&D needs for civil servants is currently not used in developing specific and competency-based L&D interventions.** The training needs for HLCS and other civil servants in Romania, as reported annually to the NACS during their respective performance appraisal process, can only be used to define generic areas of professional development. These include human resource management, institutional development, audit and control, and public communication.

⁵⁸ As seen in World Bank (2022). Deliverable 3 *Report on the development of the training network*. Delivered within the framework of the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Strengthening INA's Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration.

⁵⁹ According to Article 4(e) of GD 1066/2008, the decentralized management of the L&D process is the principle according to which public authorities and institutions have full control over the planning of training, the procurement of training services, monitoring and evaluation of civil servants' training.

Specifically, for HLCS, the training priorities reported to the NACS in the 2024 included HRM, inclusion, and leadership; institutional development and public policies; audit, control, quality, and integrity; public communication, information, and decision-making transparency (see Figure 2 below).⁶⁰

Figure 2. L&D priorities for HLCS based on annual reporting of training priorities, 2024, calculated as percentage of respondents



Source: Authors' elaboration, based on figures from [NACS \(2024\). Report on the professional L&D of civil servants](#), p. 10.

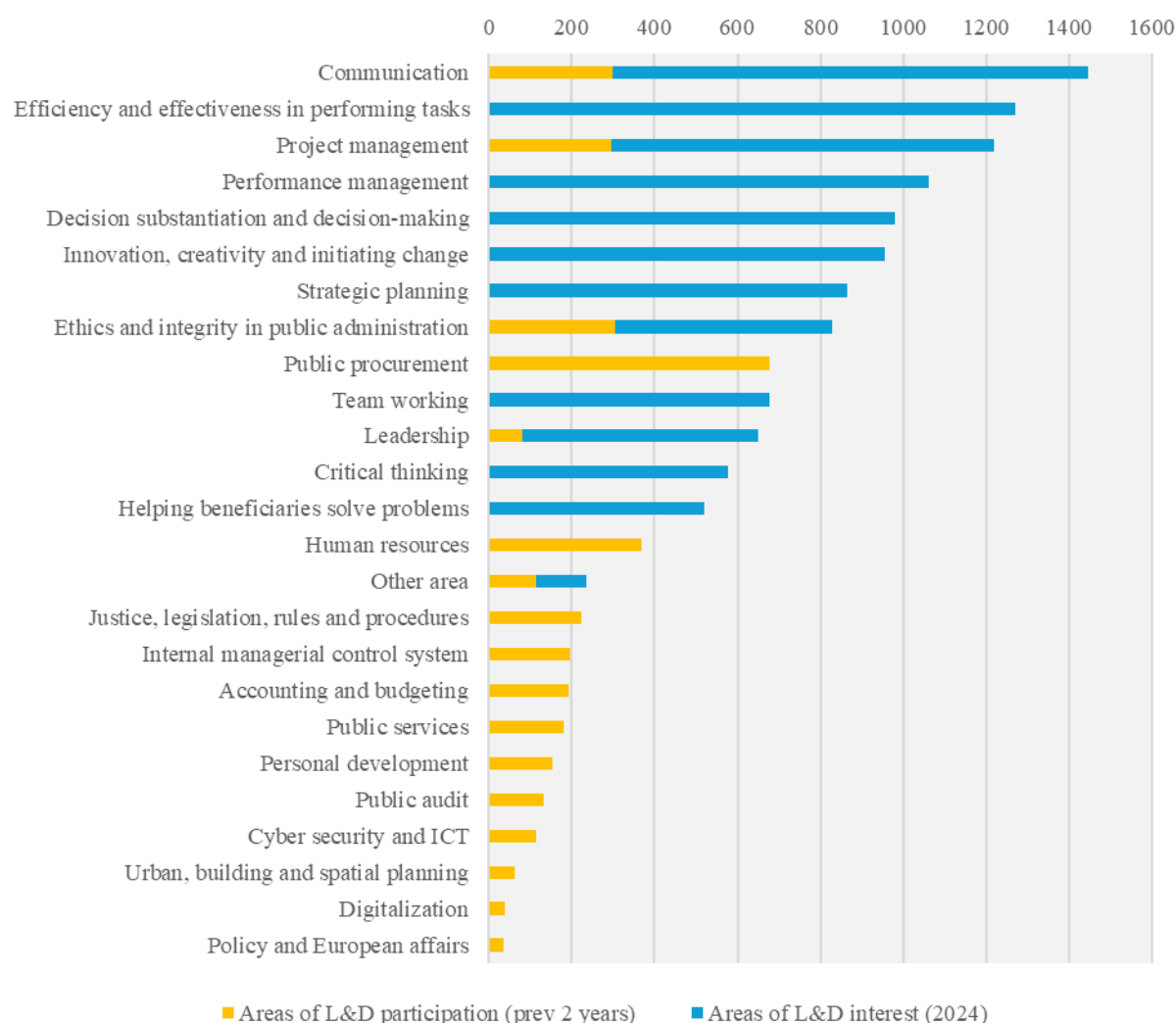
25. The NIA conducts separately an annual survey and analyses on the demand for L&D needs across public administration, although no clarity is provided publicly on the process for transposing results into learning outcomes and objectives. Based on the publicly available information, the survey does not specifically target the L&D needs of HLCS or senior managers, and is disconnected from organizational or civil service priorities, as it includes only individual responses from across public administration staff (contractual and civil service positions).⁶¹ In 2024, out of the 2,419 respondents, 10 percent represented HLCS and civil service management positions, i.e., 6 HLCS and 244 civil service managers (although no disaggregation is available among the different categories of managers).⁶² Figure 3 compares responses on L&D needs versus participation to L&D program, with the caveat that annual results might not be comparable, as the questionnaire used and details regarding the survey sample are not available.

⁶⁰ NACS (2024). Report on the professional L&D of civil servants.

⁶¹ NIA (2024). Identifying L&D needs for public administration staff.

⁶² There is no available information on the representativeness of the sample of respondents.

Figure 3. Areas of L&D participation during the previous two years and of interest for 2024



Source: Authors' elaboration, based on data from NIA annual reports.

26. The Bank team conducted thirty-nine structured interviews with civil servants to explore challenges and priorities related to L&D for the HLCS.⁶³ Interviews revealed that HLCS acknowledge the importance of continuous L&D, particularly emphasizing the need for regular knowledge updates, structured networking, and skill-building in leadership, communication, legal frameworks, financial management, and digitalization. Participants consistently highlighted the complex, multifaceted competencies required, including strategic vision, analytical thinking, effective team coordination, conflict management, and adaptability to reconcile political and administrative demands. While foundational technical skills were deemed essential, interviewees noted a comparative neglect of critical soft skills such as emotional intelligence, negotiation, and empathy. Additionally,

⁶³ Detailed findings from the interviews are provided in Annex 3.

externally oriented competencies like advanced digital skills, international engagement, foreign language proficiency, and understanding global governance were considered increasingly vital. Regarding delivery methods, interviewees advocated for interactive, practice-oriented training using case studies, simulations, role-playing and practitioner-led sessions. Respondents found critical periodic updates on legislation and emerging topics like digital governance and crisis management, alongside fostering inter-institutional and international exchanges.

27. The Bank and NACS teams organized a series of co-design and visioning workshops to identify current and expected L&D needs for HLCS and DG, based on the available information described above.⁶⁴ The workshops aimed to develop a vision and an associated roadmap for establishing a fit-for-purpose and customized L&D function and program for HLCS and DG. These elements were co-designed during three workshops by over 40 representatives of the relevant stakeholders, including representatives of the main institutions responsible for HRM policies for high-level civil servants in the public administration,⁶⁵ HRM experts, senior public administration officials, private-sector trainers, academia, and civil society representatives. The workshops leveraged the existing information on job responsibilities and expectations, and competency requirements and needs for HLCS and DG, and identified “drivers of change” which are expected to influence these roles and expectations (see Box 4 below). Based on these, stakeholders identified the most relevant roles for HLCS and associated profiles in terms of sets of competencies – skills, knowledge, and attitudes – they would need to perform in their role. Finally, participants discussed and agreed upon the L&D tools and formats most suited for developing the identified competencies.

Box 4. Main drivers of change for the required competencies for HLCS and DG

The main drivers of change, ranked by frequency of selection by the participants to the foresight exercises, and their corresponding expected impacts on the competencies of HLCS and top management civil servants include:

- **Impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on society.** This is a high-priority driver for HLCS and senior managers, emphasizing the need to acquire new skills in validating and consolidating AI-generated evidence for decision-making. This includes navigating ethical challenges, implementing AI-powered tools for citizen support and compliance, and addressing accountability issues within AI-based systems.
- **Digitalization of the public administration.** Stakeholders recognized digitalization as a major force, with public authorities and institutions potentially acting as promoters, supporters, or brokers of digital solutions. However, uneven levels of digitalization are expected across the administration. Digitalization is expected to simplify coordination, reduce lead times, and facilitate quicker decisions, while also potentially exacerbating existing gaps between institutions.
- **Anticipatory governance.** In recognition of the growing need for mechanisms to monitor emerging trends, signal disruptive changes, and identify opportunities. For HLCS and senior managers, this

⁶⁴ See Annex 5 for the full process description of the workshops.

⁶⁵ Namely, the National Institute of Administration, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, the General Secretariat of the Government, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

translates to increased importance in coordinating and facilitating co-creation or consultative processes with diverse stakeholders. They also note a need for increased leadership competencies to initiate and coordinate new initiatives.

- **Evidence-based policy making.** This was a primary focus for stakeholders, highlighting the increasing importance of data-driven decision-making. They recognize that HLCS and senior managers will need to coordinate institutional visions for data utilization, develop data strategies, and build institutional capacity for data analysis.
- **Geopolitical risks.** Stakeholders identified geopolitical risks as a significant driver, intensifying the need for partnerships, alliances, and various forms of collaboration. This places a stronger emphasis on their external leadership, negotiation, and conflict mitigation skills.
- **Demographic factors.** Considering increasing immigration and population decline, stakeholders highlight the need for adjustments in recruitment processes and a greater focus on integration and inclusion. HLCS and senior managers will need to employ official forecasts in institutional processes and enhance communication and coordination with international organizations.
- **Macro-economic imbalances.** Stakeholders recognize the need for HLCS and senior managers to be able to (re)prioritize budgetary and non-financial resources.

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the background information provided and validated during the visioning workshops, November 2024.

28. These identified drivers of change are expected to generate a shift in the specific competencies required for HLCS and senior managers in the public administration. The visioning workshops outlined how the role and corresponding competencies of HLCS and senior managers would need to adapt to the identified drivers of change. This shift implies an enhanced focus of L&D on adaptive leadership, competency development in the area of data literacy and digitalization, evidence-based policymaking, and collaboration. More specifically, this approach includes:

- **Adaptive leadership.** The increasing importance of anticipatory governance, AI, and behavioral perspectives necessitates stronger adaptive leadership competencies among HLCS and senior managers. They will need to initiate and coordinate new initiatives, facilitate co-design processes, and navigate complex ethical considerations.
- **Competency development in data literacy and digitalization.** Evidence-based policymaking and digitalization require HLCS and senior managers to develop a strategic vision for data utilization, build institutional capacity for data analysis, and ensure data standardization and mandated reporting.
- **Adaptability and collaboration.** The interconnectedness of global challenges, as highlighted by geopolitical risks and demographic changes, demands increased collaboration and network building. HLCS and senior managers need to forge partnerships, manage diverse teams, and communicate effectively across organizational cultures and silos.

29. Stakeholders defined ten main roles and associated specific competency needs for HLCS through the visioning workshops and based on the identified drivers of change. The stakeholders classified the ten roles under generic titles based on their main responsibilities. Box 5 below provides a summary of these roles and Annex 6 provides a detailed description.

Box 5. Summary of HLCS profiles and associated competencies identified during the visioning workshops

Each profile is designed to represent distinct facets of HLCS roles and responsibilities, providing a framework to identify the specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for excellence in these areas.

1. **Policy entrepreneur:** a proactive leader who drives systemic change by translating vision into action, mobilizing key stakeholders and ensuring accountability for the delivery of results. Success in this role requires strong analytical, interpersonal, and strategic thinking skills, including the ability to craft evidence-based policies, assess their feasibility, and ensure their effective implementation, and conduct impact assessments. Equally important are negotiation, consensus-building, and delegation skills to engage decision-makers and ensure effective policy implementation.
2. **Strategic catalyst:** drives strategic planning and policy and enables program delivery, from inception to implementation, ensuring collaboration and accountability. This role requires expertise in strategic planning, process management, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based assessment. Strong communication, decision-making, and resource management skills are essential for navigating complex dynamics and ensuring effective delivery of intended results.
3. **Institutional reformer:** leads institutional reform efforts to establish and sustain a performance-oriented culture in the institution, focused on delivering results for citizens. Success in this role requires expertise in change and project management, digital solutions, and stakeholder engagement, along with strong communication and strategic planning skills. A commitment to ethical conduct, institutional learning, and effectively promoting change through branding and marketing is essential.
4. **Explorer:** an innovator who drives institutional improvement through experimentation, new technologies and pilot projects. Success in this role requires expertise in foresight techniques, Agile project management, and persuasive communication to build support for new initiatives. Balancing enthusiasm with pragmatism, ethics, and adaptability is crucial to ensuring effective and sustainable innovation.
5. **Diplomat:** represents the organization in national and international forums, advancing strategic interests and managing key communications. Success in this role requires expertise in strategic communication, persuasion, and negotiation, along with thorough preparation and adaptability. Tact, patience, discretion, and a deep understanding of institutional operations are essential for navigating complex and sensitive situations effectively.
6. **Control tower:** ensures institutional efficiency and cost-effectiveness of operations by maintaining order, optimizing resources, and ensuring compliance with internal control and alignment with strategic objectives. Success in this role requires expertise in program coordination, personnel management, and conflict resolution, along with a deep understanding of monitoring, evaluation, and managerial control systems. Effective task allocation and resource management are crucial for sustaining smooth operations.
7. **Treasurer:** does budget planning and execution, ensuring efficient resource allocation while maintaining fiscal discipline. Success in this role requires expertise in public finance, budget cycles, fiscal policies, and resource allocation methods. Strong communication with policymakers and a commitment to responsible financial stewardship are essential for achieving strategic goals.
8. **Team leader:** ensures delivery of impactful results and alignment with organizational goals by coordinating departments, motivating teams, and fostering collaboration. Success in this role requires

strong skills in performance management, task delegation, conflict mediation, and internal communication. Understanding team strengths and weaknesses while providing support and inspiration is key to driving high performance and achieving results.

9. **Mediator:** anticipates, prevents and mitigates risks to the institution and manages urgent and complex situations by providing coordinated responses and solutions. Success in this role requires strong skills in crisis management, negotiation, conflict resolution, and prioritization. Balancing immediate needs with long-term consequences while maintaining a constructive and collaborative approach is essential.
10. **Advisor/Legal Endorser:** analyzes and approves normative acts, ensuring compliance with legal, technical, and financial standards. Success in this role requires critical thinking, procedural expertise, and the ability to mobilize additional expertise while leveraging AI tools. A strong ethical foundation, commitment to the public interest, and willingness to take calculated risks are essential.

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the outputs of the visioning workshops, November 2024.

30. The specific competencies defined for each profile would complement those defined under the general competency framework. Rather than L&D programs being focused on each competency separately, a more integrative approach would tie together knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are relevant to each role. Thus, such a program could enable HLCS and DGs to play that role at a high level by combining multi-disciplinary perspectives with concrete case studies and exercises aimed at addressing the challenges they face in that specific role. For example, while communication is a distinct competency within the general competency framework and is detailed further to be a specific competency for the role of the “Diplomat”, all other roles identified require mastering this skill in various forms and for various audiences.

31. An effective EDP for HLCS and DG to address these specific competencies would need to revolve around interactive and practical methods, tailored to specific learning objectives. Stakeholders in the workshops validate and prioritized a number of L&D methods and instruments which emphasize peer learning, practical applications and real-life challenges. These could include:

- **Mutual Learning Workshops.** Facilitated by experts, these sessions enable experience-sharing and networking. They are particularly useful for Explorers (enhancing receptiveness to new ideas), Institutional Reformers (evaluating transitions and communicating change), Diplomats (adapting continuously), and Control Towers (strengthening negotiation and internal audit skills).
- **Group Projects.** Small teams analyze solutions and receive feedback, fostering real-world application. This method supports Explorers (community engagement and project management), Institutional Reformers (change management and digitalization), Strategies Catalysts (alliances and strategic planning), and Control Towers (conflict management).
- **Mentorship.** Experienced professionals guide HLCS, facilitating skill transfer and professional growth. It is crucial for Diplomats (negotiation preparation), Explorers (persuasive communication), Institutional Reformers (managing resistance), Strategies Catalysts (reinforcing decision-making), and Control Towers (conflict resolution).

- **Study visits.** Direct exposure to best practices enhances institutional efficiency. For instance, Explorers could gain insights into innovative methods, while Institutional Reformers could learn successful change management strategies.
- **Workshops.** Hands-on sessions that build communication and collaboration skills, applicable to all profiles.
- **Coaching.** One-on-one guidance tailored to individual goals, valuable for all profiles to enhance leadership and self-awareness.

32. Creating a strong senior civil service community emerged from the workshops as a key priority for supporting professional development and inter-institutional collaboration. This could include an online hub that would allow HLCS and senior managers to easily identify and connect with colleagues, facilitating rapid communication for inter-institutional initiatives. Additionally, regular in-person activities structured to foster genuine knowledge exchange and community cohesion (as opposed to purely social gatherings), could help go beyond simple networking to provide opportunities for mutual understanding and learning, and even co-creation and collaborative problem-solving if focused on addressing specific problems that HLCS face. Finally, a recognition system including awards for excellence in public service, building on existing programs like the Public Administration Best Practices Competition organized by the NACS, could also give visibility to the community and increase the *esprit de corps* of the HLCS.

3. Developing competencies in HLCS and senior managers through an Executive Development Program

3.1 Rationale and objectives of the EDP

- 33. The EDP is needed in the L&D activity in order to directly support the HLCS to shift from their current eminently technical, administrative and operational management function to a strategic leadership one.** As summarized in Chapter 2, the visioning workshops highlighted that most HLCS perceive themselves and are perceived by the political leadership as operational and administrative leaders for the public administration, despite the numerous situations and challenges they described facing daily which require them taking on a transformational and strategic leadership role. Indeed, the learning needs directly highlighted by HLCS during the workshops and interviews relate overwhelmingly to the technical, administrative and management responsibilities HLCS have, whereas the leadership dimension of the role is overlooked. Correspondingly, the L&D activity serving the civil service in Romania does not contribute to the development of the senior civil service in a meaningful way. Nevertheless, effective leadership is both a *de jure* and *de facto* core requirement of both the HLCS and management roles at DG level. The current EDP proposal aims to address this current systemic gap by expanding the toolkit available to the NACS and the NIA to effectively respond to the development needs of the senior civil service. The objectives of the EDP derive from this mission statement.
- 34. The overarching objective of the proposed EDP is to improve the performance and accountability of the public administration to deliver results for citizens by developing the competencies in senior civil servants required for effective strategic leadership and operational management.** The proposed EDP will target the highest, non-political echelons of the civil service, that are directly responsible and/or have substantial prerogatives for the strategic and operational management of the public administration. Thus, the proposed EDP is designed to address learning needs for HLCS and DGs in general civil service positions. The proposed EDP will prioritize the competencies identified by public sector stakeholders as having the potential for considerable improvement among the target group, and which have been highlighted by the practitioner and academic literature as contributing to improved management and leadership outcomes. Thus, the learning objectives and corresponding delivery methods and learning instruments of the EDP will be focused on enabling senior managers to mainstream and enhance the performance orientation and accountability for results of the public administration across all its functions. The intended outcome is to drive public institutions to develop and deliver innovative, cost-effective, evidence-based and collaborative approaches to achieve impactful results for citizens, within their respective mandates.
- 35. A second objective of the proposed EDP is to foster an *esprit de corps* for the HLCS and DG through learning and community-building activities, thereby developing network of leaders committed to effective governance.** The proposed EDP will not aim solely at the development of individual competencies, but rather to develop over time a community of practice and learning at the top levels of the civil service and to facilitate collaboration across organizational silos. For this, it would provide a common language, framework, and set of principles for tackling leadership challenges. The

proposed EDP will use cohort-based leadership training, joint problem-solving exercises, and peer-to-peer learning sessions to develop a shared vision among top civil servants, increasing their capacity to navigate complex, cross-institutional. Thus, the proposed EDP will aim to cultivate a sense of shared mission, trust, and professional solidarity, ensuring that HLCS and s are not just equipped with technical skills, but also a robust inter-institutional network to drive collective impact in public administration.

- 36. A third objective of the proposed EDP is to plan for succession for HLCS by developing among DGs the necessary skills to take on and perform in top management roles in the civil service.** The proposed EDP will target DGs (and deputy DGs), who can exercise prerogatives of similar impact as (deputy) SGs in the organization and, as such, require broadly similar competencies to perform effectively in their role.⁶⁶ However, as defined in Chapter 2, secretary general roles (and deputy secretary general roles) have exclusive legal prerogatives and responsibilities in the management of their respective institution, associated with distinct challenges and competency development needs. The proposed EDP will target competencies that overlap between DG and (deputy) SG roles, as well as competencies specific to the latter. Thus, the proposed EDP would expose DGs to real-life challenges faced by secretaries general and facilitates experiential learning through knowledge exchanges between practitioners and through specific competency development interventions from subject-matter experts. In this way, the proposed EDP would contribute to the succession planning policy for HLCS by preparing a pool of (deputy) DGs who can transition easily and who can take over and fulfill the role of HLCS, as the vacant HLCS positions are expected to become vacant.
- 37. The proposed EDP will be customized to benefit HLCS and DGs.** The proposed EDP will be designed to target the level of responsibilities and challenges of (deputy) secretaries general and DGs from the central public administration. Given that the nature of the proposed EDP learning interventions – focused on experiential and practical learning, that can be applied on-the-job – and its strategic objectives of generating public value through better organizational outcomes, the proposed EDP will prioritize current jobholders, who have continuously been in such a role or have had a mix of DG and (deputy) secretaries general continuous on-the-job experience. Thus, the proposed EDP will not target other categories of HLCS, such as (deputy) secretaries general in Prefectures and inspectors general, given their distinct job responsibilities and role characteristics. Second, the proposed EDP will benefit DGs, given the numerous overlapping competency requirements with (deputy) secretaries general. Similar eligibility conditions would apply in terms of on-the-job experience. However, the proposed EDP should prioritize jobholders at the DG level with extensive experience in managing large-scale and high impact programs, public investments, reforms and/or services in the public sector, as well as those with direct accountabilities over large financial and human resources. This prioritization would be necessary to avoid fragmentation within the cohorts, to address similar competency needs and to ensure that all participants can contribute and can benefit equally from the program.
- 38. The EDP complements the NIA HLCS program by addressing specific skills needs among HLCS and DGs that can only be developed through practical experience in the exercise of the role.** Compared to the NIA HLCS program, which aims to assess and certify the level of preparedness of

⁶⁶ E.g., as defined in the general competency framework.

candidates to access HLCS positions, the EDP proposal focuses on developing the skills needed by HLCS and, to a large extent, DGs to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as leaders and high-level operational and resource coordinators within the public administration – skills that are currently not addressed in a systematic and integrated manner, as is evident from the analysis of the L&D ecosystem in Chapter 2. The EDP therefore addresses the gaps in the L&D policy for HLCS and for management staff at DG; the proposed EDP aims at other training objectives, a different set of skills and a target audience at a different stage of the professional career (i.e., advanced) than the specialized training programs currently regulated for the public administration in Romania. Thus, the proposed EDP is not intended to replace the current specialized training program for holding a public office in the category of senior civil servants provided as a necessary condition for holding such a public office⁶⁷, nor to represent an alternative to this training program.

3.2 Design and content of the EDP

39. The design of the proposed EDP is underpinned by a set of principles that ensures efficacy, relevance and usefulness, and alignment with civil service priorities, needs and established policies – in particular, the competency framework. The EDP must observe, both in design and implementation, a set of principles that ensures it can be fully embedded in the L&D framework of the civil service, as described in Chapter 2, and that it remains sustainable over the long-term. The following principles apply to the EDP:

- (i) The EDP must be demand-driven and respond directly to the functional needs of the beneficiaries, based on job responsibilities, challenges and requirements set by Government priorities and personnel policies, such as those transposed in the general competency framework.
- (ii) The GoR must position the EDP as a flagship L&D program for the senior and top managers in the civil service, to benefit from the political sponsorship and acceptance necessary to ensure that participants are committed to the program and are allowed to apply the acquired competencies.
- (iii) The EDP must provide hands-on, inter-disciplinary and integrated learning opportunities to its intended beneficiaries, given their level of seniority, their limited time for learning, and the complex and inter-connected nature of the problems they face. Workplace challenges must be center stage in the learning process and teaching to have a supporting role. Thus, the EDP must be based on interactive and participative learning, based on knowledge exchanges and practical exercises, must integrate international best practices in selected subject matters, and must be provided as an integrated learning program, with self-reinforcing and inter-dependent modules and learning instruments.
- (iv) The EDP must act as a vehicle for transferring, adapting and mainstreaming relevant private sector expertise into the senior civil service and, indirectly, in the public administration.

