

STRATEGY

OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS

INTRODUCTION

In its' Programme for the mandatory period from 2003 to 2007, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, under influence by external changes in the environment in which it operates (accession to the EU, globalisation, etc.) as well as internal needs, set out the radical reform of state and public administration as one of the priorities, with the purpose of ensuring stability, efficiency and predictability in all sectors of social and economic activities.

In this Programme, Croatian Government committed to consider and propose new organization of state administration in order to increase the efficiency and reduce costs, keeping in mind the essential purpose of the administration: quality and prompt delivery of services to the client citizens and enterprises, which, among the other things, represents one of the key preconditions for economic growth and development.

Following this point of view, the Croatian Government considers a systematic care for continuous training of Civil Servants and other employees in the public sector, with the purpose of solving professional problems, quality of services rendered to client citizens and enterprises and general success and development to be one the key conditions for functioning of a modern, efficient and effective state (and public) administration, able to achieve above mentioned goals and objectives according to the EU standards.

GOAL

The goal of the Strategy of Vocational Training and Professional Improvement of Civil Servants is to improve general level of skills and qualifications of Civil Servants at all hierarchical levels trough establishment of a system of vocational training and professional improvement, which shall improve their independence, professional competence, efficiency and effectiveness, horizontal mobility and motivation trough means of advancement possibilities and simulative salaries and trough that it shall improve the overall efficiency and flexibility of civil service in general.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF THE STRATEGY

From the year 2005 till the year 2009.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this strategy requires implementation of a common methodology for the whole civil service system, which will help in selection and creation of an appropriate individual training programme for every civil servant.

1. Identification of areas where vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants is necessary

In order to develop appropriate programmes adapted to needs of the civil service and individual civil servants in their everyday work, Personnel departments established in all state administrative bodies should systematically collect all information relevant for the development of appropriate programs adapted to everyday needs of civil service and civil servants. In accordance with the organizational goals and on the basis of the information gathered, all training needs shall be identified and appropriate training programs shall be developed.

2. Planning of training activities

The planning of training programmes consists of organization and identification of priorities among different actions aimed on vocational training and professional improvement of Civil Servants. Personnel Departments in each individual state administrative body design programmes based on identified training needs, develop proposals for generic and specific annual training programs for their employees and estimate the financial means necessary for implementing the training programmes.

The vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants can be implemented:

a) for the needs of the civil service:

- compulsory
- optional

b) for individual needs.

In accordance with annual programmes of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, civil servants selected by their employing state body are obliged to attend compulsory training programmes.

The employing administrative body must facilitate and support the participation of civil servants in optional eligible training programmes, if financial means for their implementation are secured and if that does not influence everyday work of civil servants in question.

Civil servants are not obliged