⁶⁷ According to art. 394 para. (4) letter d) of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code, with subsequent amendments and supplements.

- (v) The EDP must be future proof, thus focused on enabling participants to adapt themselves and their organization to address constantly changing environments and challenges.
- (vi) The EDP must be fully transferable to the GoR and must be cost-effective, to ensure that it can be replicated, scaled up in future iterations, and embedded in the public administration as a permanent feature.
- (vii) The EDP must be complementary to existing L&D policies and programs, and support existing career management frameworks, to ensure a coherent approach to L&D and HRM across the public administration, and an efficient use of resources.

40. The design, and the learning objectives and content of the proposed EDP are based on the L&D priorities reflected in the general competency framework and on their specific application in practice, as identified during the visioning workshops. The EDP must be fully aligned functionally with the general competency framework in terms of the L&D needs it aims to address; but must also articulate these competencies more precisely – in what can be considered specific competencies for HLCS – in terms of how they should be applied in the different job responsibilities HLCS perform, as well as what can be objectively observed (and subsequently evaluated) in terms of effective and ineffective behaviors. In addition, the EDP must prioritize what to target from these more specific competencies (or sub-components from them) in terms of the impact they are expected to have on the HLCS's ability to discharge their leadership and management responsibilities, in line with the stated objectives of the EDP. Finally, the EDP must identify particular competency gaps HLCS and DGs consistently demonstrate, in order to adequately define the necessary learning outcomes to address these gaps, and corresponding learning and training objectives, content, instruments and delivery methods to achieve these outcomes. Developing the proposal for the EDP under this methodology required a multi-phase and staggered approach:

- **Phase 1: Mapping and defining the different job roles and dimensions of HLCS, including the specific competencies linked to them.** This phase was delivered through the desk research and primary data collection, and the visioning workshops, as detailed in Chapter 2. Based on the results from this phase, the profiles and specializations of the trainers for the proposed EDP were defined, to ensure an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach for the design, development and delivery of the program.
- **Phase 2: Prioritizing and selecting the specific competencies (or sub-components) which the EDP could and should target.** This phase was delivered through a series of technical workshops in which the EDP design team analyzed the entire set of specific competencies to determine which (i) are most closely aligned with the EDP's objectives; (ii) are amenable to be developed through learning and training activities, in the limited timeframe available; (iii) relate to strategic and future-oriented responsibilities (i.e., what HLCS should be doing based on their mandate) as opposed to administrative responsibilities, and (iv) were considered to be most impactful on quantifiable organizational performance, such as organizational transformation, public investment management, resource management, and strategic management. The selected specific competencies were grouped, based on their similarity in contributing to HLCS job roles, in six distinct modules. These modules and the priority specific competencies were subsequently discussed and validated with an

inter-institutional working group, previously established to provide feedback and guidance during the design of the EDP proposal.⁶⁸

- **Phase 3: Mapping gaps linked to the respective specific competencies and identifying, detailing and deconstructing specific job challenges of HLCS generated by these gaps.** This phase was delivered through (i) desk research of previous analysis and diagnosis on the Romanian public administration developed by the World Bank, OECD and the European Commission, (ii) primary research from the interviews described in Sub-Chapter 1.2 and Annex 3, and (iii) practitioner experience and knowledge in current HLCS challenges.
- **Phase 4: Developing the curriculum and delivery methods and instruments of the proposed EDP.** The EDP project team defined the expected outcomes for the development of the selected competencies (in terms of HLCS responsibilities), defined the program objectives to achieve these outcomes and developed the corresponding curriculum, training plans and training applications and tools to be used. In this phase, the order of implementation of the six modules was logically sequenced so that each module builds on the content of the previous modules.
- **Phase 5. Designing and calibrating the structure and agenda for the proposed EDP.** The EDP project team ensured the coherence of content from one module to another by explicitly developing synergies between learning objectives, content and tools (e.g. case studies) for all modules to address the main training needs of HLCS from different perspectives, by promoting the competence framework. The project team then calibrated the scope and expectations for the learning outcomes and objectives to be achieved by the proposed EDP, to ensure that it can reasonably and realistically deliver the intended results.
- **Phase 6 (Enrichment). Identifying synergies of the EDP with academic programs focused on developing leadership in the public administration.** The EDP team will conduct this additional phase under Deliverable 5 of the RAS, once the content of the EDP is fully developed and prior to its implementation. In this phase, the EDP team will consult with selected local academic institutions on the EDP to explore (i) which of its L&D objectives can be continued, enhanced and/or supplemented through existing academic programs; and (ii) the degree to which the academic institutions can engage in the delivery of the EDP.

41. To directly respond to its envisaged objectives, the proposed EDP must be centered around a leadership development model that emphasizes systems approaches and collaborative leadership to generate public value. In line with international and practitioner experience and best practices for developing public sector leadership, described in Annex 2, the proposed EDP will focus on developing the leadership competencies and leadership capacity to address organizational challenges and to mobilize people for change and transformation in a public sector environment. The leadership models that are used consistently in executive development programs across OECD and EU comparators emphasize systems approaches and collaborative leadership. The former is considered important in the

⁶⁸ This inter-institutional working group is composed of all the institutions responsible for HRM policy in the central public administration, namely the NACS, the NIA, the MDPWA, the GSG and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

context of senior civil servants having to address policy and implementation challenges in a complex political-administrative environment, and the latter is important to help build cohesion among the senior civil service and to avoid silo-based activity. This leadership model must enable senior leaders to practice addressing public sector challenges in real-life scenarios, e.g., by focusing on creation of public value through improved delivery of public services or organizational performance. This model is supported through learning interventions targeting personal development and self-awareness, on the basis that leaders need a deep level of self-awareness to lead effectively at the most senior levels of the public administration. These interventions are typically delivered through coaching, personal reflection exercises, and the opportunity to re-evaluate mindsets and belief systems during the program.

- 42. The EDP must bring in private sector some useful practices in strategic leadership and management and contextualize them to the specificities of the Romanian public sector.** As highlighted in previous chapters, the HLCS and senior managers in the Romanian public administration require substantial development in leadership and management competencies, which are core to their role. However, as suggested by interviews with HLCS and the desk research, these competencies have historically been overlooked as a critical development priority, to the detriment of technical competencies, while the volatility and turnover that have consistently impacted the HLCS has prevented the organic, on-the-job development of such competencies and of a stable cadre of experienced managers. In this context, the EDP must tap into private sector expertise of identifying, developing and enabling the use of fit-for-purpose leadership and management competencies, particularly in specific areas amenable to applying private sector standards, such the corporate governance of state-owned enterprises (SOE). Given this comparative advantage, integrating private sector expertise into the EDP is essential for modernizing public leadership, infusing new management techniques, and fostering a mindset shift towards innovation, efficiency, and accountability. Nevertheless, this input must be adapted to ensure relevance to the context of the Romanian public administration, by aligning best practices with applicable legislation, organizational constraints and capacity limitations.
- 43. The EDP will cover directly the competencies defined for eight of the ten identified roles of HLCS jobs in six modules, while the remaining two are covered indirectly across the modules.** Under the Phase 2 of developing the proposal for the EDP and the corresponding criteria for prioritization outlined above, the Bank and NACS teams selected eight out of the ten roles of HLCS previously identified under Phase 1, to be targeted by the EDP, through six distinct modules. The remaining two roles, namely those related to external representation (the “Diplomat” profile) and legal compliance (the “Counsellor” profile), were found to be cross-cutting, and addressed implicitly in the six modules and better suited to be targeted by complementary L&D interventions (in particular, specialized training and on-the-job mentoring). These roles and distribution across modules are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Matrix of HLCS job roles and proposed corresponding EDP modules

10 profiles of HLCS (based on phase 1)	The 6 modules of EDP (based on phase 2)	Intended learning outcome
Team Leader	Module 1: Generating impact in the public administration through transformative leadership and corporate governance	Ensures that structures within the organization collaborate, have the necessary resources, and are accountable for achieving results for citizens.
Control tower	Module 2: Managing and accelerating public investment programs	Optimizes workflows and resource utilization to ensure the institution responds, contributes, and effectively achieves institutional objectives.
Institutional Reformer	Module 3: Achieving digitalization and reorganization in public institutions	Coordinates and leads the transformation of institutional structures, processes and practices to increase the institution's performance orientation; holds institutional structures accountable for delivering results to citizens in an effective manner.
Explorer		Proposes, creates and pilots new ideas, practices and technologies that increase institutional efficiency and the way the institution responds to citizens' needs.
Treasurer	Module 4: Applying performance-based budget management in the public sector	Coordinates and leads the cyclical process of budget planning and execution to ensure the necessary resources to achieve strategic objectives and maintain budgetary discipline within the institution.
Policy Entrepreneur	Module 5: Modeling Institutional Strategies for Citizen Outcomes (elective)	Identifies the need for system-level change or a transformative action that generates public value and mobilizes key actors in that direction; ensures accountability for effective implementation.
Strategy catalyst		It ensures the coordination of the process of developing strategies, policies and programs and facilitates their implementation to achieve results for citizens. It provides a space for collaboration and negotiation between stakeholders.

Mediator	Module 6: Resolving crises and complex situations in public institutions through anticipation and negotiation (elective)	Establishes, continuously adapts and oversees the operation of appropriate organizational processes and systems that improve the resilience and capacity of institutions to anticipate operational risks. Enables and coordinates coordinated responses and solutions to urgent, crisis and/or complex situations, balancing immediate needs with long-term consequences. Provides feedback on lessons learned and ways to improve the public sector.
Counselor	<u>Transversal (aspects of these profiles are an integral part of the distinct modules of the program):</u> Analyze and approve regulatory acts, ensuring compliance with legal, technical and financial standards. Represent the organization in national and international forums, promoting strategic interests and managing key communications.	
Diplomat		

Source: Authors' elaboration.

44. The learning objectives of the proposed EDP are fully aligned with the general competencies defined for HLCS. The specific competencies targeted under the current EDP proposal in each of the six modules are articulated to respond to job expectations set by the general competency framework. While a one-to-one match cannot be established – and should not be, given that the general competency framework is an integrated instrument, i.e., one competency cannot be treated distinctly and independently from others –, the proposed modules of the EDP contribute, either fully or partly, to each general competency for HLCS, as reflected in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Matrix of the general competency framework for HLCS and the focus of EDP modules

General CF targeted: Competency and (sub-competency)	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6
Problem-Solving and Decision-Making (Strategic Thinking)						
Initiative (Taking Responsibility)						
Planning and Organization (Strategic Planning and Organizing)						

Communication Strategic (Communication)						
Teamwork (Conflict Mediation)						
Citizen Orientation (Civic Responsibility)						
Integrity (Vulnerability Management)						
Performance Management (Resource and Process Management)						
Engagement Generation						
Innovation Promotion and Change Initiation (Strategic Agility)						

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the legally applicable general competency framework for civil servants.

Notes: Dark blue = principal focus of the module; Lighter blue = targeted and indirect focus of the module.

45. The proposed EDP will be designed to target advanced learning outcomes, suitable for supporting the competencies required in HLCS and DG roles. The content, learning instruments and delivery methods proposed for this EDP are structured and designed to support the most advanced levels of learning in each module, as defined through the revised Bloom taxonomy of learning.⁶⁹ These levels refer to developing capabilities to analyze, evaluate and create, adapted to the working environment and job responsibilities and expectations of HLCS and DGs. The proposed EDP will be designed to achieve learning outcomes at these levels, across all six modules, as follows:

- **At the “Analyzing” level**, participants will engage in activities such as examining and discussing case studies of complex policy issues to identify underlying problems and interrelationships.

⁶⁹ Anderson, L. and Krathwohl, D. (2000) Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing, A: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Pearson.

- **For the “Evaluating” level**, the EDP will involve exercises where participants assess the effectiveness of existing public policies or programs, using criteria like efficiency, equity, and sustainability, to foster informed decision-making.
- **At the “Creating” level**, participants will engage in designing innovative policy proposals or organizational strategies that address emerging public sector challenges, encouraging the development of strategic vision and adaptability.

In addition to their fit with the intended levels of learning, the selection of the learning instruments and materials to be used in the EDP modules was based on (i) legal obligations regarding the use of these instruments in the public sector, (ii) efficiency, (iii) transferability across modules, and (iii) availability of use and adaptation by future training providers (e.g., open-source materials and publicly available information). Table 6 provides a summary of these learning instruments, while the L&D plans included in Annex 1 describe in detail the content and delivery method of the learning materials that will be used for each module of the EDP.

Table 6. Matrix of EDP modules and corresponding learning instruments and materials

Learning instrument and material	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6
Leadership personal development plan						
Organizational external and internal communication plan						
Toolkit for enabling innovation and a performance-based culture in the organization						
Problem-driven approach for selecting, developing and substantiating regulatory interventions						
Methodology for monitoring implementation of inter-institutional strategies						

Organizational diagnosis and action plan for improving delivery of results						
Methodology for stakeholder analysis for participatory policymaking and implementation						
Plan for monitoring project and program implementation status						
Annual execution report of budget program indicators						
Standard sheet for monitoring and evaluating results: impact, outcome, and outputs.						
Institutional strategic plans for budget planning and execution						
Budget planning for multi-annual public investments						
Cost-benefit/efficiency analysis for proposed budget allocations for recurrent and investment expenditures						
Organizational vulnerability analysis						
Institutional continuity plan						

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Notes: Dark blue = principal instrument in the module; Lighter blue = targeted and limited use of the instrument in the module.

46. The EDP will require, from each participant, to develop throughout the program an individual “action learning project” on applying the specific competencies developed in the EDP in workplace challenges. The action learning project is crucial for bridging theoretical learning with

practical application. Its aim is (i) to ensure that the learning and training provided in the EDP is relevant and can contribute to observable improvements in HLCS performance, and (ii) to reinforce the acquisition, retention of application of competencies by anchoring them into real-life and personal challenges of participants.

47. To be effective in its use, the action learning project must reconcile and integrate several considerations. First, it must be customizable enough for participants to apply it in their specific circumstances, but manageable in scope and depth to be supported by the EDP. Second, it must not be an administrative burden for participants, but must be treated as core part of the EDP. Third, it must be relevant to a SG and DG job specific challenge, so, given their complexity, must integrate the use of competencies targeted by multiple modules. Thus, the action learning project should be mandatory, albeit flexible in format and presentation and its evaluation should be focused on constructive feedback, as opposed to grading or ranking. Moreover, the topics of the project would be selected by participants from a pre-defined list, which would potentially include the following applications:

- To build an organizational culture transformation plan for their institution towards a culture that will sustain institutional performance in the short, medium and long term by putting the citizen's interest at the center.
- To analyze the decision-making mechanisms at the level of the institution from the perspective of the need for correlation with the Government's Annual Work Plan.
- To prepare a monitoring report on an interinstitutional strategy and identify a set of concrete measures to support and accelerate its implementation.
- To undertake an institutional diagnosis and an institutional reform/development plan to increase the value of the public service/public policies delivered by the institution.
- To review the findings of an Annual Performance Report on the indicators of the budgetary programs.
- To review the performance indicators of a relevant budget program and complete the Standard Sheet for the proposed indicators.
- To conduct a retrospective analysis of the budget execution by program and the achievement of the public investment program.
- To carry out a vulnerability analysis of the organization and develop a business continuity plan and crisis communication plan.

48. The proposed EDP will include a component of individual mentoring from trainers in each module to enable participants to apply the acquired skills in their work environments. The mentoring component provided under the proposed EDP will combine coaching activities and real time technical assistance to support achieving the program's learning outcomes through two channels:

- Targeted and limited just-in-time technical assistance and coaching for individual participants from EDP trainers to facilitate the application, in their respective workplace, of the learning instruments used in the different EDP modules.
- Regular technical support and coaching activities throughout the EDP trainers for participants to develop their action learning plan, supplemented through a final integrated peer-review session on the completed project.

The mentoring component will be provided on-request, but must be limited and manageable by the team of experts delivering the EDP. Thus, it would be restricted to a maximum of four sessions of 1.5 hours each, per participant.

49. The implementation of the learning activities under the proposed EDP will be divided into five work streams and will take up to five months. In its full configuration, the proposed EDP would require up to five months to be fully delivered. The implementation will be divided into five work streams, briefly presented in Table 7 below. The EDP pilot project under this RAS aims to fully implement the developed activities. However, given that EDP is an innovative approach in the Romanian public administration and that piloting involves a degree of flexibility to unexpected work variables (e.g., participant commitment and national political context), the implementation of the proposed activities must benefit from flexibility to the point where they can still achieve their training objectives. Annex 1 to this document presents the proposed timetable for the implementation of the pilot EDP under this RAS and the expected effort required for the five work streams. The proposed work streams are as follows:

- **Preparing participants for the EDP.** Relevant learning resources will be provided to participants prior to the EDP modules to prepare them for the EDP content.
- **Delivery of the EDP modules.** The core leadership module is proposed to be structured in seven full-day sessions (six hours per session), delivered over two months. This module will combine classroom training with executive coaching activities. It could include a “residential training” component, with the first two sessions being held on consecutive days outside Bucharest. Each of the five technical modules would consist of up to three full-day sessions (six hours per session), delivered in Bucharest. Thus, also taking into account the possibility for participants to choose between Module 5 and Module 6, the technical modules could provide a total of up to 114 hours of training, to which will be added up to 30 hours consisting of experiential exchanges, active learning projects and mentoring, and up to 18 hours expected to be required for participants for self-study.
- **Development of the active learning project.** Participants will select their active learning project before the start of the EDP modules. The project should be developed during the EDP implementation, in parallel with the modules, in order to be subject to peer review after the end of the last module.
- **Provision of mentoring support.** Participants will be able to benefit from technical assistance and coaching activities through the mentoring component, in parallel with the modules, of up to six hours (four sessions of 1.5 hours each) per participant, as outlined above.
- **Networking activities.** Between the sessions organised for each module, the EDP would include a limited number of “fireside chats” (up to three sessions), through which participants will have the opportunity to interact within the EDP group and exchange knowledge with international experts in a relevant field of activity.

Table 7. Implementation calendar for the EDP

Main implementation activities for the EDP	Calendar Months						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Participant selection and confirmation							
Launch and graduation ceremony of the EDP							
Preparation for EDP							
Delivery of leadership module		M1					
Delivery of technical modules				M2 and M3	M4	M5 or M6	
Mentoring support							
Networking activities							
Preparation and peer-review of active learning project							

Source: Authors' elaboration.

3.3 Implementation and operational management of the EDP

50. In its initial stage, the EDP should at first be restricted to manageable cohorts to ensure effective personalization and customization of training interventions; therefore, the pilot of the EDP developed under the RAS will be capped at twenty-one participants. Smaller cohort sizes facilitate deeper engagement and interactivity of learning interventions, allow for tailored coaching and guidance, and can create personalized learning pathways and objectives, which are critical for leadership development. The size of the cohort of the EDP should be adapted to the available resources for delivering the program and its financing model, to prioritize the individual learning needs and outcomes of participants, as opposed to focusing on efficiency gains through standardization and less resource-intensive learning methods. From an operational and administrative point of view, having initially one smaller cohort per cycle in the EDP would allow its management team to build capacity, processes and know-how to deliver the program effectively before scaling up to one or more larger cohorts per cycle. As such, at this initial stage of the EDP pilot implemented under the present RAS, the EDP will be limited to up to twenty-one participants, selected with priority from among (deputy) secretaries general and supplemented by eligible (deputy) SG, to which are added eligible DG.

- 51. The selection process of participants to the EDP is an integral part of the program – it must be rigorous, credible and based on adequate substantiation that demonstrates fit with the program objectives.** An effective selection process for the EDP is a core enabler and necessary condition for the program to achieve its objectives and generate the envisaged impact in the public administration. First, the participation to EDP must be a priority of the institution's management and must be conditioned by the commitment to the program's objectives and its strict eligibility criteria. Thus, the participants must be nominated and benefit from the full support of their respective organization's political leadership. Second, the selection process must ensure that the right caliber of participants take part in the program, both in terms of the seniority, experience and expertise required, but also in terms of their commitment to learning, the relevance of the program to their professional development plan, and the potential impact the program would have on the budgetary programs, reforms and institutions they lead and/or manage. This requires an application process that strikes the appropriate balance between the transactional and administrative costs on interested participants and the program organizers, and the ability to credibly differentiate among applicants.
- 52. The EDP selection process should initially be based on two sequential and eliminatory phases.** The process should include a resume screening phase an interview with an evaluation committee established for this purpose, composed of (i) HLCS from the NACS, the NIA, the MWDPA, the GSG and the MIA, as institutional leads for HRM in the civil service, and of (ii) the EDP's program coordinator. At a subsequent stage in the evolution of the EDP, once it becomes established in the L&D framework, the selection process should also incorporate a written application from nominees, in-between the resume screening and interviews phases, to further calibrate the fit of the cohort with the program objectives.
- 53. Participation in the EDP pilot conducted under this RAS will be governed by a simplified selection procedure.** The implementation of the EDP pilot will be financed through this RAS. Therefore, the selection procedure can be simplified both functionally and administratively and in terms of the necessary regulation. Thus, the simplified selection procedure will be adapted to the rules on vocational training programs organized and conducted within externally funded projects⁷⁰. The selection procedure will consist of an application from the candidates, consisting of the submission of an individual CV and the completion of a letter of intent and a nomination from the leaders of the participating institution and an analysis from the designated team. These documents will be analyzed by the designated NACS team of the submitted CVs, in order to assess the eligibility of the participants, as well as the candidatures and to make a hierarchy of them, according to some tie-breaking criteria, in the case of the next prioritization, in which the request for participation exceeds the maximum number of available places. Details regarding the selection procedure will be provided as part of Deliverable 5 of this RAS. the order provided below:
- (i) (Deputy) SG from central public administration in office who have accumulated at least 3 years of professional experience in HLCS and/or DG positions in the last 5 years. Priority will be given to

⁷⁰ Article 9(1) of GD no. 1066/2008.

those who have passed the first stage of the national competition for occupying a HLCS position; followed by

- (ii) DGs from the central public administration in office who have accumulated at least 3 years of professional experience in HLCS and/or DG positions in the last 5 years. Priority will be given to those who have graduated from the specialized training program for occupying a HLCS position, and to those who held or hold the position of coordinator of investments and reforms of the NRRP at the time of registration with the EDP.

54. The EDP must be governed by a clear, proportionate and binding regulatory framework that ensures the maintenance of uniform quality standards for modules, trainers and future iterations.

The EDP must be carried out according to a set of rules and regulations, defining the scope, procedures and responsibilities of all parties involved. Thus, the EDP would benefit from clearly defined responsibilities, as well as a coherent framework and approach for carrying out learning activities. This set of rules must be translated into a regulatory framework that provides the EDP with a solid legal basis to be recognized as an official development program in public administration. Thus, in order to allow the development of future iterations of the EDP with partial or full funding from the state budget, the EDP must be integrated into the current legal framework on training and development in public administration in Romania as a specialized training program⁷¹. To this end, in order to align the EDP with the methodological requirements applicable to this type of training program, the current proposal incorporates international good practices in the training of senior civil servants specified by the OECD, complies with the recommendations of international standards for adult professional training⁷² and takes into account the NIA principles of quality assurance in training for public administration.⁷³ These standards and requirements will facilitate the subsequent take-over of the pilot program by competent institutions in the form of a specialized training program or a postgraduate program of continuous professional training and development,⁷⁴ based on the necessary documentation and support materials.

55. The EDP regulations should introduce the following policies for the delivery of the program:⁷⁵

- On criteria and method for assessing candidates in the application process to join the program.
- On active participation and allowed absences – the statute would require participants to complete at least 80 percent of activities; failure to meet this requirement would result in leaving the program.
- On the duration of the learning modules.
- On profile and number of trainers required for each module and activity of program.

⁷¹ These would consist of operational procedures, methodologies and regulations for the organization and functioning of the EDP, regulated by the normative acts issued by NIA, NACS and MDPWA.

⁷² These would consist of operational procedures, methodologies and the rules of organization and functioning pertaining to the EDP, regulated by tertiary legislation issued by the NIA, the NACS and the MDPWA.

⁷³ Respectively ISO 29993:2017, SR ISO 21001:2019 and ISO 30432:2022.

⁷⁴ According to NIA (2022), the Decalogue of quality in training - a guide for the wearer, developed under the SIPOCA 617 project "Strengthening the capacity of NIA regarding the development of studies/analyses with impact on the professional training system in public administration".

⁷⁵ These policies would be further detailed in the trainer's manual and the EDP's operational manual, to be developed under Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

- On the provision of mentoring activities in terms of eligible types of support, maximum allocated hours per participants, and rules of conduct between mentor and mentee.
- On criteria and standards for evaluating assignments, case studies and exercises.
- On the certification awarded for completing the program.
- On intellectual property and use of course content outside of the EDP.

56. The EDP requires a dedicated coordination and management team to ensure its effective implementation and regular adaptation to the learning needs of beneficiaries and the Government's priorities, which are constantly changing. In order to comply with the operational principles set out in sub-chapter 3.1, the EDP requires a core internal team responsible for managing the design and delivery of the program across the cycles, coordinated by an overall program leader who sets the overall direction and main objective for the EDP and ensures the consistency, coherence and quality of the content and tools used within the modules. This core team would have considerable administrative and legal responsibilities and would manage, among others, all aspects of the program related to financial and asset management, communication, marketing and stakeholder management, legal compliance (including with legislation on personal data protection and intellectual property), procurement and contract management. To the extent possible, the team should also incorporate specialist expertise in areas consistently targeted by the EDP (e.g. public financial management, institutional development and strategic management) that could directly contribute to the development and delivery of the program through technical guidance and quality assurance. However, it is likely that the specialist expertise and the specialist and certified L&D service providers that the scope and nature of the EDP require (such as certified mentors, leadership development specialists and competency assessment centres) will largely come from the private sector.

57. The profile of trainers who will deliver the EDP should reflect a practical and substantial experience in applying, in the Romanian public administration, the working tools used within the EDP. Given the applied and experiential nature of the learning and training activities proposed in the EDP, as well as the technical mentoring activities, addressed to SG and DG with substantial professional experience in office, the trainers who will be selected to deliver the EDP activities will need to be recognized experts in the respective areas addressed by the EDP, in the context of the Romanian public administration. Thus, trainers will need to demonstrate at least 10 years of experience in implementing and/or directly supporting public administration reform and capacity building initiatives in the specific field of each EDP module. Also, the selection of trainers should prioritize, but not condition, experience in training activities, as proven practical experience and expertise in the field should be the only mandatory eligibility requirements.

58. The core team would require a permanent institutional home and appropriate staffing and contractual arrangements, to enable it to manage the EDP operationally across cycles. For the proposed scale and scope of the EDP, such a core team should not exceed five permanent staff. Moreover, in the current context of the Romanian public administration, this core team would be best placed in the NIA, given its institutional mandate and experience and capacity to implement similar programs.

59. The learning journey for participants under the EDP must be supported through ancillary learning resources, available beyond the program implementation. As part of the EDP, the coordination team must maintain and update an online resource hub that would contain both core and supplementary readings and related learning materials that can be accessed before, during, and after the program. Core readings would include handouts, presentations, exercises, and case studies used in the course. Further reference materials could include additional resources with “hard” knowledge (e.g. legislation, procedures and operational guidance), academic and practitioner knowledge and country case studies on the EDP topics. Incorporating such developments in a newsletter could also help keep participants engaged in between sessions and beyond the program, to foster a community of practice among the senior civil service.

3.3.1 Communication strategy and plan for the EDP

60. A communication strategy for the EDP could help build awareness, engagement and credibility for the program. The EDP needs to attract both participants and political sponsorship and acceptance necessary to ensure these participants are committed to the program and are allowed to apply the acquired competencies. Therefore, a communication strategy should aim to inform and get support from political decision-makers, the target beneficiaries themselves, and the relevant institutions with a role in implementing the program and creating the authorizing environment for it, namely the NIA, the GSG, the MWDPA, and the MIA. A proactive, stakeholder-centered communication strategy will not only build awareness and engagement but also foster trust, ownership, and long-term sustainability for the program within Romania’s public administration.

61. The communication strategy for the EDP should consist of an identity, a replicable communication plan and a measurement and evaluation plan. The EDP identity needs to be integrated into the larger efforts the NACS has already made for visual coherence in the communication of HRM initiatives. The communication plan presents the audiences, messaging and channels while a step-by-step implementation timeline ensures a practical roadmap for the communication activities. The evaluation metrics could allow future benchmarking and good practices in communicating the EDP. The communication strategy for the EDP, with these components, will be fully developed and piloted under Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

62. The communication strategy for the EDP must be embedded in the current communication strategies of the MWDPA and NACS. In the context of the ongoing HRM reforms, the NACS has developed and is currently implementing a Promotion and Communication Strategy for Reform Measures and Investments, financed under the NRRP. The approach includes targeted outreach, clear messaging, and the use of diverse communication channels to raise awareness and encourage adoption of the new HRM measures.⁷⁶ All these requirements must apply to the proposed communication strategy for the EDP. The communication plan would build on activities from the NACS’ previous

⁷⁶ The Promotion and Communication Strategy for the Reform Measures and Investments of the National Agency of Civil Servants, Financed Under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, for October 2024 – June 2026.

communications plans such as planned awareness-raising events for the EDP to be presented to key stakeholders.

- 63. Clear role distribution across the civil service is required for coherent and effective communication.** The implementation of the EDP communication strategy requires extending beyond communication specialists to include senior management and institutional leaders. While the strategy can be coordinated by the Communication and International Relations Directorate of the NACS, its success depends on the active engagement of leadership across relevant institutions, mainly in the NIA for operational implementation and the MDPWA in high-level government coordination. Leaders of central public institutions hold an important role in recommending the program and supporting participation.

Identity requirements for the EDP

- 64. A well-defined identity creates coherence in communication by aligning internal and external materials.** The EDP's identity should be reflected in both external communications, such as brochures or online presentation, and internal resources like welcome kit, learning materials, certificate. A coherent identity experience helps participants, partners, and stakeholders recognize and trust the program. When branding is fragmented or inconsistent, it can create confusion and weaken the program's perceived value.
- 65. Establishing a clear identity is an early investment in the program's sustainability.** Branding is a strategic asset that adds long-term value to the program. A clearly defined brand ensures that each iteration of the program builds on the previous one, increasing recognition and credibility with every new cohort. As more HLCS and DG participate, brand equity grows, making the program a trusted benchmark in the L&D ecosystem for the civil service. This accumulated reputation strengthens institutional buy-in, facilitates partnerships, and enhances the program's ability to attract top-tier participants.
- 66. For awareness and recognition, the EDP branding should include a name, visual identity, description, and semantic territory to consolidate the program's reputation.** While the name reinforces the program's position as a flagship executive development initiative, the visual identity would ensure consistency across all communication materials and would contribute to program recognition. The description should clearly articulate the program's purpose, target audience, and strategic objectives. Together, these elements would establish the EDP as a recognized and credible program that can support professional development and strengthen leadership skills in the public sector. To this end, given that the EDP is focused on increasing the capacity of (deputy) SG and DG to achieve results in public administration, an initial title option could be "Competency Development Program for Accelerating Results in Public Administration". This, however, needs to be validated with the main beneficiaries of the program, as part of the evaluation of the results of the communication activities, described below.

67. The EDP visual identity must fully comply with the current GoR,⁷⁷ NRRP,⁷⁸ and NACS style guide. The Graphic Elements Manual used by the NACS for NRRP-financed initiatives defines specific color guidance for each category of projects. The current initiative would fall under the color scheme of Milestone 419: Operational competency framework in the central public administration (see Figure 4 below). The visual identity of the EDP should be in line with this guidance in all graphic materials and in its visual identity. Additionally, the communication for EDP must incorporate the generic logo for projects related to the competency framework (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 4. Generic logo for projects related to the competency framework



Source: NACS (2024) “Graphic Elements Manuals”.

Figure 5. Color gridlines for the NACS HRM-related projects



Source: NACS (2024) “Graphic Elements Manuals”.

Communication strategy and plan: objectives, audiences, channels, key messages and activities

68. The communication strategy for EDP aims to ensure visibility, engagement, and sustainability. It is designed to position the program as a benchmark for leadership development in the public administration. The branding, the quality and consistency of the communication materials contribute to this positioning. The communication objectives are:

- **Raise awareness:** promote the EDP and its vision, design and expected impact for participants, the institutions they serve and for and Romanian public administration in general

⁷⁷ GoR Identity Style. Available at <https://identitate.gov.ro/1/ghidul-de-identitate/>

⁷⁸ Visual Identity Manual for NRRP. Available at <https://mfe.gov.ro/mipe-publica-manualul-de-identitate-vizuala-pentru-planul-national-de-redresare-si-rezilienta/manual-identitate-vizuala-pnrr/>

- **Increase engagement:** encourage participation and institutional support by clearly communicating the EDP's benefits for the real-world act
- **Ensure sustainability:** establish the program as a long-term initiative through alumni engagement, branding and partnerships.

69. The communication strategy for the EDP would need to target multiple categories of stakeholders. These would include both direct beneficiaries, but also the stakeholders who would need to support its implementation in the long-term. Specifically, the strategy would cover

- **HLCS and DG as prospective participants.** The core audience of the communication strategy, as they are the targeted participants in the EDP.
- **Political decision-makers and policymakers.** They are responsible for ensuring the sustainability and authorizing environment of the program. These include ministers, secretaries of state, and members of Parliament, as well as public managers in key roles of developing and directing HRM policies for the civil service.
- **Citizens and civil society.** A broader audience targeted as part of the NACS's employer branding efforts.⁷⁹ Communicating the program's role in strengthening governance and institutional excellence helps position civil service careers as attractive and impactful.

70. To effectively reach and engage target audiences, the communication strategy could use a mix of direct, digital, and institutional channels, ensuring visibility and impact. The selection of communication channels builds on the NACS's Promotion and Communication Strategy for the Reform Measures and Investments of the National Agency of Civil Servants. Table 8 provides a summary.

Table 8. Selection of communication channels for the EDP communication strategy

Communication channel	Key methods	Target audience
Official institutional channels	- NACS, NIA websites (dedicated program section) - Government portals - Official reports, briefings, events	HLCS, directors general, decision-makers
Digital and social media	- NACS and NIA social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) - Newsletters	Civil servants, institutional partners, public (for employer branding)
Direct stakeholder engagement	- Targeted outreach to HR departments - Briefings and meetings with decision-makers - Personal invitations for participation	Political decision-makers and policymakers, HLCS, DGs

⁷⁹ World Bank (2022) Recommendations for a branding and communication strategy for NACS.

Events and public relations	- Conferences, webinars, workshops, and networking events - Press releases and media coverage in public sector publications and career/HR - Alumni engagement events	Civil servants, media, policy influencers, alumni
Internal communication within the program	- Branded participant communication, learning materials, and certificates - Mentor engagement with participants - Program follow-up and professional network engagement	Program participants, trainers, mentors, alumni

Source: Authors' elaboration.

71. The key messages will articulate the purpose and the key characteristics of the EDP. The key messages transmitted through the communication strategy must be specific, data-based and evidence-informed. The messages must be adapted to the needs of each target audience and cover the different dimensions of the EDP. The key messages should articulate the following:

- The EDP is an exclusive development program for SG and some DG roles in the central public administration.
- The purpose of the EDP is to develop leaders capable of driving innovation, addressing complex challenges, and shaping the future of public administration.
- The EDP enhances public management positions but also supports Romania's broader goals of creating a professional, efficient, and future-ready public administration.
- The EDP is informed by extensive research, stakeholder input, and international best practices, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness for Romania's reform objectives of the civil service.
- The EDP is aligned with civil service priorities, needs and established policies, particularly the general competency framework. The EDP systematically develops critical competencies required for (deputy) SG and DG performance, such as strategic thinking, collaboration, communication, and decision-making, required through the general competency framework.
- Learning and training delivered in the form of modules, focused on experiential and practical learning, which can be applied in the workplace, at the SG and DG levels..
- The EDP emphasizes fostering a strong sense of community, networking, and esprit de corps. The alumni network aims to be a network of leaders committed to effective governance.

72. The communication plan is structured into three key phases – before, during, and after the EDP – to ensure maximum visibility and engagement. Each phase has distinct objectives and tailored communication approaches to reach and engage the audiences. Communication materials will be developed for each activity in line with visual identity and with adapted key messages for each audience. Table 9 summarizes the proposed activities.

Table 9. Main communication activities planned for the EDP

Phase and objectives	Communication activities
Before the EDP: Raise awareness and ensure institutional buy-in	- Presentation webinars to introduce the EDP. - E-mail communication with and from institutional management. - Promotional materials: digital brochure, online presentation page. - Q&A document addressing frequent questions. - Targeted outreach to government institutions, senior leadership, HR departments.
During the EDP: Ensure engagement and learning experience	- Promotion of purpose, key themes in LinkedIn/Facebook. - Press releases & media relations targeting HR, career, and leadership-focused outlets. - Branded learning materials (guides, workbooks) to ensure consistency. - Online resource hub. - Informal networking events.
After the EDP: Ensure sustainability and alumni engagement	- Final event to showcase program outcomes. - Follow-up communication highlighting key results. - Promotion kit for HLCS, mentors including personalized visual materials. - Alumni engagement strategies (networking events, follow-up sessions). - Content creation (case studies, success stories, video testimonials) to demonstrate impact.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Implementation roadmap of the communication strategy for the EDP pilot and performance metrics

73. A roadmap for implementing the communication strategy is an essential component in the implementation of both the EDP pilot conducted under this RAS and for future editions of the EDP. From a technical point of view, logistical preparation is essential as it ensures that all digital assets, the necessary mechanisms for event planning and content delivery are in place before the launch of the EDP pilot. Another success factor is the contribution to the communication efforts of all institutions involved in the EDP pilot through their official communication channels. For future editions of the EDP, the roadmap should be updated and adapted based on the results of the evaluation of the communication activities, as described below.

74. The endorsement from the central public institutions' leaders is also an important success factor all stages. This includes encouraging participation of SG and DG to ensuring their involvement during

the pilot edition of the program and, subsequently, supporting the application of the skills developed within the program in the workplace.

Figure 6. Implementation roadmap for the communication strategy for the pilot EDP

Proposed communication activities	Tentative calendar						
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Program launch							
Presentation at the working session for the Government meeting							
Launch conference							
Online presentation webinar							
E-mail from the NACS to participating institutions							
Social media posts from the NACS							
Online presentation page text							
Digital presentation brochure							
FAQ document							
Press release							
2. During the program							
LinkedIn/Facebook content							
Media relations							
3. End of the program							
Closing conference							
Key figures infographic							
Social media distribution kit for participants and experts							
LinkedIn/Facebook content – Key figures promotion							
4. Monitoring and evaluation							
Report, KPIs, lessons learned							

Source: Authors' elaboration.

75. The effectiveness of the communication strategy should be assessed through performance metrics at each stage of the pilot EDP, as well as in subsequent iterations. Measuring the impact of the communication strategy in achieving its objectives and supporting the EDP implementation is critical to enable improvements of the program. These lessons learnt can influence the communication channels to be used, the content developed and the resources to be invested in communication. Table 10 provides a summary of potential performance metrics for each stage of the communication strategy.

Table 10. Summary of potential performance metrics for the EDP communication strategy

Phase and objective	Performance metrics (examples)
Before the EDP: Raise awareness and ensure institutional buy-in	- Number of participants in webinars introducing the program. - Engagement with promotional materials (website visits, brochure downloads, social media reach). - Number of institutions reached through targeted outreach efforts. - Volume of inquiries and requests for additional information
During the EDP: Ensure engagement and learning experience	- Social media engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, reach on LinkedIn/Facebook posts). - Media coverage and mentions in HR, career, and leadership-focused publications. - Attendance and feedback ratings from informal networking events.
After the EDP: Ensure sustainability and alumni engagement	- Attendance at final event showcasing program outcomes. - Number of shares and uses of the promotion kit by HLCS, mentors, and stakeholders. - Alumni engagement levels (participation in networking events, follow-up sessions, mentorship activities). - Success stories and testimonials collected (case studies, testimonials, survey feedback).

Source: Authors' elaboration.

3.4 Evaluation of the EDP

76. The overarching objective of an evaluation for the EDP is to determine how effectively and efficiently the program activities lead to participants genuinely acquiring and applying the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and, ultimately, to drive organizational performance and better outcomes for citizens. The evaluation of the EDP should be a joint responsibility of the NACS and the NIA, as part of their prerogatives related to the L&D activity for the civil service. By gauging both short-term learning results and long-term organizational impact, the NACS and the NIA can fine-tune future iterations of the program, reallocate resources as needed, and strengthen governance structures, to ensure that the EDP contributes to the broader strategic vision of the GoR. Additionally, a regular analysis and evaluation of the EDP's financial costs and operational challenges would ensure that the EDP is and remains financially sustainable and proportional to its functional added value, although a cost-benefit analysis would be inadvisable in the context of the L&D function in Romania, given its current stage of maturity.

- 77. The operational evaluation of the EDP facilitates that its financial costs are sustainable, resources are used efficiently and logistical processes run smoothly.** This dimension of the evaluation would examine the financial costs of the program, the implementation and delivery procedures (such as participant selection, scheduling, and venue arrangements), and the overall administrative and management quality of the initiative. By focusing on these dimensions alongside an evaluation of learning outcomes, the NACS and the NIA can make data-driven decisions to optimize the training experience and outcomes for the target audience among civil servants, optimizing at the same time financial discipline.
- 78. The evaluation of learning outcomes of the EDP should draw upon established adult learning theories and proven evaluation frameworks, ensuring that assessments align with how senior professionals learn most effectively.** The evaluation methodology for the EDP should be based on the Kirkpatrick Model,⁸⁰ which starts at Level 1 by gathering participant reactions and perceived relevance, moves to Level 2 by examining the degree of learning via quizzes or demonstrations, extends to Level 3 by assessing changes in on-the-job behavior, and concludes at Level 4 with an analysis of resultant organizational improvements. To complement these insights, a cost-benefit component – included as an extension to Level 5 of the evaluation methodology – can offer a structured approach to quantifying the return on investment by comparing tangible benefits in competency retention and utilization against the costs of delivering the training, thereby giving stakeholders of the EDP and of the broader L&D activity for HLCS a clear financial perspective on the impact of the program – this component could draw from the Philips return-on-investment (ROI) model.⁸¹ By integrating Kirkpatrick’s Four-Level Evaluation Model and a methodology for measuring the cost-benefit of the training, this approach simultaneously measures participants’ reactions, learning outcomes, on-the-job behavior, and organizational impact. For the current iteration of the EDP, given the available timeframe for implementation under the RAS, the evaluation would be limited to the second level of analysis, i.e., on the degree to which participants have acquired and can apply the learnings the competencies targeted by the EDP.⁸²
- 79. The evaluation of the learning outcomes of the EDP should be done throughout program implementation, at each stage of the learning process and linked directly to the EDP’s stated indicators of success.** The NACS and the NIA should plan the evaluation based on a matrix that maps each learning objective to at least one quantifiable measure. This matrix will serve as the blueprint for all subsequent data collection efforts. Table 11 lists the recommended data collection tools for each level of evaluation. Additionally, the evaluation design should be customized for different stages of the EDP delivery process, as follows:

⁸⁰ Kirkpatrick, D. L., & Kirkpatrick, J. D. (2007). *Implementing the Four Levels: A Practical Guide for Effective Evaluation of Training Programs*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

⁸¹ Phillips, J. J., Phillips, P. P., & Toes, K. (2024). *Return on Investment in Training and Performance Improvement Programs* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

⁸² The evaluation methodology will be developed and applied under the upcoming Deliverable 5 of this RAS.

- Once the EDP commences, formative assessments – including brief reaction polls, informal discussions with participants, and instructor observations – provide real-time feedback on whether the content, pacing, and format are resonating with adult learners. Specifically, instructors would administer quick polls via digital platforms (e.g., Mentimeter or Slido) to capture immediate feedback on comprehension or engagement, followed by short reflective exercises that encourage participants to articulate personal insights or questions. Additionally, summative assessments should be integrated throughout the EDP delivery, to measure practical application of the competencies; these will consist of simulations and scenario-based exercises– such as requiring participants to draft a mock policy brief under time constraints – or using role-play to assess their negotiation and leadership styles. Additionally, self-assessment and peer assessment tools offer insight into perceived proficiency and can be disseminated through structured questionnaires or guided peer-feedback sessions.
- In the period following the completion of the EDP iteration (typically four to eight weeks after the end of the program), behavior change can be best measured using targeted surveys or interviews that ask participants, peers and subordinates to provide concrete examples of how new competencies were applied by the participants. For robust data triangulation, organizational metrics should be tracked before and after the training to demonstrate any direct performance improvements – however, the existing data scarcity and limited monitoring systems in the Romanian public administration render this unfeasible. In the longer-term, financial data collection related to program costs can be used for a ROI analysis, where tangible benefits (e.g., in terms of organizational performance, increase in quality of governance) are compared against total expenditures for the training program.

Table 11. Data collection tools aligned with the proposed levels of evaluation

Level of evaluation (based on the Kirkpatrick model)	Data Collection Tool	Timing	Purpose
Level 1: Reaction	- Quick online polls - Session feedback forms	During/Immediately after each session	Gauge participant satisfaction, immediate engagement
Level 2: Learning	- Written tests - Simulation exercises - Role-play assessments	End of the training program	Measure knowledge retention, skill development, and competence
Level 3: Behavior	- Follow-up surveys - Supervisor/peer interviews - 360 degree feedback sessions	4–8 weeks post-training	Determine on-the-job application and changes in work practices
Level 4: Results	- Organizational KPIs - Performance	Ongoing, 1–3 months post-training	Assess impact on team/department

	dashboards - Case study reviews		performance, policy outcomes
Level 5: Cost-benefit analysis (Phillips ROI)	- Cost-benefit analysis - Financial and operational metrics (time savings, cost reductions)	End of evaluation cycle (8–16 weeks)	Compare qualitative/performance benefits to program investment

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the Kirkpatrick model and the Phillips profitability model.

80. Compiling, reviewing, and communicating the findings of the evaluation marks a critical phase in the overall evaluation process, as it translates raw data into practical lessons and recommendations for improvement for refinement. The evaluation report should be structured to address each evaluation level explicitly, offering clear narratives around whether the training met participants' expectations (Level 1), delivered targeted learning objectives (Level 2), influenced on-the-job behavior (Level 3), contributed to measurable organizational gains (Level 4), and generated a positive return on investment (Level 5). The report should be discussed and enriched in a validation workshop, to ensure that all key stakeholders – ranging from beneficiaries such as the NACS and the NIA, EDP participants and their supervisors – have an opportunity to scrutinize the findings and propose strategic actions. This workshop can clarify ambiguous results, delve deeper into unexpected outcomes, and fine-tune specific recommendations for future iterations of the EDP – e.g., which modules to restructure, which new skill areas to emphasize, or how to improve the evaluation itself.

81. The EDP pilot conducted under this RAS will be evaluated operationally and in terms of the degree of achievement of the proposed training objectives (Level 2 of the methodology described above). The evaluation of the EDP pilot conducted under this RAS is constrained by the project implementation schedule, which does not allow for an evaluation on all the dimensions described above. Therefore, under this RAS, within Deliverable 5, the EDP pilot will be evaluated operationally, according to the model described above, at the end of the pilot implementation period. This evaluation, however, will focus on financial, administrative and logistical considerations for implementing future EDP iterations, but will not include considerations related to program development – such as the costs related to the design and development of the curriculum and program content –, since the EDP components have already been developed within this RAS and are expected to continue to be relevant for the next EDP iterations. At the same time, for this EDP pilot, the operational evaluation will be complemented by the evaluation of the degree of achievement of the training objectives, namely the degree to which participants perceive and prove through evaluation that they have acquired and can apply the competencies targeted by the EDP. The performance criteria for the modules are presented in Annex 1 and will be detailed in Deliverable 5 of this RAS. The evaluation will inform a knowledge transfer workshop supported by the World Bank team with the NACS and NIA teams to facilitate the implementation by the latter of the next iterations of the EDP. At the same time, to ensure the validity of the evaluation and to facilitate the use of the results to improve future iterations of the EDP, representatives of the NIA and academic institutions will be invited as active observers to the delivery of training activities under the program.

82. Evaluation of the EDP across all levels requires substantial institutional capacity and commitment to improving the L&D activity through evidence-based feedback loops. Moving forward, to remain relevant and fit-for-purpose, the EDP must be continuously adapted to the needs of beneficiaries and calibrated to maximize its cost-effectiveness in addressing said needs. To achieve this, the NACS and the NIA must introduce rigorous evaluations across all levels of analysis for the EDP and the L&D activity, more broadly. However, this requires dedicated leadership commitment and investments of resources towards designing, conducting and integrating the results of in-depth evaluations in the actual program design and delivery – which has, thus far, not proven to be a priority for the L&D activity. In the short-term, such rigorous evaluations could be limited to the EDP, given its envisaged high-impact and use of resources, and could be initially conducted via third-parties, before being taken over in-house by the NIA, to enable its program team to build capacity for evaluations (see Box 6 for an example of quality assurance of L&D programs in the French public administration).

Box 6. Quality Assurance Mechanism in the (former) École Nationale d'Administration⁸³

The mission of the ENA was to recruit and train future civil servants for the highest level of the French civil service. Candidates underwent a 24-month curriculum, based on theoretical and practical training, delivered by civil service professionals, as well as on-the-job training, delivered through “stages”, or high-level internships in the civil service. To ensure that the training provided was effective and relevant for the candidates, the ENA employed an integrated quality control mechanism, consisting of the following components:

- A first stage of quality assurance took place through the selection process into the program. The jury responsible for selection provided detailed inputs on the strengths, weaknesses and background of the candidates, which would be taken into consideration when developing the curriculum.
- A second stage took place throughout the program. Candidates were interviewed (i) at the outset, to understand their expectations; (ii) at mid-term, to identify if candidates required additional support to benefit to the extent possible from the program; and (iii) at the end, to support candidates in identifying their strongest competencies and their ideal job profile.
- A third stage consisted of ex-post evaluations of how effective the candidates were in their job, once they graduated and joined the civil service. Information was collected informally from the supervisors of the graduates, through the ENA alumni network. More formally, information was collected through annual surveys, sent to civil servants who had graduated the ENA in the last fourteen months, as well as their supervisors.
- In a final stage, the information collected was analyzed by the ENA training department, who would provide recommendations on whether the curriculum and syllabus should be revised, if the ratio

⁸³ The ENA was disbanded in 2021 and a part of its prerogatives were taken-up by a newly established Institut national du service public (INSP) in 2022.

between the different learning and development tools should be changed or if the teachers who delivered the training should be dismissed or kept in the program.

Source: Based on Larat, Fabrice. (2015) “Internal and external quality control mechanisms: Lessons drawn from the Ecole Nationale d’Administration”, in Rosenbaum, Allan (ed.). (2015) “In Quest of Excellence: Approaches to Enhancing the Quality of Public Administration Education and Training”, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA, as seen in Deliverable 1 – Report identifying enabling conditions for Training of the RAS on Strengthening the INA’s Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456), signed between the World Bank and the National Institute of Administration in Romania.

3.5 Institutional and financial sustainability of the EDP

- 83. The EDP must continuously align with the L&D priorities and needs, and broader HR management policies, for top and senior managers, to remain relevant for the public administration.** The proposed design of the EDP incorporates mechanisms – such as debriefing and feedback sessions throughout program implementation – to calibrate and adapt its content and delivery to perceived L&D needs and priorities from the beneficiaries. These instruments provide a vehicle for participants to discuss evolving priorities and propose updates for future iterations of the EDP. While the intensive co-creation process used for the initial EDP design should (could) not be replicated annually, a similar methodology – which uses interviews, surveys, and workshops—could be implemented at regular intervals, in sync with the multi-year strategic planning cycle for the civil service, as articulated in national strategies. This approach would enable the EDP to (i) align the Government’s strategic objectives for HLCS and senior civil servants and with their perceived L&D needs and priorities, and (ii) act as a feedback loop to inform L&D policies on what learning outcomes and delivery methods should be prioritized and institutionalized.
- 84. The EDP must be formally integrated in the professional development policy for HLCS and senior managers, to introduce a consistent approach to L&D.** As detailed above, in the current HRM framework for HLCS and DGs, L&D priorities are set entirely from the bottom up, by jobholders and their supervisors, during the annual performance appraisal process, based on individual preferences and perceptions of L&D needs. In this context, the EDP should be introduced as one of the career development milestones for these categories of staff (currently, alongside the NIA-led HLCS preparatory program) in order to put in place and institutionalize a consistent approach to the professionalization of the civil service. Thus, the EDP should become a permanent L&D instrument for the civil service, which must be provided to HLCS and senior managers once they meet its eligibility criteria, as part of their learning plans. This requires a stable policy anchor in the Administrative Code, sponsored and sustained by the NACS and the MDPWA.
- 85. Moving forward, other incentives for L&D could be introduced for HLCS and senior managers, to foster and enhance the learning culture in the public administration from the top-down.** This could include the piloting of the proposed L&D credit system, regulated through the AC, which aims

to introduce L&D requirements in the career progression policies for civil servants. Once the credit system is introduced, the EDP can count towards the L&D credit requirements for career or wage progression (while ensuring it does not become an administrative obstacle for staff). For DGs, this would be one way of incentivizing participation, by having the EDP be one option for them to accumulate credits for promotion. For this, raising awareness about the EDP, its objectives, and its substantive added value will be crucial to avoid a formalistic approach focused solely on the number of credits earned.

86. The EDP requires a permanent institutional home, with the appropriate mandate and capacity to finance, deliver and continuously update the program. As described in Chapter 2, the current institutional framework for L&D in the public administration or, more specifically, for the senior civil service, is not fit to produce, in an efficient and cost-effective manner, the learning outcomes that lead to enhanced capabilities in the different categories of personnel. Improving such outcomes requires structural changes to the operating and delivery models of L&D in the public administrations, as discussed in previous World Bank reports.⁸⁴ Thus, in the current context, the institutional set-up that can reliably support the management, delivery, and evaluation and update of the program, across iterations, must be based on an inter-institutional partnership between the NACS, as responsible for senior civil service HRM and L&D policies, and the NIA, as responsible for the delivery of the EDP. Under this institutional set-up for the EDP, the program team would be housed in the NIA. This partnership would allow the EDP to be integrated by the NACS into the broader HLCS policies and career development strategies and interventions, while also benefitting from the NIA's operational capacity and experience to deliver L&D programs to senior managers in the civil service. Moving forward, and in line with the lessons learnt from OECD and EU countries, a specialized and dedicated L&D function for the senior civil service must be established, within a dedicated HRM framework – recommendations for this will be provided in the upcoming Deliverable 4 under this RAS.

87. The EDP will require stable and adequate financing to effectively and consistently achieve its intended learning outcomes; this could be achieved through cost-sharing financing model. As main objectives, the EDP financing model should encourage commitment to the program among participants, while also keeping it financially accessible without becoming challenging for the Government to sustain it in the long term. Thus, the EDP could be financed through a cost-sharing model, whereby the costs for the management, delivery and maintenance of the program are covered by participant fees – fully covered by participants or subsidized, at different potential extents, by their respective employing institution – and by the institution responsible for delivering it, indirectly through its allocated state budget. This financing model could be further adapted to the aforementioned objectives by introducing a fee reimbursement clause, whereby the fee paid by participants is reimbursed, depending on their commitment to the program (e.g., if attend the program in full) or payback clauses for government sponsorship to the program, whereby the employing institutions or the

⁸⁴ See Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration, signed between the World Bank and the NACS, and Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Strengthening the NIA's Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456), signed between the World Bank and the NIA in Romania.

government fully funds attendance to the program, but requires participants to remain to stay in the civil service for a set period (e.g., up to five years) or repay part of the cost if they leave early. However, introducing such clauses required commensurate changes in the regulatory framework for civil servants, which might not be easily introduced in the short run. Thus, in its first iterations, the EDP operational costs⁸⁵ could be appropriately financed through the following model:

- Up to thirty percent covered through participant fees, paid jointly by the participants and their employing institutions.
- At least seventy percent covered through the state budget, by the institutions responsible for the program delivery.

88. The EDP should be part of a distinct budgetary measure that incorporates all L&D programs for HLCS, to be monitored under the MDPWA's institutional strategic plan (ISP). As explained in Chapter 2, currently, data on L&D spending is collected and reported annually at the aggregate level, per each institution, includes only direct costs (e.g., costs of participation to training) and does not allow any type of disaggregation (e.g., spending for different categories of staff); such data is not centralized at level of the public administration. Defining a dedicated budget measure for all L&D activities related to HLCS, that would include both the proposed EDP and the NIA-led HLCS eligibility program, would allow for cost and performance monitoring and control for L&D expenditures across the public administration for top and senior civil service managers. It would provide an accurate and comprehensive view of the all the costs related to L&D for HLCS, as well as allow for a cost-benefit analysis in the longer term. Such a budget measure for the HLCS could be included in the MDPWA's institutional strategic plan, as part of a budget program for the entire L&D function for the public administration, with distinct indicators allocated to the NIA and the NACS, depending on their respective responsibilities in the L&D activity for HLCS. In the longer-term, this budget measure should be assigned to the institution responsible for a dedicated HRM role for HLCS, in order to pool allocated resources for L&D and link it to other programs related to HLCS development.⁸⁶

89. The EDP must leverage the expertise and infrastructure of higher education institutions for its sustainable delivery, through formal partnerships. Universities and research institutions bring academic rigor, expertise, and insights derived from data analysis that can inform best practices in public administration, policy analysis, and leadership. They can update the EDP to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical applications and can provide faculty experts and guest lecturers who have extensive experience in relevant fields, fostering a learning environment that blends academic insight with real-world public sector challenges. In this sense, as described above, the implementation of the EDP can be transposed into a postgraduate program, supported through a partnership between the GR

⁸⁵ The principal capital costs – related to developing the curriculum, content and training and learning instruments – are expected to be relatively low in the short- to medium- term, as they have been covered under the present RAS and the EDP is not expected to be revised substantially in its first several iterations. An estimate of the total operational costs will be provided under the upcoming Deliverable 5 of the RAS.

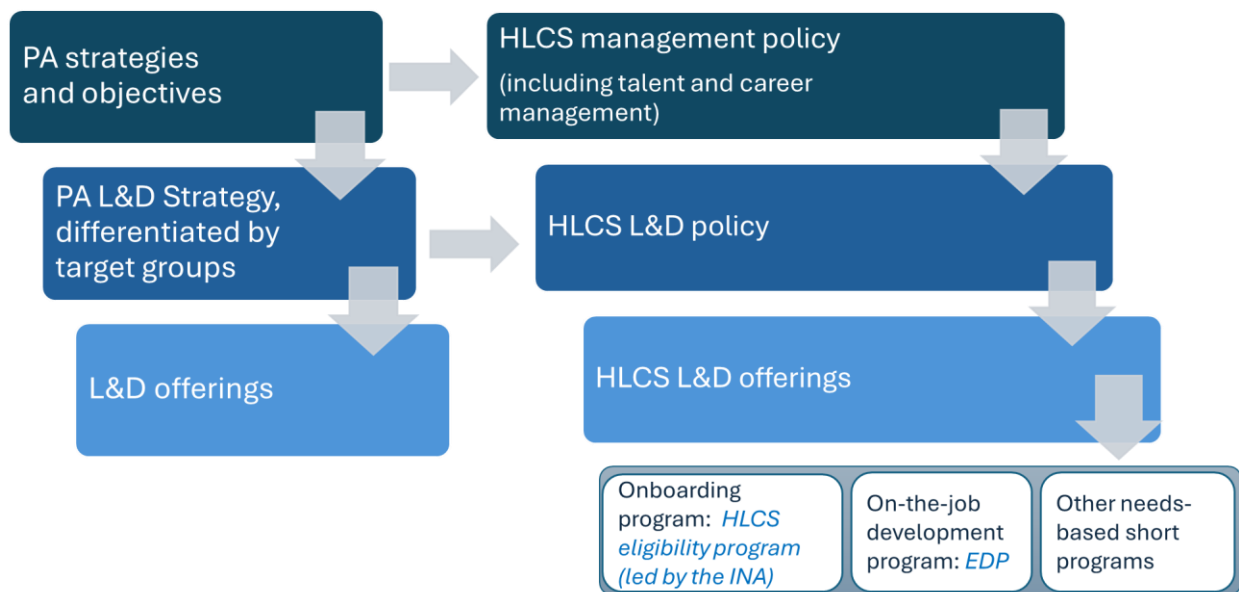
⁸⁶ Options on adequate governance arrangements for the HLCS will be provided in the upcoming Deliverable 4 of this RAS.

and academia. Universities can also conduct evaluations and impact assessments of training programs, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with evolving Government needs. Furthermore, partnerships with academia open opportunities for networking, peer learning, and access to other technical development programs tailor-made for specific competencies, which require specialized subject matter expertise and learning resources (e.g., in policymaking).

4. The EDP as an enabler of effective L&D for HLCS and DG

90. International experience shows that successful EDPs are typically embedded in larger L&D and talent management programs for senior civil servants, which include a differentiated set of L&D tools and instruments. Figure 7 below illustrates how this would look for Romania, and how the EDP would fit within this overall framework. Overall, developing a broader, updated, strategic approach L&D for HLCS and DG will require updating future strategies for civil service development and for training to include dedicated sections specifying training needs and potential training offerings for them, such as the EDP, distinct from the general training priorities for the entire public administration. In the medium and longer term, creating a learning culture in the civil service will require strengthening both demand for and supply of L&D for HLCS. While the detailed recommendations for the integration of specialized L&D policy into the broader HLCS and DG career management policy will be covered in the upcoming Deliverable 4 of the present RAS, selected key messages on how to strengthen demand and supply for L&D and embed it into the broader management framework are presented below.

Figure 7. Integrated HLCS management and L&D system



Source: Authors' elaboration.

91. **A first major step to increasing demand for L&D in HLCS and DG roles is ending or severely limiting temporary appointments to these positions.**⁸⁷ This would enable the NACS, as current institutional lead for managing the senior civil service, to introduce measures for tying L&D more closely to career and talent management and to develop a pipeline of “future leaders” as part of succession planning policies for the public administration. Of particular importance is meaningfully implementing performance evaluations for HLCS, which would allow identifying individual L&D needs, developing individual L&D plans, and monitoring performance dynamics of HLCS over time.
92. **The EDP and the current HLCS eligibility program led by the NIA could also be complemented by/integrated into a more differentiated and better targeted set of L&D offerings for HLCS.** An essential first step in this direction is increased coordination and collaboration among key actors in the HLCS policy and management systems to better identify systemic L&D needs and to adequately address these. Another step is stronger collaborations among key public L&D and civil service management institutions, such as the NACS and the NIA, and other actors of the broader L&D and HRM governance ecosystem.⁸⁸ Similarly, a critical gap in the L&D framework for the senior civil service is the lack of formal partnerships with private training providers specializing in leadership training. Instead, collaborations with academic universities and regional organizations already exist and could be better articulated into established and permanent training programs. For example, the NIA adapted for the Romanian public administration the Council of Europe’s Leadership Academy Program for developing leadership capabilities of local officials, while the NACS collaborated with national and EU academic institutions to provide training to public administration staff on digitalization and HRM. However, there do not seem to be more systematic collaborations and networks around L&D for HLCS. A more appropriate collaboration in this sense would go beyond externalizing the design and delivery of L&D activities to individual/institutional contractors, as is currently the general practice in the public administration. Instead, it would require a more hands-on collaboration and more robust and enforceable quality assurance protocols, in order to develop fit-for-purpose curricula and be able to deliver it, through specialized trainers, to ensure that it achieves its intended learning objectives.
93. **Overall, there is a need for increasing awareness about the investment value (the return-on-investment/cost-efficiency) and necessity of L&D for SCS in public institutions and among political decision-makers.** While part of this should be addressed through the communication plan of the EDP (see Sub-Chapter 3.3.1.) and other offerings, other factors that lead decision-makers and civil servants to underestimate the value of L&D and, thus, impede the development of a learning culture in the public administration will also need to be addressed. For HLCS specifically, one key cause for

⁸⁷ A detailed analysis on temporary appointments to HLCS positions and policy recommendations on how the NACS could limit them have been provided in Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration, signed between the World Bank and the NACS. These will be further elaborated as part of the recommendations to overhaul the HLCS under the upcoming Deliverable 4 of the present RAS.

⁸⁸ Detailed recommendations on improving the L&D function in the public administration are provided in Deliverable 1 developed under the RAS on Strengthening the INA’s Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456), signed between the World Bank and the NIA in Romania.

this is again the frequency of temporary appointments, which both reflect and amplify the lack of prioritization among senior leaders of the systematic assessment and development of competencies for HLCS. Part of this neglect seems to stem from role perceptions of HLCS as “one-way transmission belts of political mandates”⁸⁹. However, political mandates are complex and not necessarily easily implemented and implementing them requires a complex set of skills and high levels of adaptability – as also evidenced by the interviews and workshops. Clarifying and highlighting the key role HLCS play in the public administration should be part of future reforms to the overall HCLS management framework and will be further explored in Deliverable 4 of this RAS.

- 94. Finally, building a stronger database about the impact of L&D on individual and organizational performance and communicating the results of L&D to a broader audience can further strengthen the case for it.** In addition to the EDP feedback and evaluation mechanisms which are outlined here and will be further developed under the upcoming Deliverable 5, creating a stronger evidence-base for L&D will require first more systematic data collection and data sharing among the NACS, the NIA, and other relevant agencies. Interconnecting the relevant data-bases would allow better tracking of the training completed by civil servants throughout their career and linking training to career progression and on-the jobs results, answering questions such as, for example, how many participants in the NIA training passed the national competition and/or were named in HLCS position, how many HCLS have completed the NIA course and/or the EDP at any point in time. Better data would also allow more rigorous impact evaluation research designs of specific trainings, which could draw, for instance, on data from performance evaluations of HLCS or even administrative data of organizational outputs and performance to assess impact of training.

⁸⁹ As mentioned in interviews with HLCS conducted for this deliverable.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Proposed EDP structure, curriculum and agenda

Table 12 . Expected commitment for participants in the EDP

Activity	Training days	Training hours
Module 1: Generating impact in public administration through transformational leadership and corporate governance	7	42
Module 2: Managing and accelerating public investment programs	3	18
Module 3: Implementing digitalization and reorganizations in public institutions	3	18
Module 4: Applying performance-based budget management in the public sector	3	18
Module 5: Shaping institution strategies for citizen outcomes (elective) Or Module 6: Solving crises and complex situations in public institutions through anticipation and negotiation (elective)	3	18
Total A Training	19	114
Networking and exchange sessions with practitioners	1.5	9
Technical mentoring sessions	1	6
Active learning project preparation	1.5	9
Discussion of the active learning project	0.5	3
Assessment of leadership style and advice on interpretation of results	0.5	3
Total B Networking, mentoring and coaching	5	30
Self-learning to go through training materials	3	18
Total C Self-learning	3	18
TOTAL	27	162

Table 13. Overview of the learning instruments in the EDP

Module	Day	Main practical applications
Module 1. Generating impact in public administration through transformational leadership and corporate governance	Previous	Completion of questionnaire - Tool that analyzes respondents' thinking styles and behavior
	Day 1	One-to-one executive coaching - interpreting individual results and identifying directions for development
	Day 1	Exercise: Completion of Leadership vs. Management questionnaire - discovering the differences between leadership and management from an OECD perspective
	Day 1	Exercise: Personal Development Plan - Styles of thinking and behavior - Increasing constructive styles and reducing defensive styles so as to have a positive impact on organizational culture
	Day 2	Exercise: Clarity of intention - discovering the components of clarity of intention and their impact on the organization and its citizens
	Day 2	Exercise: Clearly communicating vision, mission and strategic directions in the public institution
	Day 3	Case Study: Decisions and organizational culture
	Day 3	Exercise: Understanding the difference between real culture and ideal culture and to deepen the relationship between values and behaviors
	Day 3	Exercise: Plan for communicating and supporting desirable values and behaviors
	Day 4	Case study: Identifying the need for transformation
	Day 4	Exercise: A culture of ownership and integrity to encourage the practical application of cultural transformation tools
	Day 5	Case Study: Engagement in the organization to develop the capacity to recognize behavioral signals of engagement, predict performance, formulate appropriate interventions, and assess the impact of leadership policies
	Day 5	Exercise: Assess the level of psychological safety in the participants' team based on the 4 essential areas of psychological safety
	Day 5	Exercise: Plan for increasing psychological safety in own team

	Day 6	Exercise: Innovation - Introducing the 3 steps of the innovation process: Inspiration, Idea, Implementation and exploring barriers
	Day 6	Exercise: Plan for a culture of innovation adapted to your own institutional context
	Day 6	Individual reflection on personal transformation during the program
	Day 7	Case study: Application of analytical and decision-making tools that support the fulfillment of the role of representative of the public guardianship authority in dealing with state-owned companies
Module 2: Managing and accelerating public investment programs	Day 1	Exercise: Strategy Mapping - Identifying national, sectoral strategies and other strategic documents that are operationalized through ISP
	Day 1	Demonstration and Simulation: Using the online platform www.psi.gov.ro to monitor the implementation of ISP and to generate semi-annual and annual performance reports
	Day 1	Case study: Analyzing and reviewing the findings of an Annual Performance Report
	Day 2	Role-play: Attend a government meeting to present the results of the implementation of the ISP and advocate 3 public policy priorities to obtain an appropriate budget
	Day 2	Case Study: Analyzing and reviewing indicators used in strategic planning and performance measurement system at the level of Romanian ministries
	Day 3	Case study: Project portfolio monitoring. Project concept assessment based on the PIM evaluation grid applied to a list of anonymized projects
	Day 3	Case study: Project portfolio monitoring. Evaluation of the maturity of the implementation of an investment project based on the PIM evaluation grid applied to an anonymized project list.
Module 3. Implementing digitalization and reorganizations in public institutions	Day 1	Exercise: Organizational diagnosis and data analysis to assess the structure and efficiency of organizational processes, identify problems, bottlenecks in the operational flow and external factors influencing the performance of the institution
	Day 2	Exercise and role play: Develop an Institutional Development Plan based on contextual information and diagnosis of a public institution aiming at modernization of administrative processes, digitalization, organizational restructuring or implementation of new public policies

	Day 3	Case study: Digital transformation vs. pseudo-digitization. Differentiating document digitization versus digital transformation projects in order to design process re-engineering solutions that generate results for citizens
	Day 3	Exercise: design a Digital Transformation Plan for an institution including vision and goals for 2026 - 2030, As-Is vs. To-Be analysis, 3 pilot initiatives, roadmap, KPIs and accountable parties
Module 4. Applying budget management based on performance targets in the public sector	Day 1	Case study: Current budgetary constraints on budget planning and execution. Approved budget of a public institution
	Day 2	Exercise: Analysis of the budget programs of public institutions based on their allocations for the current year, two previous years and two subsequent years
	Day 2	Simulation: Elaboration of a public investment program
	Day 3	Exercise: Evaluating alternatives for budget resource allocation through cost-benefit analysis
	Day 3	Exercise: Analyzing and interpreting the budget execution of public institutions
Module 5. Modeling institution strategies for citizen outcomes (elective)	Day 1	Exercise: Analyzing the context, setting objectives and designing/adapting an inter-institutional monitoring mechanism for a public policy document
	Day 2	Exercise: Identifying stakeholders and completing the stakeholder matrix
	Day 2	Exercise: Generating options and going through the main steps in the tool for presenting and motivating normative acts
	Day 3	Case study: Developing new legislation on corporate governance of public enterprises in the context of Romania's obligations under the NRRP, communication and negotiation with EC and OECD partners
	Day 3	Case Study: Use and integration of the views formulated by the Advisory Council for Regulatory Impact Assessment (CCEIAN) on proposals for regulatory acts
Module 6. Dealing with crises and complex situations in public institutions through anticipation and negotiation (elective)	Day 1	Exercise: Analyzing the vulnerabilities of a public institution and designing a rapid action plan in case selected scenarios materialize
	Day 2	Exercise: Elaboration of an Institutional Continuity Plan based on the previously analyzed vulnerabilities
	Day 2	Role-play: Implementing the continuity plan previously developed to solve a crisis, with different roles assigned to key positions in a public institution

	Day 3	Role-play: Simulating a negotiation in a crisis situation in public administration involving analysis of the interests of the parties involved, development of negotiation strategies, application of persuasive tactics and agreement of a solution by both sides that minimizes the impact of the crisis
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Table 14 . Training plans and agendas per proposed EDP module

Module 1. Generating impact in the public administration through transformational leadership and corporate governance		
Competences addressed in the General Competence Framework • Generating commitment • Promoting innovation and initiating change, Sub-Competence: Strategic Agility • Initiative, Sub-Competence: Taking Responsibility • Integrity, Sub-Competency: Vulnerability Management • Citizen Orientation, Sub-Competency: Civic Responsibility • Problem Solving and Decision Making, Sub-Competency: Strategic Thinking		
Learning objectives: • Critically analyze their thinking and behavioral styles impacting the act of leadership and make developmental decisions at the personal level to increase their positive impact at the interpersonal, team and institutional levels • Clarify the vision and mission of the institution and articulate them in a way that is easy to understand and generates trust and commitment both for the employees of the institution and for the citizens / direct beneficiaries • Communicate the vision and mission with impact at both institutional and societal level		Performance criteria: Day 1 Public Sector Leadership • Understanding the role of leadership in the public sector • Understand the responsibilities of the leader in relation to organizational culture • Awareness of own leadership development needs • Building a personal development plan Day 2 Clarity of intention • Ability to clarify the vision and mission for the organization that reflects its citizen orientation • Building a vision and mission communication plan Day 3 Organizational culture

• Identify habits that influence the institution's results and categorize them into desirable (constructive) and less desirable. • To identify cultural transformation needs in the organization and use leadership levers to implement the desired cultural transformation • Model and develop people to build a culture of integrity and ownership, consistently articulate the expectation for people to demonstrate the habits of a culture of integrity and ownership • Recognize the psychological needs of the institution's employees and create through the act of leadership an environment of psychological safety to increase organizational commitment • Encourage employees to identify opportunities for innovation based on citizen interest, generate new ideas and implement innovation plans. • To analyze issues relevant to performance at every stage in working with State Companies and to track performance in relation to the strategy, objectives and KPIs set.	• Understanding the difference between real culture and ideal culture • Understanding the relationship between culture - values - customs • Ability to define values for the institution • Ability to translate values into desirable habits • Ability to identify undesirable habits • Defining desirable and undesirable habits • Building a plan to communicate values and behavioral expectations Day 4 Cultural transformation • Ability to identify the need for cultural transformation • Carrying out a diagnosis • Understanding the leadership levers for achieving cultural transformation • Building a plan for implementing a culture of ownership and integrity Day 5 Engagement and psychological safety • Recognizing the factors impacting engagement in the organization • Understanding psychological needs • Diagnosing the level of psychological safety • Building a plan to increase psychological safety Day 6 Innovation • Understanding the stages of innovation • Building a plan for a culture of innovation Day 7 Corporate Governance • Understanding the role as a representative of the guardianship authority and how it differs from the role as a board member • Understanding the key elements to look for at each step in working with a state-owned company • Understanding the levers/measures they can use at each stage • Understanding their own role in ensuring institutional transparency
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Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1	Leadership in the public sector		
09.00 - 11.00	What is leadership and why is it different from management - differences in terms of focus on purpose, core activities, required competencies, time horizon and change orientation; Organizational culture and structure - components of culture and structure, distinct responsibilities of leader and manager; Components of leadership. Benefits of leadership in the public sector	Introduction of experts, presentation tour, presentation of objectives and agenda Initial assessment test 1 (situational) Exercise: Completing the Leadership vs. Management questionnaire - discovering the differences between leadership and management from an OECD perspective Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Conceptual model of organizational culture management; Factors influencing the habits of people in an organization; Climate vs. Culture - differences and interferences between culture and climate; Cultural tension - sources of cultural tension; Styles of thinking and behavior.	Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Impact of Leader Personal Styles on the Institution - how passive/defensive and aggressive/defensive personal styles affect the institution and how constructive styles help.	Exercise: Personal Development Plan - Styles of Thinking and Behaviour - increasing constructive styles and reducing defensive styles so that they have a positive impact on organizational culture.	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Day 2	Clarity of intention		
09.00 - 11.00	Vision, mission and strategic directions in a public sector organization.	Exercise: Clarity of intent - uncovering the components of clarity of intent and their impact on the organization and citizens.	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;
11.15 - 13.15	Citizen orientation in defining vision and mission; Role of the leader to give direction and inspire the team; Communicating the vision and mission while maintaining citizen orientation. Messages and communication strategy.	Interactive presentation Examples from participants	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Communicating vision and mission while keeping citizen orientation. Messages and communication strategy.	Exercise: Clear communication of vision, mission and strategic directions in my institution.	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 3	Culture, Values and Customs		
09.00 - 11.00	Introductory exercise - Ideal culture and real culture Defining/ Clarifying citizen-oriented values	Case Study: Decisions and organizational culture	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	From values to reality - Habits by which the team manifests values Defining undesirable and desirable habits	Exercise: Understanding the difference between real culture and ideal culture and to deepen the relationship between values and behaviors	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Practical application - Defining undesirable and desirable habits How do values come alive in the organization?	Exercise: Plan to communicate and support desirable values and behaviors	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Day 4	Cultural Transformation		
09.00 - 11.00	Case study - Identifying the need for transformation Leadership levers for cultural transformation	Case study - Identifying the need for transformation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Leadership Levers for Cultural Transformation Defining values and habits	Exercise: A culture of ownership and integrity to encourage the practical application of cultural transformation tools (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Defining the transformation need and action plan	Exercise: A culture of ownership and integrity to encourage the practical application of cultural transformation tools (2)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 5	Generating commitment Psychological safety in the organization		
09.00 - 11.00	Commitment in the organization Actions impacting on commitment	Case study: Engagement in organization to develop the ability to recognize behavioral signals of engagement, predict performance, formulate appropriate interventions and assess the impact of leadership policies	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Psychological needs Components of psychological safety	Individual questionnaire Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Identifying the level of psychological safety Impact of leadership on psychological safety	Exercise: Assessment of the level of psychological safety in the participants' team based on the 4 essential areas of psychological safety Exercise: Plan for increasing psychological safety in your own team	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Day 6	Encouraging innovation. A culture of innovation		
09.00 - 11.00	Innovation Inspiration and citizen orientation Ensuring diversity of ideas (1)	Brainstorming Exercise: Innovation - Introducing the 3 steps of the innovation process: Inspiration - Idea - Implementation and exploring barriers	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Ensuring diversity of ideas (2) Managing implementation	Interactive presentation Exercise: Plan for a culture of innovation adapted to your own institutional context	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Culture of Innovation Reflection on personal transformation	Individual reflection on personal transformation during the program Final evaluation test (situational) 1	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 7	Corporate Governance		
09.00 - 11.00	Role in dealing with state-owned companies: What is the role of a representative of the supervisory authority vs. Step 1. Formulating and conveying expectations Strategic alignment of the letter of expectations, Sources of information and points to track, Governance theories applicable to state-owned companies Step 2. Involvement in board formation Job profile, Profile of the ideal candidate, Aspects to look for in the selection process	Initial assessment test (situational) 2 Interactive presentation Case study: Application of analysis and decision tools that support the fulfillment of the role of the PFE as representative of the public guardian authority in relation to state-owned companies (Steps 1 and 2)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	From expectations and targets to KPIs and activities	Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;

	Step 3. Analyze and approve company plans Management Plan (submitted by the board): alignment of the objective with the letter of expectations, working assumptions, context considered and planned budget; Step 4. Analysis and approval of company plans Management plan (submitted by the board), KPIs considered, reflection of performance in KPIs, activity forecasted, alignment with planned budget Step 5. Current monitoring of activity Things to check in activity report	Case study: Application of analysis and decision tools that support the fulfillment of the role of the PFI as the representative of the public guardian authority in relation to state-owned companies (Steps 3, 4 and 5)	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Step 6. Evaluation of board mandate Objectives Assumed vs. Achieved -Evaluation of individual mandates and objectives Exceptional events: Departure of a Board member, Renegotiation of KPIs at the request of the Board, Pre-adjustment of indicators, Decisions to extend the mandate Ensuring institutional transparency: Documents ensuring transparency, Monitoring compliance with transparency rules	Interactive presentation Case Study: Application of analytical and decision-making tools that support the fulfillment of the role of the KPI as representative of the public guardian authority in relation to state-owned companies (Step 6) Facilitated discussion Final assessment test (situational) 2	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Module 2. Managing and accelerating public investment programs

Competences addressed in the General Competence Framework

- Performance Management, Sub-Competence: Resource and Process Management
- Planning and organization, Sub-Competency: Strategic planning and organization
- Problem Solving and Decision Making, Sub-Competency: Strategic Thinking
- Communication, Sub-Competency: Strategic Communication

Learning objectives:

- Organize and supervise the processes of updating the ISP and measuring institutional performance in accordance with the steps and timeframes set out in the normative acts;
- To align performance management with the mission of the organization and the strategic priorities of the institution;
- Use tools and best practices for planning, monitoring and reporting institutional performance;
- Address and interpret performance variations and take measures to optimize performance and prevent poor performance;
- To strategically monitor a portfolio of projects, with a focus on assessing maturity and implementation risks

Performance criteria:

- The Strategy Map includes national and sector strategies relevant to the ministry's mandate, provides a clear overview of the ministry's effort to contribute as a leader and contributor to their implementation, and sets the framework for operationalizing the measures in the ISP;
- Participants can easily access useful information for monitoring the implementation of the ISP from the platform www.psi.gov.ro and can generate semi-annual and annual performance reports;
- Analysis of the Annual Performance Reports identifies areas of public policy where corrections are needed, correctly interprets variations in performance and allows measures to be taken for optimization and to prevent poor performance;
- Participants collaborate effectively to present the results obtained from the implementation of the ISP and proposals to reduce performance deviations and support with valid arguments the 3 public policy priorities for which they will request the allocation of an appropriate budget, while respecting the attributions according to the assigned roles;
- The proposals formulated for the reduction of deviations and actions to assist the ISP are relevant to the performance variations encountered and enable the business to recover towards the targets set;

		- The analysis of the indicators used substantiates the necessary revision of their to support the performance measurement process; - Assessment of the project concept and maturity of implementation of an investment project is carried out according to the PIM methodology and facilitates strategic decision making to achieve the set targets.	
Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1			
09.00 - 11.00	Strategic planning system in Romania. Developing, monitoring, reporting and reviewing the ISP at Ministry and GSG level: -Implementation tools and roles. -Establishment of the work schedule -Roles of the (deputy) SG in the process -Inventory of national, sectoral strategies and other strategic documents that are operationalized through ISP	Initial assessment test (situational) Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise. Strategy Map - Identification of national, sectoral strategies and other strategic documents that are operationalized through ISPs	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Half-yearly and annual reporting on the execution of budget programs. Preparation of the performance report	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Demonstration and simulation: Using the IT platform www.psi.gov.ro to monitor the implementation of the ISP and to generate half-yearly and annual performance reports (1) Case study. Analyze and review the conclusions of an Annual Performance Report	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Half-yearly and annual reporting on the execution of the budgetary programs. Preparation of the performance report	Case study. Analyzing and reviewing the conclusions of an Annual Performance Report (2)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;

		Facilitated discussion	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 2			
09.00 - 11.00	Half-yearly and annual reporting on the execution of budget programs. Performance reporting	Role play. Participation in a government meeting to present the results of the implementation of the ISP and support 3 public policy priorities Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Performance management at strategic level. Implementation mechanisms	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case study. Analysis and review of indicators used in strategic planning and performance measurement system at the level of Romanian ministries (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Performance management at strategic level. Implementation mechanisms	Case study. Analysis and review of indicators used in strategic planning and performance measurement system at the level of Romanian ministries (2) Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 3			
09.00 - 11.00	What is public investment management (PIM)? Project cycle. Stages of a large investment. Evaluation. Evaluation of the project concept Monitoring. Stages of an investment. Examples: IT and building. Project portfolio monitoring	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case study. Project portfolio monitoring - Project concept assessment based on the PIM evaluation grid applied to a list of anonymized projects	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Project portfolio monitoring	Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;

		Facilitated discussion Case Study. Project Portfolio Monitoring - Assessing the maturity of an investment project implementation based on the PIM assessment grid applied to a list of anonymized projects (1)	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Project portfolio monitoring	Case Study. Project Portfolio Monitoring - Assessing the maturity of an investment project implementation based on the PIM assessment grid applied to a list of anonymized projects (2) Facilitated discussion Final evaluation test (situational)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Module 3. Implementing digitization and reorganizations in public institutions

Competences addressed in the General Competence Framework

- Stimulating innovation and initiating change. Sub-Competence: Strategic Agility;
- Initiative. Sub-Competence: Taking responsibility;
- Performance Management. Sub-Competence: Resource and Process Management.

Learning objectives:

- Analyze and assess the organizational capacity of the institution, identifying strengths, weaknesses and resources needed to meet strategic or reform requirements;
- Develop and coordinate reform plans/institutional development or strengthening plans that align organizational structures and processes with new strategies, policies or external requirements;

Performance criteria:

- The organizational diagnosis is carried out based on the correct interpretation of the context information provided and includes the assessment of the structure and bottlenecks in the operational flow;
- The institutional development plan makes effective use of the information provided and the diagnosis and responds to the needs for which it was designed : modernization of administrative processes /

- Lead the implementation of institutional reforms, monitoring progress, evaluating impact and adjusting processes to ensure that objectives are achieved; - Develop the capacity to lead digital transformation at the public institution level and to differentiate between projects that merely "digitize paper" and digital transformation solutions with real impact.		digitalization / organizational restructuring / implementation of new policies; - The proposed institutional reforms are tailored to the development objectives set can generate a measurable impact, allow the monitoring of progress and the operation of the necessary aids along the way; - The digital transformation solutions identified are adapted to the institutional context and improvement needs and are in line with new technologies; - The designed digital transformation plan responds to the formulated requirements and institutional needs as presented.	
Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1			
09.00 - 11.00	Foundations and key concepts of organizational change Theories and explanatory models of change Types of change and their management	Initial assessment test (situational) Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Brainstorming	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Organizational diagnosis and identification of weaknesses Collecting and analyzing relevant data for decision making	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case Study Exercise: Organizational diagnosis and data analysis	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Organizational diagnosis and identification of weaknesses Types of interventions for organizational change	Exercise: Organizational diagnosis and data analysis (continued) Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 2			
09.00 - 11.00	Key change steps and success factors	Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation;

	Intra-institutional collaboration and involvement of relevant stakeholders (roadmap) Setting clear objectives for a successful plan Choosing the most appropriate change strategy	Facilitated discussion Brainstorming	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Implementing change: strategies and methods Creating and implementing a concrete change plan Implementing change: action plan, communication and monitoring	Interactive presentation Exercise and Role Play: Developing an Institutional Development Plan Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Implementing change: strategies and methods Creating and implementing a concrete change plan Implementing change: action plan, communication and monitoring	Exercise and Role Play: Developing an Institutional Development Plan (continuation) Interactive presentation	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 3			
09.00 - 11.00	Digitization, digitalization, digital transformation - strategic alignment and levels of implementation; Digital maturity assessment; Digital governance of data and technology	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case study - Differentiating document digitization vs. digital transformation projects	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Digitalization of Public Administration processes - strategies and set of best practices;	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Projector;

	Managing the digital transformation process	Brainstorming Exercise: Designing a Digital Transformation Plan for an Institution	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Digitalization of Public Administration processes - strategies and set of best practices; Managing the digital transformation process	Exercise: Designing a Digital Transformation Plan for an Institution (continued) Interactive presentation Final evaluation test (situational)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Module 4. Applying performance-based budget management in the public sector

Competences covered in the General Competence Framework

- Performance Management, Sub-Competence: Resource and Process Management

Learning objectives:

- Holistically approach the institution's budget management throughout the budget cycle, harmonizing strategic objectives, performance targets and investments with budget allocations;
- Organize and manage an efficient budget planning process involving the specialized departments and subordinate institutions;
- To apply a cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analytical framework, depending on the context, in making decisions on the allocation of budgetary resources;

Performance criteria:

- The reasons for possible under-achievements in the budget programs of the analyzed institutions are identified and the adequacy of the estimates for the coming years is realistically assessed, taking into account historical achievements and changes in the strategic and budgetary context;
- The selection of public investment programs is made according to established rules - limits, prioritization criteria and process - and the advantages and disadvantages of each approach are identified;
- The choices made on budget allocations for pre-determined current and capital expenditure are properly justified in terms of cost-benefit analysis criteria and respect the strategic objectives of the institution;

• To organize the budgetary programs in correlation with the strategic objectives of the areas of activity managed by the public institution; • Monitor budget execution, interpret the results obtained and use the conclusions in the planning of the next budgetary exercises; • Identify solutions to improve the budgetary management in the institution, which to apply in the next budget cycle.		• Relevant aspects of budget execution are identified: achievements and problems. The potential causes of the problems are highlighted, the implications for the budgetary programs and the public investment program are stated and available solutions identified.	
Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1			
09.00 - 11.00	National budgetary policy framework European and national policy documents Synthesis of fiscal-budgetary objectives and implications for Principal Authorizing Officers in the current year and the next 3 years	Initial assessment test (situational) Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Brainstorming	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	General rules in planning and executing public budgets Public finance legislation, framework letter Budget tools: Budget classifications and Budget indicators Main budgeting methods used internationally for public institutions	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Brainstorming Case study	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart; Extracts from normative acts, Statistical data.
14.00 - 16.00	Temporary rules in the planning and execution of public budgets	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart;

	Implications of current budgetary constraints on budget planning and execution: In the current year. Examples from approved budgets of some public institutions. Next year.	Brainstorming Case study: Current budgetary constraints on budget planning and execution Approved budget of a public institution	Extracts from normative acts, Statistical data.
Day 2			
09.00 - 11.00	Program Budgeting Budget programs and their relation to established budget processes, budget classification Classification of budget expenditure in terms of budget programs.	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Brainstorming Case study	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Public Investment Programs Public investment cycle: presentation, legislative framework. Regulatory framework, role, rules, rules, structure, process related to public investment programs.	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Brainstorming Exercise: Analysis of budget programs of some public institutions based on their allocations for the current year, two previous years and two subsequent years	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Public investment programs Correlation with strategic objectives and national profile plans.	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Simulation: Developing a public investment program	PowerPoint presentation; Projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Day 3			
09.00 - 11.00	Cost-benefit analysis of budget allocation proposals Introduction to cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis. Simplified cost-benefit analysis methods for managerial level: description, international experiences, applicability in Romania.	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case study	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Tools for analyzing budget execution Budget classification at COFOG level 3 Budget and budget execution reporting tools in the Forexebug portal	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise: Evaluation of budget resource allocation alternatives through cost-benefit analysis.	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Tools for budget execution analysis Analyzing budget execution. Transfers of appropriations, rectifications Lessons learned for the following budget cycles	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise: Analyzing and interpreting the budget execution of public institutions Final evaluation test (situational)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Module 5. Modeling institutional strategies for citizen outcomes (elective)

Competences addressed in the General Competence Framework

- Planning and organization. Sub-competency: Strategic planning and organization
- Problem Solving and Decision Making. Sub-Competence: Strategic Thinking

• Communication. Sub-competence: Strategic communication • Citizen orientation. Sub-competence: Civic responsibility			
Learning objectives: • Apply decision-making at institutional level based on the coordination of strategies and policies; • Coordinate and monitor the implementation of strategies and policies to align institutional objectives and ensure their achievement; • To identify trends external to the organization, assess risks and opportunities; • Initiate concrete measures to adapt and position the institution to achieve strategic objectives; • To map the key actors involved and facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders to implement strategies and policies.		Performance criteria: • The context analysis utilizes relevant and substantiated information, covers all dimensions of the PESTLE model and provides useful inputs for setting the objectives of the public policy document; • The institutional monitoring mechanism allows tracking the progress of the strategy, includes relevant indicators and is appropriate to the structure and size of the institution under analysis; • The stakeholder matrix identifies the relevant representatives for the issue under analysis and includes appropriate ways for their consultation and involvement during the implementation of the strategy; • The implementation options are defined, the selected option is properly substantiated and the sections of the presentation and reasoning instrument are completed with the necessary information; • Valid alternatives for drafting and drafting new corporate governance legislation are identified, together with relevant proposals for approaching negotiations with the EU and OECD • The main comments made by the CCEIAN on the proposals for regulatory acts are interpreted and the agreement on the appropriateness of their inclusion in the final content is based on sound arguments and an assessment of their impact.	
Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1			
09.00 - 11.00	Tools for developing institutional strategies, policies and strategic plans; Linking the strategic planning process and tools to the process of drafting normative acts	Initial assessment test (situational) Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

11.15 - 13.15	Methods to analyze the internal and external environment Ways to define general and specific objectives and result and impact indicators	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise: Analyzing the context, setting objectives and designing/adapting an inter-institutional monitoring mechanism for a development strategy (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Methods for analyzing the internal and external environment How to define general and specific objectives and indicators of results and impact	Exercise: Analyzing the context, setting objectives and designing/adapting an inter-institutional monitoring mechanism for a development strategy (2)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 2			
09.0 - 11.00	Stakeholder identification, consultation and mobilization methods	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise: Identifying stakeholders and completing the stakeholder matrix (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Stages of the public policy cycle; Annual Government Work Plan (AGWP), from bureaucratic to priority setting model	Exercise: Identifying stakeholders and completing the stakeholder matrix (2) Facilitated discussion Interactive presentation Exercise: Generating options and going through the main steps in the tool for presenting and motivating normative acts (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

14.00 - 16.00	Annual Government Work Plan (AGWP), from bureaucratic to prioritization model	Exercise: Generating options and going through the main steps in the tool for presenting and motivating normative acts (2) Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 3			
09.00 - 11.00	Stages of the decision-making process at strategy and policy level, linked to the objectives of the policy papers in relation with the EU and OECD	Facilitated discussion Interactive presentation Case Study: Drafting new legislation on corporate governance of public enterprises in the context of Romania's obligations under the NRRP, communication and negotiation with EC and OECD partners (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Stages of the decision-making process at strategy and policy level, linked to the objectives of the policy documents in relation with the EU and OECD Regulatory Impact Assessment Advisory Board (CCEIAN)	Case study: Developing new legislation on corporate governance of public enterprises in the context of Romania's obligations under the NRRP, communication and negotiation with EC and OECD partners (2) Facilitated discussion Interactive presentation Case Study: Use and integration of the views formulated by the Consultative Council for the Assessment of the Impact of Legislative Acts (CCEIAN) on proposals for legislative acts (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

14.00 - 16.00	Regulatory Impact Assessment Advisory Board (CCEIAN)	Case Study: Utilization and integration of the views expressed by the Advisory Council for the Impact Assessment of Legislative Acts (CCEIAN) on proposals for legislative acts (2) Facilitated discussion Final evaluation test (situational)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
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Module 6. Dealing with crises and complex situations in public institutions through anticipation and negotiation (elective)

Competences addressed in the General Competence Framework

- Integrity. Sub-Competence: Vulnerability Management;
- Communication. Sub-Competence: Strategic Communication;
- Teamwork. Sub-Competence: Conflict Mediation.

Learning objectives:

- Identify the main characteristic elements of critical situations: crises, emergencies or complex situations, as well as their triggers;
- Implement appropriate strategies and procedures for the effective management of crisis, emergency and/or complex situations;
- Apply practical models of crisis intervention and crisis resolution, adapted to the specifics of the organization.

Performance criteria:

- The vulnerabilities of the analyzed public institutions are identified realistically and are categorized correctly;
- The institutional continuity plan is relevant to the vulnerability situations identified and enables the achievement of the objectives set, in relation to the institution's capacity, resources and challenges;
- Participants collaborate effectively to resolve the crisis, within their assigned roles;
- The participants correctly analyze the interests of the parties involved, develop negotiation strategies and identify solutions that suit both parties involved.
- Participants apply negotiation methods and techniques adapted and appropriate to the simulated situations

Duration	Content	Training methods	Training materials
Day 1			
09.00 - 11.00	Defining the concepts of crisis, emergencies and complex situations; characteristics, differences, impact Decision making under pressure Typologies of emergency, crisis and complex situations Triggers and impact on the institution	Initial (situational) assessment test Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Case study	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Dynamics and causes of conflicts in public administration Conflict resolution models and approach styles Identifying institutional vulnerabilities	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion Exercise: Analyzing the vulnerabilities of a public institution and designing a rapid action plan in case predefined scenarios materialize (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Identifying vulnerabilities of the institution	Exercise: Analyzing the vulnerabilities of a public institution and designing a rapid action plan in case predefined scenarios materialize (2) Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 2			
09.00 - 11.00	Developing contingency plans and crisis scenarios	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;

	Risk analysis and planning of preventive measures Methods for continuous situation assessment and adjustment of interventions		Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Institutional Continuity Plan	Interactive presentation Exercise: Developing an Institutional Continuity Plan based on the vulnerabilities previously analyzed (1)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Institutional Continuity Plan	Exercise: Developing an Institutional Continuity Plan based on the vulnerabilities previously analyzed (2) Role-play: Implementing the continuity plan previously developed to resolve a crisis, with different roles assigned to key positions in a public institution Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
Day 3			
09.00 - 11.00	Basic principles of negotiation Identifying optimal negotiation objectives and strategies Negotiation styles Negotiation methods and techniques	Interactive presentation Facilitated discussion	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
11.15 - 13.15	Negotiation styles Negotiation methods and techniques	Role-play: Simulating a negotiation in a public administration crisis situation involving analysis of the interests of the	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector;

		parties involved, development of negotiating strategies, application of persuasive tactics and agreement of a solution by both sides to minimize the impact of the crisis (1)	Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.
14.00 - 16.00	Negotiation styles Negotiation methods and techniques	Role-play: Simulation of a negotiation in a crisis situation in public administration involving analysis of the interests of the parties involved, development of negotiating strategies, application of persuasive tactics and agreement of a solution by both sides to minimize the impact of the crisis (2) Final assessment test (situational)	PowerPoint presentation; Video projector; Computer; Worksheet; Flipchart.

Annex 2. Best practices in developing competencies for senior civil servants: international experience and practitioner insights

The Senior Civil Service (SCS) has increased in importance and been subject to increased attention regarding its management and development in OECD countries.⁹⁰ Senior Civil Service or Senior Executive Service typically refers to the corps of civil servants one or two (in some cases up to five, as seen in the US Federal Administration) levels below the political leadership. They act as a bridge between politics, policy, and administration, advise ministers and political leaders, and ensure policy coordination across departments and government agencies.⁹¹ SCS are increasingly expected to be not bureaucratic managers but public sector leaders, combining and balancing various roles such as strategic policymakers, governance stewards, and institutional change agents to advance the public good.⁹²

At the same time, the ideal (of) leadership in the public sector has changed significantly in the last decades: from traditional and hierarchical to transformational, adaptive, and collaborative.⁹³ Classical management theory saw the main tasks of managers in public organization as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting, and reporting upwards (“POSCORB”).⁹⁴ However, this traditional, hierarchical, model, which emphasizes control and compliance, is not suited for the current “VUCA”⁹⁵ world, i.e., for an environment characterized by rapid technological advancements, heightened public scrutiny, fiscal constraints, and shifting societal expectations of public organizations.⁹⁶ This environment requires transformational rather than transactional leadership. Rather than focusing solely on routine processes and maintaining stability, transformational leaders create a shared vision, mobilize and

⁹⁰ See Gerson, D. (2020). *Leadership for a High Performing Civil Service: Towards Senior Civil Service Systems in OECD Countries*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 40. OECD Publishing, Paris; Kuperus, H., & Rode, A. (2016). *Top Public Managers in Europe: Management and Employment in Central Public Administrations*. Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Hague; and Lafuente, M., Manning, N., & Watkins, J. (2012). *International Experiences with Senior Executive Service Cadres*. World Bank, Washington, D.C.

⁹¹ Kuperus, H., & Rode, A. (2016). *Top Public Managers in Europe: Management and Employment in Central Public Administrations*. Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Hague

⁹² Gerson, D. (2020). *Leadership for a High Performing Civil Service: Towards Senior Civil Service Systems in OECD Countries*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 40. OECD Publishing, Paris; Kuperus, H., & Rode, A. (2016). *Top Public Managers in Europe: Management and Employment in Central Public Administrations*. Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Hague

⁹³ O’Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The Collaborative Public Manager: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century*. Georgetown University Press; van der Wal, Z. (2017). *The 21st Century Public Manager*. Palgrave Macmillan; and Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565.

⁹⁴ Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565.

⁹⁵ Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

⁹⁶ O’Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The Collaborative Public Manager: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century*. Georgetown University Press; van der Wal, Z. (2017). *The 21st Century Public Manager*. Palgrave Macmillan.

motivate staff to pursue this shared vision, and collaborate across boundaries to drive change and innovation.⁹⁷

Such transformational leadership requires a dramatically new set of competencies.⁹⁸ To articulate a vision and steer organizations in an ever-changing world, SCS need strategic thinking and foresight to anticipate future challenges and craft innovative policy solutions. To motivate and mobilize staff towards the vision they need strong emotional intelligence, and the ability to foster trust, motivation, and engagement among teams and stakeholders. To advance cross-sector partnerships and stakeholder engagement, they need strong communication, negotiation, and consensus-building skills. Transformational leaders must be adaptive and resilient, capable of managing change, navigating crises, and promoting a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Ultimately, they should be able to inspire and empower others to drive meaningful, long-term improvements in public service delivery.

This changed ideal of leadership and associated competencies have been incorporated into modern Senior Civil Service management frameworks in OECD and EU countries.⁹⁹ They are incorporated into competency frameworks that guide recruitment, performance management, career and talent management for civil service managers and senior leaders. While competency frameworks often exist for the entire civil service, the majority of OECD countries have special employment and management conditions for SCS/SES.¹⁰⁰ And even though there are differences in terms of how the SCS corps is managed, OECD SCS systems share an emphasis on the systematic development of leadership skills and competencies.¹⁰¹ For example, the OECD Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability recommends that members and non-members “build values-driven culture and leadership in the public service, centered on improving outcomes for society”, among other by “building leadership capability in the public service”, “continuously identifying skills and competencies needed to transform political vision into services which deliver value to society”, and “creating a learning culture and environment in the public service”.¹⁰²

The systematic development of leadership competencies is pursued not just through dedicated training offerings, but through a broader set of learning and development tools (see [Figure 8](#) below).

⁹⁷ Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565.

⁹⁸ Benington, J., & Moore, M. H. (Eds.). (2010). *Public Value: Theory and Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan; O'Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The Collaborative Public Manager: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century*. Georgetown University Press; van der Wal, Z. (2017). *The 21st Century Public Manager*. Palgrave Macmillan; and Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565.

⁹⁹ Gerson, D. (2020). *Leadership for a High Performing Civil Service: Towards Senior Civil Service Systems in OECD Countries*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 40. OECD Publishing, Paris.

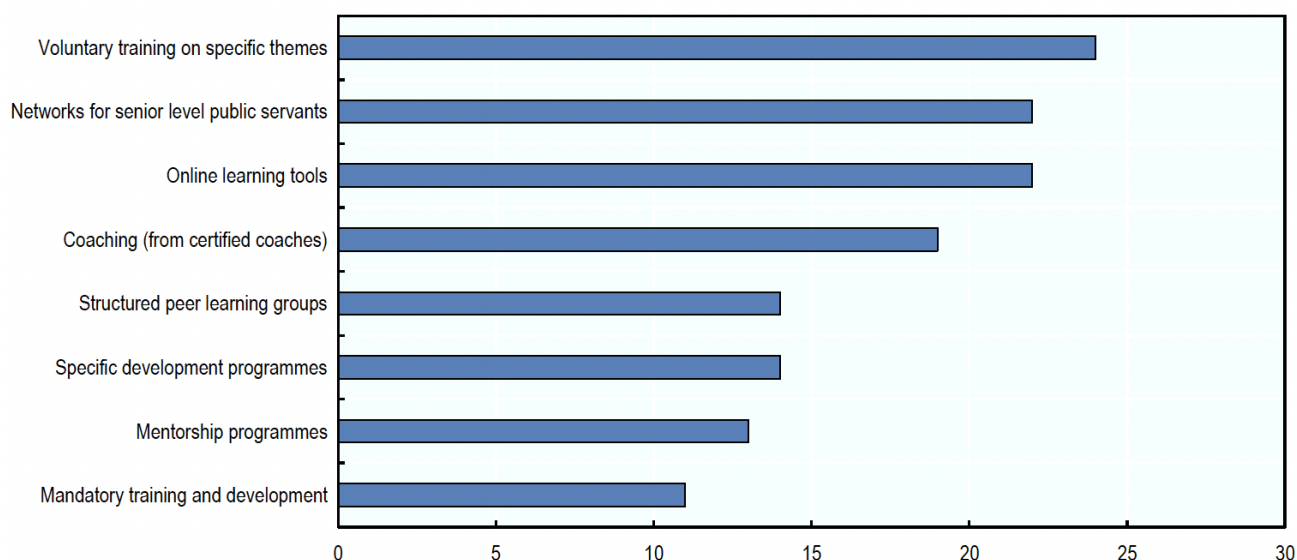
¹⁰⁰ Lafuente, M., Manning, N., & Watkins, J. (2012). *International Experiences with Senior Executive Service Cadres*. World Bank, Washington, D.C

¹⁰¹ Gerson, D. (2020). *Leadership for a High Performing Civil Service: Towards Senior Civil Service Systems in OECD Countries*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 40. OECD Publishing, Paris.

¹⁰² OECD. (2019). *Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability*. OECD Legal Instruments, OECD/LEGAL/0445.

A key goal in this respect is to develop a continuous learning culture. Just like in the case of performance management, developing a learning culture must start from the top.¹⁰³ For SCS, developing a learning culture requires integrating diverse tools that fit their demanding schedules and address their specific leadership challenges. Beyond training, such tools include continuous development and regular feedback, alongside a broader set of structured opportunities for learning such as tailored coaching, peer networks, and mobility. For example, peer networks can help break down organizational silos and expose leaders to diverse perspectives and novel solutions. Tailored coaching and peer learning can provide spaces for SCS to reflect on experiences, discuss mistakes, and receive targeted advice from those who understand their unique context.

Figure 8. Learning opportunities for SCS in OECD countries



Source: OECD (2021). Public Employment and Management 2021: The Future of the Public Service. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Notes:

- Based on responses from 34 OECD countries, in 2020.
- Original survey question: “Which of the following learning opportunities and peer support are available for senior level public servants”?

At the same time, L&D is not a stand-alone HRM function, but part of the broader HRM toolkit for SCS and the civil service in general. This means, that the broader L&D policy and program offerings are designed and targeted to develop the competencies civil servants need at different stages in their careers. In other words, executive development programs are part of a broader, differentiated but integrated set of learning and development program that targets civil servants at different stages of their career. For example, in the UK, L&D programs for senior managers are structured in levels, with different offerings for external hires (Civil Service Orientation), induction training for those promoted to new management grades, and

¹⁰³ Schnell, S., Mihes, D., Sobjak, A., van Acker, W. (2021). Performance management in the public administration: Seven success factors. EFI Insight-Governance. Washington, DC: World Bank.

selective leadership development offers tied to various career development schemes such as “Senior Leaders Scheme” or “Future Leaders Scheme” (pipeline management).¹⁰⁴

Such schemes also underscore that career management, performance management, and L&D should closely connected, to identify staff with leadership potential and systematically but selectively direct them towards targeted leadership development programs. For example, the Senior Executive Development programs of the five EU countries reviewed for this RAS¹⁰⁵ were intended for those *aspiring* to the highest-level positions in the civil service system, not necessarily those who had already reached the highest level. Their goal is to ensure that there is a cohort of leaders ready to step up to the highest level. Participants are selected based on a rigorous selection procedure, which often includes nomination from the employer ministry, a written application from the candidate, strict eligibility criteria, and interview by a high-level selection panel. Overall, linking the design the broader L&D program to other HRM process and tools, such as performance and career management, is crucial for identifying differentiated L&D needs and priorities (e.g. through bottom-up training needs assessments), and designing L&D programs which address those needs especially for target groups with complex needs and constraints such as SCS.

This interconnection between L&D and the broader management framework for SCS is also reflected in the institutional set-up for public sector HRM of many OECD countries. While the institutional set-up and types of training and development for HLCS differs to some degree by HLCS regime,¹⁰⁶ in (almost) all systems a central coordinating agency, typically located within the core public sector HRM department/agency, guides the alignment between executive development, core competencies and broader HRM policies for HLCS. Indeed, all five countries analyzed as part of this RAS have a distinct top-level group or office (e.g., department or agency) who oversees which oversees the development of the senior civil and public service. For example, in the Netherlands, Bureau ABD is responsible for recruiting and selecting SCS managers and acts as the central employer of the Top Management Group (TMG). Top civil servants are employed by the central bureau, even if they are assigned to different ministries. Having such a central employment or at least coordination body for SCS assists with mobility at the top level, cohesion and collective responsibility for action, and facilitates development.

Sometimes, but by no means always, the central HRM agency in charge of HLCS also has its own subordinated training institute which is involved in EDP programs among other providers. Most countries have a mix of SCS leadership training providers, not just government-owned or aligned training institutes, but also universities, NGOs, and private training providers (see Box 7 below for an example). Indeed, in all five countries reviewed for this RAS, the EDPs involve some delivery by external individuals or companies who have specific expertise, either to organize and facilitate the overall program or to deliver content, or sometimes a combination of both. In some cases, e.g. UK, the whole program is managed by a

¹⁰⁴ Government Skills and Curriculum Unit, & Leadership College for Government. (2022). Leading to Deliver: A Leadership and Management Prospectus. UK Civil Service.

¹⁰⁵ Finland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, and Ireland. See Annex 2.

¹⁰⁶ Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565. See also OECD (2017). *National Schools of Government: Building Civil Service Capacity*. OECD Public Governance Reviews. OECD Publishing, Paris.

private provider (selected by procurement). In other cases, elements of the program are delivered by individual experts and private providers, complemented by in-house inputs and co-ordination.

Box 7. US System of Senior Executive Development

The Office of Personnel Management is the agency in charge of HRM policies in the US federal system, including the competency framework for members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). Its Center for Leadership Development offers a variety of courses, as well as coaching, for various positions in the civil service (not just the SES). Some of the courses are tied to certificates, such as the LEAD certificate or agency-specific development programs. Offerings include broad leadership courses that touch on a variety of skills, as well as more specialized leadership and management courses (e.g. on leading organizations), often tied to/ including OPM Leadership 360 assessment and coaching.

For example, “Leadership for a Democratic Society” is a 160-hour course offered both online and in-person (residential format/retreat). “Using the U.S. Constitution as a principal foundation, it guides [participants] to understand the diverse goals of the government and the citizens it serves. The program is anchored in current leadership theory, OPM’s Executive Core Qualifications, and leadership competencies.” “Through a combination of larger class sessions and small teams, [participants] expand [their] professional networks and gain knowledge on leadership concepts, models, and tools from a variety of assessments, readings, case studies, written assignments, and individual presentations.”

The Center also houses the Federal Executive Institute. Today, the Institute is one among many providers of training and executive development, alongside universities (who offer both short trainings and full-length executive education degrees), specialized NGOs, such as the Partnership for Public Service and its Leadership Institute, and private training providers. Agencies can choose among different types of training and executive development offers.

Source: US Office for Personnel Management website. More information is available here <https://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/center-for-leadership-development/>

The existence of a strong institutional anchor for SCS management, including learning and development, alongside a diversified training ecosystem is crucial for the long-term success and sustainability of EDPs. In the medium- and long-term, for SCS L&D to be successful, governments need to be able to not just identify learning and development needs of SCS, but also develop a strategy to address these, and offer training and L&D opportunities that address these needs (see also Table 15 below).¹⁰⁷ This in turn also requires (i) substantial critical mass of HLCS to be trained, (ii) adequate resources made available for training, and (iii) perceptions that government employees (including SCS) are valuable resources that need to be continuously developed and that training is a useful way for such a development.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Van Wart, M., Hondeghem, A., Schwella, E., & Suino, P. (Eds.). (2015). *Leadership and Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

In other words, successful SCS L&D require a continuous learning culture coupled with capacity to tailor L&D opportunities to systemic and individual needs of SCS.

Table 15. Success factors for SCS training programs

Tends to produce lower-quality SCS training or weak programming	Tends to produce higher-quality SCS training or strong programming
Perceived lack of critical mass of SCS.	Substantial critical mass in terms of numbers and ability to train in centralized locations.
Lack of aggregation of different levels when critical mass is otherwise lacking.	Ability and willingness to aggregate when necessary to get sufficient critical mass.
Fiscal stress leads to insufficient funds for individuals, tendency to ignore SCS competency gaps.	Resources are made available to central government, agencies, and/or individuals for SCS training opportunities.
Inability of those in charge of training to address current needs coherently with resources available.	Ability of those in charge of training to address current needs coherently with resources available.
Perceptions of SCS that they do not need additional training tends to dry up critical mass for training; SCS might perceive need but be unwilling or unable to participate because of time demands.	Perceptions of SCS that additional training is useful in order to fill gaps, rejuvenate, change mindsets as government agendas evolve, etc.; SCS makes time for training because of training-education culture, necessity for continuation in service, training mandates.
Little ability to concretely identify individual training needs of SCS.	Ability of the system to identify needs for SCS or enable them to identify and address their needs themselves.
Lack of analysis of system needs.	Good identification of system needs and a resulting “game plan” for improvement.
Perceptions that government is the problem, that government is bloated, and that government needs to be cut leads to SCS training reductions.	Perceptions that government is the solution, that government institutions and personnel are valuable resources, and that government executives need to be constantly honed and improved as in the private sector.

Source: As seen in Van Wart, M., Hondeghem, A., Schwella, E., & Suino, P. (Eds.). (2015). *Leadership and Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Classroom and pedagogical training are only one tool for EDP or leadership development, both in the public and in the private sector, and it should generally be secondary to applied training. Training offerings for private and public sector leaders alike have diversified to become more individualized, interactive, and contextualized, with a greater emphasis on transparently tracking learning outcomes.¹⁰⁹ In practice, this means that the focus is on developing skills through applied and interactive case studies,

¹⁰⁹ Moldoveanu, M., & Narayandas, D. (2019). The Future of Leadership Development. *Harvard Business Review*, 97(2), 40–48.

simulations, individualized coaching as well as socializing (future) public sector leaders and cultivating attitudes suitable for their position and for creating public value. This was the case for all five programs reviewed for this RAS, whose goals were not just developing leadership skills and capacity but also developing an ‘esprit de corps’ and community or practice and cultivating a set of common public sector (leadership) values.

Given the centrality of SCS in leading public organizations and creating public value, one important and distinctive element of EDP for public sector leaders is they need to carefully balance societal, organizational, and personal elements in their design. While public and private sector leadership development training have many commonalities, especially when it comes to the development of individual leadership skills (e.g. through coaching), finding this balance is a crucial difference that needs to be considered when designing an EDP. SCS development programs should show how addressing societal and public sector environment and challenges is linked to organizational and personal development. For example, aiming for this balance can include:

- **Individualized coaching:** Some one-to-one confidential coaching, ideally based on a pre-test/assessment at entry and/ or incorporating 360° feedback. Typically, this should happen in the beginning because the insights gained from the coaching and feedback can act as a catalyst for deeper learning in subsequent modules. For example, the EDP program in the Netherlands starts with a Development Centre, used to assess baseline competencies and goals, run by an external agency.
- **Emphasizing and cultivating public values:** Unlike in the private sector, in the public sector the achievement of targets and the measurement of progress is not by reference to profit. Instead, in the public service the purpose of leadership is to create public value.¹¹⁰ Public Value(s) are not just abstract concepts - they are the ‘why’ of leadership in the public sector.
- **Acknowledging the political environment:** Senior public and civil servants operate in a highly political environment. They must exercise leadership in this context, including in relation to their supervisor and their minister. They must understand how leadership is exercised in a way that helps make progress but also maintains these important relationships. Political awareness is a key skill. They must also understand how stakeholders can be mobilized to make progress on policy implementation, and how the sometimes-competing interests of different stakeholders in the system can be managed.
- **Distinguishing between authority and leadership:** Because of their senior position in the hierarchy, senior public servants are invested by the state with significant formal authority. However, it should not be confused with leadership. Being in a position of authority is not the same as being “a leader”. The purpose of authority is to provide direction, protection, and order but exercising leadership requires much more than this. It requires vision and the ability to mobilize others towards this vision.¹¹¹
- **Emphasizing change, adaptation, and solving complex challenges:** Distinguishing between technical and adaptive challenges is important because the participants often frame their challenges, and the solutions to them as technical or operational, when in reality they are adaptive (cultural, behavioral). This is what distinguishes them as leadership challenges as opposed to management

¹¹⁰ Benington, J., & Moore, M. H. (Eds.). (2010). *Public Value: Theory and Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹¹¹ Van Wart, M. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 553–565.

challenges. Solving them needs experimentation and new learning in the system, all while balancing stability and continuity with the need for change and working with the constraints of the system.

- **Promoting empathy and “people skills:”** The challenge SCS face are complex also because they involve multiple stakeholders with competing interests. Understanding different perspectives is a critical skill related to both the diagnosis of and the solution to the challenge. This applies to both external and internal stakeholders. Motivating people and teams within the constraints of the public sector is a *sine qua non* of leadership. This does not mean ‘directing’ them, but rather developing a leadership culture at all levels within the ministry or agency and get staff at all levels to take appropriate responsibility and to exercise leadership.

Striking this balance requires not just careful curriculum design and a balanced mix of learning tools and pedagogical instruments, but also adapting structure, duration, and logistics of the EDP to the specific constraints SCS face and to the challenges of their work. For example, the five EDP reviewed for this RAS had between twenty and thirty participants per cohort. This allows an adequate balance between ensuring critical mass and promoting networking and peer-learning while still allowing an interactive design where all participants can be actively involved and bring in their own challenges and experiences into the discussion. To allow participation considering SCS busy schedules, all programs were offered over the period of several months (between six and ten), with a modular set-up (modules on specific topics spread out over this period of time), with activities between the modules (“homework” such as leadership challenges and coaching) to keep participants engaged. All programs had a significant residential component, even if some mixed it e.g. with online modules and resources. This is essential not just for ensuring active, “mental” presence during the training component of the EDP (i.e., focusing attention and ensuring participation) but also for promoting networking and creating the *esprit de corps* which is a common goal of EDP.

Given the complexity of EDP, their costs can be expected to be proportionally higher than L&D programs for general civil servants. In the five cases reviewed, the EDP ranged from EUR 8,000 to EUR 20,000 per participant. Typically, they are borne either by the institution which nominated the SCS for participation in the EDP or by the central hosting organization, or by a mix of both, sometimes with (limited) co-funding from the participants themselves. However, while costs are relevant for financial sustainability, this ultimately depends on the success and the political and administrative buy-in for the EDP, and its embeddedness into the broader management framework for SCS. In other words, whether funding is available on a continued basis is itself one indicator (among others) of the continuous learning culture which is crucial for leadership development in the public sector.¹¹² Building such a culture in turn also depends on clearly showcasing the value of EDP and L&D more broadly and ensuring that SCS are seen as valuable resources that need to be continuously developed.¹¹³

¹¹² Gerson, D. (2020). Leadership for a High Performing Civil Service: Towards Senior Civil Service Systems in OECD Countries. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 40. OECD Publishing, Paris.

¹¹³ Van Wart, M., Hondeghem, A., Schwella, E., & Suino, P. (Eds.). (2015). Leadership and Culture. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Research on the impact of EDP has shown that certain kinds of trainings, such as on transformational leadership, can indeed have a significant impact on leadership behaviors as well as on staff and organizational performance if carefully designed.¹¹⁴ Given that the impact of EDP is contingent on design, implementation, and the wider administrative and political environment, rigorous evaluations of EDP are crucial. These need to be also embedded in the broader SCS L&D and management environment, to allow for the adjustment and improvement of future iterations of the program. All five countries reviewed for this RAS use classical evaluation methods that are easy to implement, such as participant evaluations during and at the end of the program, participant presentations of leadership challenges to a jury of experts at the end of the program, as well as in some cases external evaluations of changes in individual skills and attitudes of participants (e.g. through development centers) and their benefits for the employing organizations of the SCS trained.

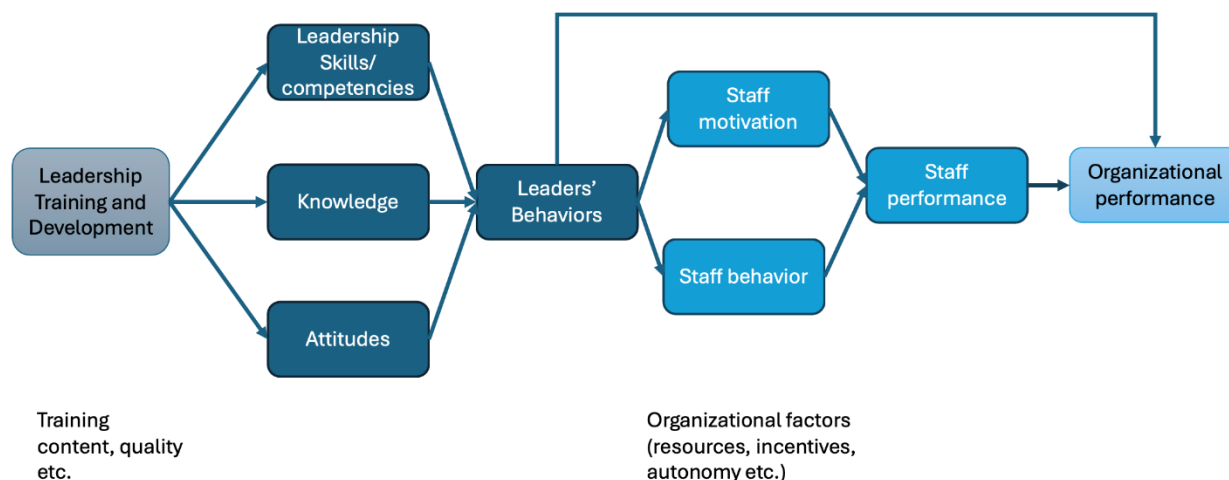
However, rigorous evaluation of EDP and broader L&D impact is perhaps the least developed and institutionalized function even in the EU countries reviewed for this study. This is in part due to methodological challenges, including the fact that the impact of training on individual and organization performance is mediated and attenuated by many individual and organizational-level variables¹¹⁵ (see an illustration of theory of change on the impact of training on performance in Figure 9 below). Nevertheless, the data and government analytics revolution offers ample opportunities for improved data collection and more rigorous impact evaluations of such programs.¹¹⁶ For example, civil servant surveys can be used to gather data on staff motivation and behavior and try to link it EDP or other L&D participation of senior managers, while administrative data can be used to assess the link to organizational performance. This, however, requires a reliable and institutionalized data collection process for L&D in the public administration, as well as a culture of evidence-based decision-making across the public administration, which in many cases still have to be introduced and/or consolidated.

¹¹⁴ See Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of Transformational Leadership Training on Attitudinal and Financial Outcomes: A Field Experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(6), 827–832; Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2005). *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press; and Jacobsen, C. B., Andersen, L. B., Bøllingtoft, A., & Eriksen, T. L. M. (2022). Can Leadership Training Improve Organizational Effectiveness? Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment on Transformational and Transactional Leadership. *Public Administration Review*, 82(1), 31–44.

¹¹⁵ Martin et al., 2021; Seidle et al., 2016) See Martin, R., Hughes, D. J., Epitropaki, O., & Thomas, G. (2020). In pursuit of causality in leadership training research: A review and pragmatic recommendations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 31(6) and Seidle, B., Fernandez, S., & Perry, J. L. (2016). Do Leadership Training and Development Make a Difference in the Public Sector? A Panel Study. *Public Administration Review*, 76(4), 603–613.

¹¹⁶ Rogger, D., Schuster, C. (2023). *The Government Analytics Handbook: Leveraging Data to Strengthen Public Administration*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Figure 9. Leadership Training Logic Model/Results Chain



Source: Authors' elaboration.

Analysis of OECD and EU country experience with executive development programs in the public sector

The Bank team conducted a review of recent or current executive development programs for senior public servants in selected EU countries. Based on background research on where such programs are at a high level of maturity and are embedded in the public administration, as well as on availability of and access to relevant information, the five countries selected were Finland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, and Ireland. Portugal's Instituto Nacional de Administração (INA) was also contacted but indicated that they were not in a position to provide information at this time.

The case studies are based on desk research and online interviews with key managers involved in the development and delivery of the programs. Where available, this was supplemented with more detailed information provided in course curricula and other documents.

Table 16 provides a summary of the findings for each analyzed country for key dimensions of the executive development programs. These are further detailed in the sections below and within each country case study.

Table 16. Summary of key findings from the case studies on executive development programs in selected EU and OECD countries

	Duration	Modules	Target Audience	Main Content	Delivery Methods
Finland	13 days over 10 months	4 + networking visits	Second tier civil servants (25- 30 per program)	Leadership, Personal Development, Innovation, International environment	Expert inputs, coaching, networks, site visits
United Kingdom	11 days over 12 months	5 (3 are residential)	High potentials at level just below Director General (30 per program)	Leadership, Digital, Communications, frontline services, equality and diversity	Expert inputs, action learning, frontline experiences, elective subjects, own organization challenges
Netherlands	15 days over 21 months	5 (including international visit) + start and end meetings)	High potentials aspiring to join the top level group of civil servants (up to 24 per program)	Leadership, personal development, societal and global issues, collaboration	Expert inputs, coaching, development centre, reflection, study visit, Harvard case method, own organization challenges
France	20 days over 12 months	11 modules	High potentials aspiring to join the top level group of civil servants (up to 130 per program)	Leadership, personal development, decision-making, innovation, digitization, global issues, environment, citizen engagement	Expert inputs, inputs from other public agencies including Army, coaching, crisis simulation, presentation to ‘jury’ of experts, Theatre Group
Ireland	8 days over 6 months	3 modules (all	One Level below	Leadership, systems thinking,	Expert inputs, coaching, Case

		residential, including one residential in another country)	Permanent Secretary	personal development, resilience, organizational and societal challenges	in Point methods, international residential, case studies, own challenges
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Key features of the executive development programs in the five OECD and EU countries

Context

In all the five countries reviewed the programs were specifically designed and delivered to meet the needs of high-level public servants, mostly at the level just below the top one or two grades, and it was expected that those selected for attendance had the potential to reach the top level. The programs were developed against a background of global and domestic uncertainty, complex public policy challenges, and the increasing need for innovation and citizen-focus in the delivery of public services.

All five countries have a distinct top-level group or office whose responsibilities include oversight of the development of the senior civil and public service. In the Netherlands, Bureau ABD is responsible for recruiting and selecting senior civil service (SCS) managers and acts as the central employer of the Top Management Group (TMG). While in the Netherlands the top civil servants are assigned to different ministries, their employer is the central bureau. This assists with mobility at the top level, cohesion and collective responsibility for action, and facilitates development.

One of the key objectives for most of these programs is to ensure that there is a cohort of leaders ready to step up to the highest level. For this reason, there are rigorous selection processes and/or strict eligibility criteria for participation. The programs are for high-potential leaders who already have a significant track-record of achievement.

While leadership is the primary focus (and in some cases the sole focus) of the top-level executive development programs, some countries also incorporate other elements of content such as related to globalisation and EU environment, technological development, policymaking, and citizen focus. In some countries e.g. Ireland, these other topics are the subject of separate courses.

Target audience and selection

In all cases the target group was the level just below top level of the civil service (Permanent Secretary or Director General). In some cases, the primary target group included those who had just been promoted to this level. While participants were generally at the same grade level, several programs mixed delegates from different parts of the public sector (central and local government, health, judiciary, agencies) and in some cases e.g. France, also included the private sector and NGOs.

In most cases there is quite a rigorous selection process that typically involves a nomination from the employer ministry or other organization, a written application from the candidate, the requirement to meet strict eligibility criteria, and then an interview by a high-level selection panel. The rigorous process of

selection makes participation to be considered a privilege for those selected, and an advantage for future promotion.

Most of the programs typically have between 20 and 30 participants but the French program has up to 130 participants generally work in sub-groups throughout the program.

Structure

The programs range in duration from 8 days to 20 contact days and take place over an elapsed period of several months (typically between 6 and 12 months) or, in the case of France, 21 months. The programs are modular ranging between three modules (Ireland) to eleven modules (France).

Between formal modules there are ongoing activities such as participants working on leadership challenges, or ongoing one-to-one coaching, or as in the Netherlands program, reflection opportunities.

The programs are delivered through a combination of plenary sessions (all participants together), sub-group work, and individual learning and reflection exercises.

Some of the programs e.g. Ireland, are fully residential ('stay over') where the program takes place at off-site venues including sometimes in another country. Some programs e.g. Finland and Netherlands, have some residential and some non-residential modules, and the French program does not have any residential element (because of the large size of the group). One of the key advantages of the residential element is to create esprit de corps among the group and the opportunity to engage in deeper learning, and to remove participants from their immediate work environment.

Content

There were two primary areas of emphasis that were common across the programs, and in some programs e.g. Ireland, these were the exclusive areas of focus.

The first relates to developing the leadership skills and leadership capacity to address organizational challenges and mobilise people for change and transformation in a public sector environment. The leadership models that are used emphasise systems approaches and collaborative leadership. The former is considered important in the context of senior public servants having to address policy and implementation challenges in a complex political-administrative environment, and the latter is important to help build cohesion among the senior civil service and to avoid silo-based activity. Communications, influencing, change management, systems thinking, decision-making, negotiation and having personal impact are all areas that are included in the leadership elements of different programs.

A practical public service focus is a feature of all programs. This is achieved by having current practitioners or those with extensive public service experience involved in delivery. Also, in some programs public service-specific case studies have been developed and are used as a teaching tool, and the leadership models are used to practice addressing public sector challenges e.g. focus on creation of public value. All programs require participants to work on some challenge from their organization or work environment throughout the process. In some cases (France, Ireland) participants must present the results of their challenge to an external panel made up of senior public servants and experts at the end.

The second main area of emphasis relates to personal development and self-awareness. This is on the basis that leaders need a deep level of self-awareness to lead effectively at senior levels of the public service. All programs have some assessment of current competencies and the identification of areas that each individual needs to develop. This is typically achieved through coaching, personal reflection exercises, and the opportunity to re-evaluate mindsets and belief systems during the program. The development of tools for personal resilience and self-management is also a feature of several programs. The Netherlands program starts with a Development Centre, used to assess baseline competencies and goals, and this is run by an external agency.

There was also an emphasis in several programs on understanding the global environment, with some programs involving international visits e.g. Netherlands. There were also elements that required participants to work or engage with front-line services, such as the Netherlands program which uses a Hackathon to design innovative solutions for community-based organisations, or the French program that focuses on citizen participation.

The French program is the only one to feature a specific module on the technological environment and digitisation, but in other countries this is more typically the subject of separate and optional training. However, innovation in public service is a topic included in several programs so this can incorporate technology as an element. The French program also includes a module on ecological and environmental issues and the role of public sector leadership in these areas.

Collaboration and the building of a community of practice at the senior level was a feature of most programs. Participants are encouraged to network and maintain these networks after the program has ended.

Delivery methods

A wide range of delivery methods are deployed across the various programs. However, in general the approaches to development tend to be interactive, experiential, and participative, with highly skilled facilitators and inputs from experts on specific topics. The feedback from interviewees was that in-person delivery was most effective for this type of program and that online delivery was only used in limited circumstances.

It is worth emphasising the importance of experiential learning on leadership programs. Many of the programs incorporate this approach, and the objective is to achieve deeper and long-term learning that goes beyond “tips and tricks”. The value of this experiential approach is not just the opportunity to change behaviours and mindsets to deliver effective leadership at the highest level, but to prepare leaders for the challenges associated with transformation and change, both personal and organizational. Experiential learning of this type has a lasting impact but also requires highly skilled facilitators to create a safe and trusting environment to undertake these personal challenges.

There are also examples of other innovative delivery approaches. As noted earlier the Netherlands host a Hackathon to use design thinking to develop innovative solutions for selected non-profits and community organizations, where the CEO of the organization later gives feedback on experience with implementation of the solution. The French and Irish programs use theatre companies to deliver a module to develop communication and leadership skills. The French program also uses the French army to deliver teaching on decision-making under pressure and uses a crisis simulation exercise.

Individual coaching is a feature of all programs. Each participant has access to an expert coach who provides feedback on areas that need development and helps them to develop and implement an individual action plan. Some coaching e.g. Ireland, uses a dedicated online diagnostic instrument to help assess and then develop specific leadership competencies. Coaching sessions are both online and in-person and in some cases, coaches also attend at plenary sessions of the programs to observe the participants.

As noted above, some programs include trips to other countries and meetings with international civil servants to enhance awareness of global challenges and develop international connections.

Several of the programs require that participants deliver formal presentations on the outcomes of their leadership challenges to a panel of experts and senior civil servants at the conclusion of the program.

Action learning sets, peer consulting, and ‘fireside chats’ are some of the methods used to facilitate peer engagement and collaboration. Most programs use some type of case study, including using the Harvard case teaching method.

It is also noteworthy that all of the programs reviewed involve some delivery by external individuals or companies who have specific expertise, either to organize and facilitate the overall program or to deliver content, or sometimes a combination of both. In some cases, e.g. UK, the whole program is managed by a private provider (selected by procurement). In other cases, elements of the program are delivered by individual experts and private providers, complemented by in-house inputs and co-ordination.

Costs

While the costs of programs were not available in all cases, generally the cost of attendance ranged from €8000 to €20,000 per participant. In some cases, e.g. Ireland, the fee was payable by the participant’s organization, while in other cases e.g. Netherlands the cost was fully absorbed by the central hosting organization (based on subscriptions). In other cases, there was a combination of central funding supplemented by a fee per participant. However, it was clear that none of these programs are delivered to achieve a profit, but rather to cover costs.

The programs are generally quite expensive because of their longer duration, the need for in-person tuition and sometimes residential costs, and the use of external companies and experts.

Evaluation

In all cases it was recognised that evaluation of the impact of the programs currently presents a challenge. Most of the programs use participant evaluations during and at the end of the program. Some use external companies to undertake an independent evaluation, and in Finland the Ministry of Finance has conducted an evaluation. External evaluations typically supplement the feedback of participants with the input of the sponsoring leaders (‘what has been the impact and change you have observed’), and the Netherlands also uses a Development Centre approach to monitor progress.

Both France and Ireland use the progress made on leadership challenges brought by participants and then presented to a ‘jury’ of experts as a means of monitoring impact and achievement.

Detailed case studies on the executive development programs in the selected EU and OECD countries

Finland: Future Leaders Program and Renewal

Context

Finland has long experience of leadership development for the senior officials since the early 1990s. Over 30 years ago a national strategy group comprising heads of ministries, senior executives from the private sector and representatives of municipalities was established to identify the capacity and development needs of senior civil servants. This was a successful initiative, and a similar initiative is currently under consideration.

The development strategy for senior civil and public servants is set in the context of overall government strategies and objectives, which include promoting innovation and renewal of culture. There is a senior civil service group that is supported by a management support unit at the Ministry of Finance, and this facilitates dialogue and oversees development of the group.

Finland's public administration is highly decentralized and comprises 12 ministries and 70 agencies.

The group of top civil servants' numbers 130 and includes permanent secretaries and the two levels below that. There is open recruitment to senior levels in the civil service. Most senior civil servants are career civil servants although there are now politically appointed state secretaries and developing a productive relationship between these two groups is a current issue. Top civil servants are appointed for terms of 5 years that can be extended to 7 years.

Municipalities represent a larger sector than central government with over 80,000 employees. Directors and Mayors are frequently included in leadership programs.

The 70 agencies of state represent very diverse groups such as the police service, the national statistics office, and this diversity of roles can be a challenge when designing leadership development that caters for all.

The Ministry of Finance has an overarching policy role over all sectors.

There is no central competency model although specific competencies are defined to support recruitment to top roles.

There is also an objective of promoting mobility among the top leaders to broaden experience and enhance accountability, but this can be difficult to achieve.

Program objectives

One of the primary development programs for senior public servants has been the Future Leaders Program (FLP). The objectives of the program are to

- Strengthen professional management culture and strategic skills
- Strengthen shared values and common corporate culture and networks

- Advance brave leadership for new public management and agile responsiveness to the future challenges.

The Future Leaders Program has been replaced by a different program called Renewal. This new program has only recently been commenced but is described briefly later.

Target group and selection for the FLP

The target group is the immediate subordinates to the top managers and newly appointed top managers. Participation is mainly confined to the civil service as having a homogenous group was considered important.

There were 11 programs delivered between 2008-2018 with excellent feedback.

In total 300 participants attended which helped to create a special and sustainable network at senior level.

Each ministry nominated candidates, and each candidate prepared a portfolio that set out their previous development experience (this was considered an advanced program so candidates had to have attended some previous development program), career plans, learning objectives etc. These portfolios were considered as part of the selection process. Every candidate was interviewed.

Structure, delivery and content for the FLP

The program was ordered and paid for by the Ministry of Finance but implemented by HAUS together with its partners and subcontractors.

The program was delivered over a total of 13 days, over an elapsed period of 10 months, with between 25 and 30 people per program.

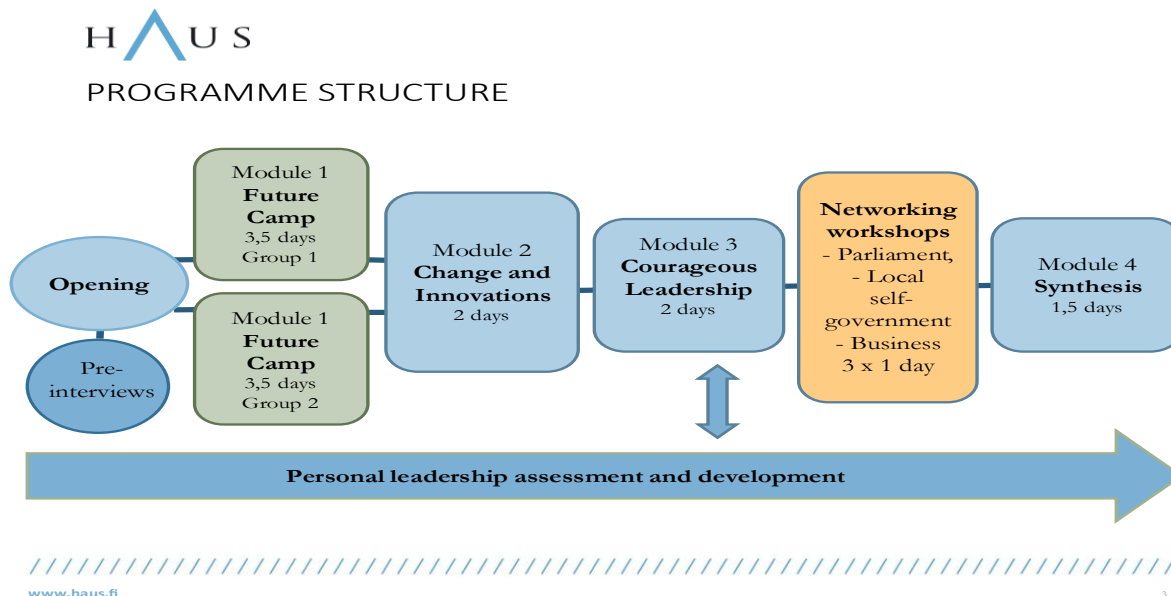
The core of the program is based on developing leadership skills but also considering the need for innovation, and the international environment.

As part of the program participants were assigned real-world challenges by permanent secretaries to work on during the program. They have to present progress on these at the end.

The content of the modules is reflected in the diagram below, but included leadership, considering the international environment (international speakers and visits), private and voluntary sector visits and placements.

Some modules were residential which was important for network building. All elements are in-person.

Figure 10. Structure of the executive development program for senior civil servants in Finland



Source: HAUS website.

Evaluation of the FLP

Evaluations were conducted by means of participant feedback but also periodic external formal evaluation by the Ministry of Finance (using an external contractor).

Updating the FLP: Renewal

Since 2018 the Future Leaders Program has been replaced by a different program called Renewal. This has been developed by SITRA, the Finnish Innovation Fund and is also part funded by the Ministry of Finance. It is aimed at top leaders from all parts of the public sector and one of the main objectives is to enhance collaboration and collaborative leadership, as they wish to encourage leaders to work outside silos.

The training had a dual focus: building knowledge and skills for the future; and enabling leaders to create the future together.

The training program includes six modules and a total of 11 contact teaching days.

The themes of the training modules are:

- Global phenomena and the public sector's ability to renew.
- New operating models for complex phenomena.
- Alternative systematic approaches from around the world (international study trip).
- From public administration to service.
- Leading people and renewing the leadership culture.

- Putting new practices and lessons learned from experiments into practice.

Under the auspices of SITRA there were six courses delivered that attracted 140 senior civil servants from central government. The training groups were compiled cross-governmentally so that each course included representatives from different ministries and agencies. In addition to expert presentations, the training included workshops, practical interim assignments that support learning, peer learning and practice experiments related to the current challenges of administration and enabling leadership.

Costs

It is estimated that the cost of each program is €200,000 (the Future Leaders Program was delivered at a lower cost). Now the Renewal program has been taken over by HAUS and it is expected that it will now be funded by HAUS or funded by participant fees.

The UK: Directors Leadership Program (DLP)

Context

The Leadership College (LC) for Government is part of the new Government Campus for Skills. It is the physical and virtual location for civil service and public sector leaders to learn.

Currently the LC is developing a paper that will set out the standards expected of civil servants at the highest level in terms of behaviour, skillset etc. The purpose is to bring together several different current frameworks and to integrate management and leadership to a greater extent.

Objectives

The main desired outcomes from the program are to

- Master systems thinking and leadership
- Connect to the frontline of public service and citizens
- Operate effectively in government.
- Communicate effectively.
- Respect and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Lead and manage well.

Target group and selection

The Directors Leader Program (DLP) is aimed at Directors, who are at the level just below Director General and who would be expected to progress to the next level. The one-year program offers high-potential directors in the Civil Service an opportunity to strengthen the skills needed for the most senior roles in the service.

There is a two-stage selection process. Stage One is a written application by the candidate based on a statement of Purpose, Potential and Values with the requirement of an endorsement from the Permanent Secretary. If an application passes stage one, Stage Two involves an interview by a panel of senior officials/experts.

About 30 delegates are selected for each program. Delegates are mainly from central government but now they are looking at extending to wider government.

Structure, delivery and content

The program is delivered in five modules by the Blavatnik College at Oxford University over an elapsed period of approximately 12 months. The overall focus is on collaboration and systems leadership. Collaboration is critical because too much activity can be within silos and yet many complex challenges in government require cross-government working and leadership. But this can be difficult to “sell” to delegates as they are concerned that when it comes to promotion interviews collaborative working will not be recognised.

There are currently five modules with three in-person and two virtual, but there are plans to make the virtual sessions also in-person as in-person is considered more effective. The three in-person modules are residential (overnight stays) and comprise 9 days of the total 11 days (2 days are currently online). There are also meetings of the Action Learning Sets, and also opportunities for frontline experience (two per program). These frontline experiences are opportunities to engage with communities, citizens and public services. The program organises meaningful engagements and creates a safe space to reflect on the value of these experiences, shaping the understanding of the role of a public leader.

Alongside the core program there are electives which are not mandatory – for example “global insight” sessions.

Overall, the core program focuses on leadership, collective action, as well as the legal, economic, social and technological environment, as well as futures thinking.

Action Learning Sets that focus on leadership challenges feature throughout the program.

Costs

The main supplier on behalf of LC is Blavatnik College at Oxford University, with other subsidiary suppliers (all selected through a procurement process). The cost per delegate is approximately £20,000.

Evaluation

Evaluation is currently mainly by feedback from participants, but it is recognised that this is an area that needs to be strengthened.

The Netherlands: Top Management Group (TMG) Program

Context

Bureau ABD is the central management development organisation for senior civil service members in the Netherlands, which is called ABD. It aims to promote quality in the administrative executive levels of government departments. The office is responsible for recruiting and selecting SCS managers and acts as the central employer of the Top Management Group and is also responsible for the development of managers at this level, and those aspiring to this level.

The ABD comprises about 800 senior officials at Director General, Secretary General, and Director level. The Top Management Group comprises approximately 100 at the Director General and Secretary General Level. These are responsible for 12 government ministries and some of the major offices. ABD was originally established, inter alia to improve collaboration and co-ordination at the top level of administration.

Target group and selection

The program is aimed at those at Director level who are considered to have the potential to reach the Director General or Secretary General level. Recruitment is by nomination from the ministry/agency, then a written application from the candidate that sets out their potential and demonstrates that they meet certain criteria e.g. eligibility for promotion to next level, and then a selection interview. There are always more nominations than places available.

Structure, delivery and content

The program is delivered over an elapsed period of 1 year and 9 months, and typically has between 20-24 candidates attending each program.

The program is delivered over about 13 days which includes an international study visit and all five modules are in-person. Online elements were considered not to work well.

The program commences with a Development Centre. Development Centres are typically used to assess baseline competency levels and competency development needs through questionnaires, diagnostic tools, etc. They yield data that assist with defining the needs to be addressed on the leadership program and evaluating progress. In the Netherlands case, the centre is managed by an external agency and there are also sessions held during the program and at the end.

There are four main themes explored in the modular approach: Global, Societal, Organisational, and Self. While leadership is a key theme throughout there are also other factors explored, such as understanding international practice by visiting another country e.g. recent program included visits to London. Other issues, such as technology environment, are not explored on this program but are addressed in other programs.

Approximately 50 percent of the program is designed and delivered by in-house experts and 50 percent by external experts. External experts are procured for 4 years before another procurement process is held.

The Case Method developed by Harvard University is used in the program, and a consultant from the Kennedy School of Government has developed, and now teaches, a case which is based on the Netherlands.

There is coaching by qualified coaches throughout the program. There is also a 24-hour get-together session when the group intensively examines a case study. They also incorporate “fireplace sessions” to facilitate some reflection on progress to date, challenges being encountered etc. Participants are encouraged to bring their own organizational challenges to the program, but this is an area that needs to be strengthened, including to facilitate evaluation.

Cost

While the overall cost of the program was not available, it was indicated that ministries and agencies already pay for all the costs of Bureau ABD, and so development programs such as this one are funded from these subscriptions.

Evaluation

Currently evaluation is by review by delegates, including a review at the end of the program. However, it is recognised that evaluation of impact has to be strengthened.

France: Cycle des hautes études de service public/ Cycle of Advanced Public Service Studies (CHESP)

Context

The CHESP program, the Cycle of Advanced Public Service Studies, is a very high-level training program intended for future senior state executives. It has been offered since 2021 to senior executives in the civil service, health and hospital directors, magistrates in the judiciary, the territorial public service, and some private sector (mainly NGO-type organisations).

Target group and selection

The program is aimed at those just below the highest level but with the potential for promotion. Candidates must be nominated by their ministry or organisation, and applications are considered by the central governance and management body for the French civil service, the *Délégation interministérielle à l'encadrement supérieur de l'État* (DIESE), and they approve selection. There are typically 130 participants on each program, and the program is delivered for a new cohort each year. The program is implemented by the *Institut national du service public* (INSP) – which replaced the *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) as the development school for French civil servants – in collaboration with other state bodies and private sector contractors and coaches.

Structure, delivery and content

The program consists of 20 days in-person attendance (not residential because of large number) over 11 modules that is delivered over 12 months. Delegates mostly work in sub-groups of between 12 and 30, depending on the topic, and there are plenaries to help with networking of the whole group of 130. Previously some elements were delivered online but this format did not work well.

To describe the structure, they use the three concepts of Grow, Know, and Open Up.

There is a core leadership element delivered over three modules. This focuses on helping individuals to know themselves better, how to deploy leadership strategies in an organizational context, and how to express (Influence, persuade, communicate- they use a Theatre Group to deliver a workshop). These core modules are delivered by a private company (currently Turning Point) selected through procurement.

These core modules are supported by other modules that involve a variety of pedagogical methods:

- There is a 2-day Hackathon when delegates use design-led thinking to address challenges identified by two or three community or voluntary organizations. Over 2 days, working in groups, they design and innovate and present their solutions. Later in the program the CEOs of these organizations make a presentation on what ideas have been implemented. The Hackathon is organised and delivered by a private company (currently Big Bloom).
- There is a module on decision making where personnel from the French army introduce a decision - making approach and delegates practice using this in an administrative context. There is a crisis simulation exercise to support learning about decision-making in a crisis.
- There is a digitization module where they consider issues such as Artificial Intelligence and its application and cybersecurity.
- There is a module on ecological and environmental issues and how public sector leaders can contribute. This involves presentations and roundtable dialogue with experts.
- There is also a module on citizen participation when delegates consider the citizen participation elements of their projects.

Some of the modules are presented in partnership with other ministries or government agencies such as the Digital Directorate or the Ministry of Ecological Transition.

Each delegate is expected to bring a challenge or project to the program on which they will work and make progress throughout the program.

On the final module they must make a presentation to a “jury” comprised of high-ranking officials, explaining how they have undertaken either an organisational or personal transformation as part of the program. The best presentations are given a special award, and all candidates are awarded certificates.

Costs

The overall cost of the program was not available, but it was indicated that while each organisation pays a fee for their delegate, the program is heavily subsidised by central government.

Evaluation

There is no external evaluation but delegates complete surveys and give feedback at the end of each module and at the end of the program.

Ireland: The Leadership Challenge Program

Context

In 2007 the Senior Civil Service asked the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) to develop a leadership program to develop those at the level immediately below Permanent Secretary level. The Leadership Challenge Program for senior public servants was developed in 2007 and has been delivered for the past 17 years. It is aimed at the level just below Permanent Secretary, or their equivalent, and is open to senior civil servants, health and local government officials, and state agencies. One of the objectives is to promote understanding and collaboration across sectors, but the primary objective is to develop leadership capacity.

The program was designed following the review of senior executive development programs available from leading business schools such as IMD, INSEAD and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Ultimately the model used at Harvard was deemed best suited as it had a primarily public service focus.

From the beginning the intention was not to develop a “once-off” program, or to aim the program solely at the development of individual competencies, but rather to develop over time a community of practice and learning at the top levels of the Irish public service, and to provide a common language, framework, and set of principles for tackling leadership challenges. The focus was on developing organizational and personal leadership skills and to develop leaders to operate in a complex administrative and political environment.

Target group and selection

The Program is aimed at those just below Secretary General level (Assistant Secretary). To be eligible to attend candidates had to be at this senior grade level and had to be nominated by the Permanent Secretary. There are typically between 20 and 25 delegates per program.

Structure, delivery and content

The program was designed and developed collaboratively by faculty at the Institute of Public Administration and leadership development experts at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

It became clear from an early stage that a program designed along traditional lines and relying primarily on a lecture format of delivery, or on content that traditionally may have been included in leadership programs, would not be sufficient to meet the objectives that had been set. The core of the approach adopted for the program was based on the concept of adaptive leadership developed by Heifetz, Linsky and colleagues at Harvard University. Adaptive leadership recognizes that organizations embody collective systems, and that therefore leadership is not a role played all of the time by a few senior people, but rather an activity that people at all levels of the organization have the opportunity to engage on a daily basis.

The structure of the program had to be designed to enable the participation of senior people for whom time was limited. The program was designed to be residential, intensive, delivered over three short modules in a total of 8 days, with two individual coaching sessions. It was very specifically designed to address practical and personal development issues, since almost all the participants already had a high level of academic qualifications. It is delivered once or twice per year depending on demand.

Three key approaches/themes were incorporated in the design to achieve the learning objectives:

- **Real problems, real people, real outcome.** In the consultation process it was clear that the program would have to be designed with real, current, and relevant challenges in the Irish public sector to the fore, and that there was an expectation that the program would deliver real change outcomes in respect of these challenges. Therefore, the program was designed so that rather than have workplace challenges incidental or secondary to the teaching, as in many traditional programs, these challenges were put ‘up front’ and centre stage. The challenges brought to the program by participants had first to be approved

and mandated by the senior civil servant in the organisation, typically at permanent secretary level. This provided participants with a major incentive to make progress on the challenge during the program.

- **Recreating the dynamics of complex systems.** The program was designed to re-create complex system dynamics in real time, which sometimes involved working in the plenary group (typically 25 people), sometimes in small case groups, or sometimes with individuals. Participants learned how to use the adaptive leadership model to create change in public service systems, always understanding that creating greater public value was the end goal. Adaptive leadership was the “how”, but public value was the “why”. Typically, the small case group and individual learning time allowed for deeper and more reflective work, whereas the plenary sessions allowed participants to explore risk and relationship in a more complex, and sometimes more confusing and challenging, setting. In both exercises and classroom discussions participants were challenged about their assumptions, their perceptions and behaviours, challenged to gain greater insight into their own motivations and values, and to work at the edge of their comfort zone. This work in the classroom required skilled facilitation as it raised some profoundly important, and sometimes difficult, questions for both individuals and the group.
- **Learning about self.** Exercising leadership to promote change in a complex and challenging environment requires that leaders have a very high degree of self-awareness. Therefore, in addition to the approaches just described, there was an emphasis on helping participants to better align their own motivations and values with their work life. Every participant had to undertake a 360-degree leadership diagnostic (using the online Leadership Effectiveness Analysis instrument) where they received formalised feedback from direct reports, peers, and their boss. Coaches then worked with individuals in coaching sessions, supporting learning from the program, providing feedback and observations on the individual’s participation in plenary and other sessions, and through a confidential one to one coaching session providing feedback on the data from the leadership diagnostic questionnaire. This provided the basis for developing, and later reviewing, an action plan.

The small group work and individual coaching, the work in plenary sessions, and the inter-modular application of learning in the workplace, all combined to provide a very intensive developmental experience. As noted earlier, while it often took some time for individuals to fully process the learning, the outcome was learning at a deeper level that sustained over time.

The final module focused on self-management and resilience and presenting the results of their projects to an external panel of experts.

Over the years a network of senior officials was developed across the system that had shared the same development experience and now had a shared model for addressing leadership challenges.

The program was delivered by a combination of internal and external leadership experts, including input from the Kennedy School. The Olivier Mythodrama company was also engaged to use theatre to support leadership development. Two coaches are assigned, who deliver individual coaching sessions but also attend the program to observe the delegates and this assists with feedback during coaching.

Costs

All modules are residential, including one module outside Ireland (typically UK or USA/Harvard). The costs of the program are €7700 per participant payable by the sponsoring organization. Overall, the fees from the program covered the cost of delivery.

Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out by the participants at the end of the program, and the impact of the changes made as a result of their work on their leadership challenges was also evaluated by the sponsoring organisation. Permanent Secretaries were contacted to review what changes had been observed. The action plan agreed with coaches was reviewed.

Annex 3. Summary of findings from interviews

The Bank team conducted a series of thirty-nine one-to-one structured interviews with civil servants from across the central public administration to gain insights into the challenges and priorities related to L&D for the senior civil service. Overall, the main objectives of the interviews were to identify the different profiles and dimensions of work of HLCS across the public administration; specific job-related challenges for HLCS and corresponding competency gaps; the constraints and enablers in the public administration for HLCS to build, develop, retain and apply the required competencies and perform their respective roles; and job dynamics with the political leadership, subordinated staff, and other stakeholders (e.g., citizens). The interviews were conducted between August and October 2024, using five structured protocols, to differentiate between (i) political leadership, (ii) managers, (iii) technical staff, (iv) high level civil servants, (v) personnel from the NIA. Interviewees came from fourteen institutions from the central public administration and from all levels of seniority in the civil service, as follows:

- **Political decision-makers:** eight interviews.
- **High level civil servants:** eleven interviews.
- **Directors general and deputies:** three interviews.
- **Management-level civil servants (except DGs):** eight interviews.
- **Technical-level civil servants:** nine interviews

Interviews with HLCS revealed that they do recognize the importance of L&D and see the need for continuous learning and further L&D opportunities. First, given the frequent legal changes and reform efforts, interviewees highlighted the need for regular knowledge updates through short ‘refresher sessions’ at least every 2-4 years. Second, they also highlighted the usefulness of structured opportunities for networking and exchange of experience among HLCS in different institutions as well with international peers. Third, in terms of areas for further development, many named leadership and ‘soft’ skills, such as team-building and communication, alongside more ‘technical’ knowledge such legislation, financial management, and digitalization.

All interviewees¹¹⁷ highlighted that HLCS play complex roles that require a complex set of competencies – among the general competencies, leadership and management emerged as important priorities. Even respondents who saw leadership as falling within the remit of political decision-makers acknowledged that HLCS need to be able to make strategic decisions, coordinate and motivate teams, and overcome resistance to change, all while navigating competing demands and maintaining administrative stability. This involves not only effective communication but also mediating and managing conflicts constructively and reconciling political mandates with administrative constraints. Strategic vision, analytical thinking, and the ability to synthesize complex information were also mentioned as important for HLCS.

¹¹⁷ A number of thirty-nine interviews were conducted with HLCS, management and technical civil servants, as well as political decision makers.

While technical, legal and financial, skills were named as foundational, interviewees also highlighted the importance of soft skills, with some emphasizing that developing these has been comparatively neglected. Technical skills include a thorough understanding of legal and financial principles and tools. Interpersonal and relational competencies, including communication with internal and external stakeholders, negotiation, and empathy were however also considered important by most of the interviewees. Emotional intelligence and adaptability were also named by some interviewees as needed to enable HLCS to foster positive team dynamics, manage stress, and respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

Externally facing and future oriented competencies were also emphasized by many respondents as critical. Digital skills were debated in scope, but in their more advanced version included an understanding of how digitalization processes can help streamline workflows, reducing bureaucracy, and driving efficiency in public service delivery. And while opinions were divided on how much sector-specific specialization is necessary, some respondents underlined the value HLCS can generate by engaging with international and European discussions and best practices in their areas and in administrative reform more generally. To this end, proficiency in foreign languages and understanding of European and global governance structures were considered necessary for roles that require cross-border cooperation and alignment with international standards.

In terms of approaches to L&D, responses to the interviews emphasized the importance of practical and interactive teaching methods. These would include case studies, simulations, and role-playing exercises to enable participants to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world administrative challenges. It was suggested that training should be led by practitioners with significant field experience to ensure the relevance and applicability of the content. Additionally, respondents pointed to the necessity of periodic updates on legislative changes and short, specialized courses in emerging areas such as digital governance and crisis management to maintain and enhance professional competence. Networking opportunities, exchanges between institutions, and international collaborations were also seen as key avenues for learning and professional development.

Annex 4. Detailed description of the process used to develop a vision and roadmap for the development of the corps of senior civil servants in Romania

The Bank and NACS teams organized three workshops in November 2024 to develop a common vision and roadmap for future L&D policies and programs for the senior civil service. Each workshop lasted up to five hours and was attended by between twenty to thirty participants, which included HLCS, management-level civil servants, HR experts from the private sector, members of academia and from the NGO sector. Each of the three workshops achieved a specific objective, as follows:

- First workshop, held on 7 November 2024 focused on describing the profiles of HLCS, anchored in the current and future needs of public administration.
- Second workshop, held on 15 November 2024 focused on identifying and validating key competencies in relation to these profiles.
- Third workshop on 22 November 2024 focused on defining the architecture of an EDP that could support the development of the identified competencies.

The methodology and process employed in each workshop is detailed below.

The workshops resulted in analytical input that was used to inform the design of the executive development program proposed in this report. The following results were obtained:

- (i) **Ten profiles or facets of the life of HLCS each with a brief description.** Generated based on activities identified by participants, these profiles are considered representative of the professional life of HLCS, even though their relevance may vary depending on the field of activity and/or the specific institution they belong to. These are provided in full in Annex 5.
- (ii) **Competencies associated with each profile, detailed at the level of skills, knowledge, and attitudes.** Collectively, the 10 profiles encompass 92 skills, 35 areas of knowledge, and 32 attitudes. The competencies identified in these workshops align with the general competency framework applicable to civil servants in Romania.
- (iii) **A prioritization of preferred training methods** in relation to the identified competencies and the professional context of HLCS.
- (iv) **Guidelines for building a community of HLCS.** Recognizing collaboration among senior public officials as a key driver of interinstitutional cooperation and knowledge transfer, the following were validated:
 - The usefulness of an online hub, a social network through which members can access each other's profiles.
 - The opportunity for activities aimed at enhancing community cohesion, such as periodic meetings, policy hackathons, or team-building sessions
 - The introduction of reward mechanisms to support a reputation-based system within the senior public officials' body.

(v) **General principles of the training program architecture.** Based on the competencies associated with HLCS profile and the identified training methods, the following aspects were observed and validated with participants in plenary sessions:

- The need a training program focused on practical applications, highlighted both by the clear dominance of skills among competencies and by the preferred training methods.
- The need for a highly interactive program, involving interaction either with internationally recognized experts sharing their experience or through direct collaboration among senior public officials and with supervisors of collaborative projects.
- The focus on job relevance of the program, to connect the training program with existing experience and typical activities of HLCS, by addressing real case studies, fostering mutual learning, and recognizing the relevance of mentoring.

As a result, participants tested and validated in plenary discussions the possibility of structuring the program based on the identified profiles. This option would imply that

- The program can be structured into training modules strongly anchored in the specifics of each profile (modules may vary in duration).
- For each module, an interdisciplinary team of trainers defines and supervises a learning experience closely aligned with the case studies associated with that profile, combining interactive elements (such as mutual learning workshops, case studies, team projects, and working sessions) focused on developing skills and attitudes, with more traditional teaching methods aimed at knowledge transfer (such as online or in-person courses).
- A possible "mix & match" approach: Some modules could be considered core (essential), while others could be optional, allowing senior public officials to choose based on their learning needs.
- Training participants could play an important role in identifying case studies that form the basis of the practical experience, by providing examples from their own work. Additionally, the program could develop a case study repository, where the most relevant cases are carried forward into sessions in subsequent years.

First workshop, 7 November 2024

The workshop held on November 7 consisted of a series of working sessions, both in groups and in plenary, with the following specific objectives:

- Capturing participants' perceptions regarding the role, competencies, career trajectory, motivation, organizational and societal impact of HLCS, among others.
- Mapping the current activities of HLCS, covering both intra- and extra-organizational tasks and addressing both managerial-administrative and leadership dimensions. The goal was to describe, as concretely as possible, the typical activities of HLCS in all their variety.
- Exploring, in working groups, the change factors that may, in the future, bring modifications to the activities of HLCS. The set of change factors was developed in advance based on various sources and presented to workshop participants in the form of cards. The set includes exogenous forces (e.g., the impact of AI on society, geopolitical risks, demographic changes, etc.) and new paradigms in public

administration (e.g., collaborative governance, anticipatory governance, etc.). During the session, participants were also able to add new factors that were not initially included in the list.

- Outlining profiles of HLCS, based on previous sessions, that synthetically and suggestively reflect the activities identified by participants as typical for HLCS. These profiles were grouped according to their nature. Essentially, each profile highlights a particular "emphasis" in the work of HLCS, without implying that they are completely separate or distinct from one another.

Second workshop, 15 November 2024

During the second workshop, the working groups aimed to validate, refine, and expand the list of competencies associated with HLCS' profiles. The consolidated list in Annex 5 is the result of this session.

This workshop used as input the set of ten profiles identified in the previous session. Additionally, in preparation for this second event, the facilitation team associated each profile with a series of competencies (skills, knowledge, and attitudes), leveraging various studies and consultations, including recent interviews conducted by the World Bank team with numerous stakeholders (see Annex 3). The general competency framework for civil servants was used as input to the discussions and a reference to develop the more specific competencies for HLCS.

Third workshop, 22 November 2024

The workshop held on November 22 included a group working session accompanied by the presentation of results, followed by a plenary discussion session. The workshop aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Exploring and assessing the relevance of a set of training methods.
- Exploring possible components of the training and learning program architecture dedicated to HLCS.
- Identifying measures and key elements that could serve as the foundation for building a community of HLCS with training-related objectives.

To support these objectives, the event followed these steps:

- Presentation of results from previous workshops: the ten profiles of HLCS and the competencies associated with each, to serve as a reference point in discussions on training needs and methods.
- Presentation of various training and development programs for senior public officials inspired by international experiences.
- Exploring, in working groups, different training methods that could be part of a future training program for HLCS and identifying those that participants consider most effective for acquiring the previously identified competencies. The set of training methods was prepared in advance based on multiple sources, presented at the beginning of the working session, and enriched or refined by the workshop's working groups.
- Exploring, through plenary discussions and based on examples from international practice, potential activities that could be implemented to build a community of HLCS in Romania.
- Engaging participants in exploring different options for organizing a pilot training program for HLCS, including module duration, structure, content, specificity, and the expertise of trainers.

Annex 5. Detailed HLCS profiles and required competencies identified through the visioning workshops

I. Policy entrepreneur

Coordinates systemic change by translating vision into action, mobilizing key actors, and ensuring accountability for generating results.

Skill: *Articulating policy proposals* with transformative impact

Skill: *Coordinating the assessment of the technical feasibility* of a public policy

Knowledge: Principles and mechanisms of *impact assessment* techniques (ex-ante and ex-post) on affected groups

Skill: *Key actor/supporter mapping*

Skill: *Coordinating evidence-based decision-making* (e.g. literature review, dialog with experts)

Skill: *Engaging decision makers* in the process by coordinating negotiation processes

Attitude: *Continuous*, open and consistent *communication* with partners

Attitude: *Consensus* orientation

Attitude: Willingness to *negotiate*

Attitude: *Diplomacy* in relationships

Attitude: *Awareness of change*

Knowledge: *Dialogue* facilitation and *mediation*

Knowledge: *Multicriteria analysis*

Skill: *Mapping global trends*

Skill: *Prioritizing policy initiatives*

Skill: *Assigning tasks* to the appropriate departments in the institution

Skill: *Learning* in new areas

II. Strategy catalyst

Coordinates strategic planning and strategic policies and enables program organization from concept to implementation, ensuring collaboration and accountability.

Skill: *Setting the terms of reference* of the strategic document

Skill: Coordinating the process of describing the current state of the field *based on existing evidence*

Skill: Coordinating the process of *systematic stakeholder engagement* in exploring directions for system transformation

Attitude: Commitment to *transparent* participatory processes

Skill: *Mobilizing experts* to strengthen strategic documents and proposals for legislation

Skill: *Coordinating negotiations* with stakeholders to reach final agreement

Skill: *Budget adjustment within* the limits of the strategic document.

Skill: *Coordination of* policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Skill: To say NO

Skill: *Outsourcing activities* and ensuring knowledge transfer as a result of outsourcing

Organizing *internal processes*

Skill: Building *inter-institutional alliances*

Skill: *Cooperation of relevant actors*, including affected departments ("coagulator")

Communication for endorsement

Knowledge: *Strategic planning*

Knowledge: *anticipatory thinking techniques (trends, scenarios, vision)*

Attitude: *A good personal attitude to time* - beyond management techniques

Attitude: Commitment to the *common good*

III. Institutional reformer

Coordinates institutional reform efforts to establish and sustain a performance-oriented culture in the institution, focused on generating results for citizens.

Knowledge: *Change Management*

Knowledge: *Project Management*

Skill: [developing the mechanism for] Assessing the *current situation*

Skill: *Identifying "quick wins"* (e.g. in 6 months) and *attracting allies* to achieve them

Translating information into *statistics, visual interpretation of data*

Skill: *Accessing institutional memory*, learning from the success or failure of previous reforms

Attitude: Open communication and courage to establish *collaborations based on transparency*

Skill: *Articulating a vision* for institutional change and linking performance indicators

Skill: *Defining a roadmap*

Skill: Identifying candidate areas for de-bureaucratization and digitalization

Knowledge: computerization and databases, digital transformation of institutional processes

Attitude: Accountability and attention to *achieving milestones associated with the reform process*

Attitude: *Curiosity* supported by exposure to *international good practice*

Skill: Analyzing *the costs of the transition* (anticipating, identifying negatively affected actors) and proposing ways to mitigate negative impacts

Skill: Gaining *the support of key stakeholders* for change

Skill: *Clear communication at strategic level of the direction of change and progress made*

Attitude: Assuming a *strong commitment* to organizational success and motivating others to commit to achieving goals

Knowledge: *branding and institutional marketing*

Anticipating and responding constructively *to resistance to change*

Skill: *Avoiding confrontational approaches* and maintaining positive communication

Skill: *Reputation management*

Attitude: *Positioning as a "neutral player"* in the political arena

IV. Explorer

Coordinates institutional improvement through experimentation, new technologies, and pilot projects.

Attitude: *Proactive mindset*, oriented towards identifying ways to improve institutional effectiveness

Attitude: *Receptiveness* to existing good practices, new technologies or approaches to address societal needs

Skill: *Participating in relevant communities of practice/networks/forums* to access existing knowledge and get guidance from those with relevant experience

Skill: *Encouraging and motivating employees* and other stakeholders to contribute to such processes

Skills: *persuasive communication* (being able to create mental images that translate the vision you propose and the anticipated benefits), *attracting allies* for various solutions/approaches

Skill: *Improving ideas and testing their support* (through dialog with relevant stakeholders, experts or consultations with citizens)

Knowledge: *Appropriate tools and mechanisms* to launch pilot actions (projects, working groups, but also newer approaches such as innovation labs, regulatory sandboxes tested in European practice)

Skill: Clear formulation of specifications/requirements (e.g. when requesting/ outsourcing digitization solutions)

Skill: *Integrating learning* from pilots, including from failures

Attitude: Combining enthusiasm and initiative with pragmatism, a sense of responsibility and the ethics of exploration

Attitude: Courage, boldness, perseverance in the face of resistance to change

Attitude: resistance to failure, lack of attachment to own ideas

Knowledge: Foresight techniques, e.g. probing emerging trends, weak signals relevant to the field

Knowledge: collaborative design methodologies and tools (e.g. design thinking)

Knowledge: process management

Knowledge: project management methodologies, e.g. "agile" (highly collaborative and iterative) methodology

V. Diplomat

Represents the organization in national and international forums, promoting strategic interests and managing key communications.

Skill: [mechanism for] *mapping the relevant fora* in which the institution is or should be represented

Ability: [mechanism for] communicating with relevant fora, including by promoting the interests of the institution, the sector, national interests on the agenda of these fora

Skill: Strategic communication and persuasion

Skill: Coordinating the process of drafting *position papers or speeches* and maintaining coherence of communication

Skill: Identifying points of disagreement and *negotiating* with key stakeholders

Ability: [mechanism for] Coordinating the process of *monitoring and reporting on the status of implementation of international recommendations*

Attitude: *Respectful and diplomatic approach* in all interactions, emphasizing tact, patience and discretion, especially in sensitive negotiations

Skill: *Preparing* negotiations (e.g. on ordinances, with trade unions, in crisis situations) - identifying supporters in the negotiation process, documenting and analyzing profiles of other negotiating participants, adaptability in positioning/speech

Knowledge: negotiation techniques

Attitude: *Openness to diversity* (of opinions, beliefs, ideas), including intercultural and multicultural dimensions

Knowledge: Understanding *how* international institutions *work*

Knowledge: Romania's policies and priorities

Attitude: Willingness for continuous learning

Attitude: Continuous adaptation to new developments and requirements

VI. Control Tower

Ensures institutional efficiency and profitability of operations by maintaining order, optimizing resources, ensuring compliance with internal control conclusions, and aligning with strategic objectives.

Skill: *Program management coordination*

Knowledge: *standards and procedures of the management internal control system (MICS)*

Knowledge: *program monitoring and evaluation principles*

Knowledge: *a thorough understanding of the institution's programs*

Skill: Ensures that the *necessary resources* and the right skill set are available to achieve program success

Skill: Conflict management, including taking *decisions to unblock difficult or conflictual situations*

Skill: [developing mechanisms for] *Monitoring* programs

Skill: [developing mechanisms for] *Regular program evaluation*

Skill: *Mobilizing advisory councils* for life-cycle corrections

Knowledge: Understanding subordinate structures and their responsibilities

Attitude: Willingness to negotiate

Internal audit and internal financial control management

Skill: Personnel management

Skill: Coordination of compartments with different interests

Skill: Allocating tasks to relevant departments

VII. Treasurer

Manages budget planning and execution, ensuring efficient allocation of resources while maintaining fiscal discipline.

Knowledge: Understanding of public finance principles, budget planning cycles, fiscal policies and resource allocation methods

Knowledge: program budgeting rules

Knowledge: public finance legislation (e.g. Law 500 - General Framework of Public Finance, Law 296)

Knowledge: Budget analysis

Skill: *Analyzing annual financial reports*

Skill: [Mechanism for] *Monitoring budget execution*

Skill: [Mechanism for] *Rationale for regular budget planning or correction*

Skill: *Budget planning and re-planning* against indicators and targets

Skills: *Budget negotiation* with the Ministry of Public Finance

Skill: [Mechanism for] *Dialogue with key actors* on budget (re)planning or rectification

Ability: *communicating to the policy maker* the major needs for budgetary corrections

Attitude: Commitment to *good stewardship of public resources*

Knowledge: cost-benefit analysis techniques (especially for ministries/institutions with investments)

Knowledge: Principles of impact assessment

VIII. Team leader

Ensures that structures within the organization collaborate, have the necessary resources, and are accountable for achieving results for citizens.

Skill: [mechanism for] *Performance assessment and management*

Skill: [mechanism for] Training *managers* in human resources management (recruitment criteria, transfers, leave, etc.)

Skill: Tasking specialists and specialized departments, synchronizing workflows, setting the optimal pace of activities

Skills: *forming and facilitating diverse intra- and inter-departmental teams*

Skill: *Inspirational internal communication* on the institution's priorities and development directions

Attitude: Displays a *strong commitment to organizational success* and inspires others to be committed to achieving goals and achieving visible and sustainable results

Ability: *Praises and rewards high performance*, initiative and generally motivates and encourages team efforts

Skill: Helps employees see how *their work contributes to the success of the organization* or the public good

Ability: Adaptability/constructive stance in situations where resistance/ reluctance from team

Attitude: *Respect* for the interlocutor and the opinions received

Skills: *conflict mediation*, upholding ethical principles in difficult circumstances

Knowledge: familiarity with the *spirit and culture of the organization*, with the unwritten rules that influence intra-organizational decision making and behaviour

Knowledge: knowledge of team members' expertise and profiles, their level of performance, strengths and weaknesses

Knowledge: context-appropriate persuasive communication and active listening techniques

Knowledge: *conflict management theory*

Knowledge: Time and resource management

Attitude: respect for work-life balance

IX. Mediator

Anticipates, prevents and reduces risks for the institution and manages urgent and complex situations by providing coordinated responses and solutions.

Skill: *Identifying the challenge requiring urgent response*

Skill: *Involving the right experts in the consultation*

Skill: *Prioritization in simultaneous crises*

Skill: *Creating and supervising task force teams*

Skill: *Mobilizing resources and providing support to address the crisis situation*

Skill: *Consultations with relevant stakeholders*

Skill: *Clear communication of challenge and solutions*

Skill: *Identifying and mediating conflicts*

Attitude: *Openness to information and evidence*

Knowledge: *conflict management theory*

Skill: *Negotiation*

Knowledge: *anticipatory management to predict/prevent future crises*

Attitude: *shared responsibility and constructive attitude in the face of failure*

X. Advisor

Analyzes and approves regulatory documents, ensuring compliance with legal, technical and financial standards.

Skill: *Critical thinking* about the pros and cons of the legislative act in relation to the legislation

Skill: Establish procedural mechanism, including for the endorsement process

Skill: Empowering departments (e.g. legal, technical) to be able to respond to endorsement needs

Skill: Coordination of interdepartmental collaboration

Skill: Evaluation of materials coming from departments

Ability: Mobilize *additional expertise* (advisory councils, experts, etc.) when needed

Attitude: *Commitment to the public interest* so that all legislation serves the public good and is aligned with institutional and national policy objectives

Knowledge: legal, technical and financial

Skill: Using artificial intelligence tools with a good understanding of the limitations

Attitude: Institutional ethics

Attitude: Risk-taking

Skill: Analyzing the implications of regulatory acts and ensuring compliance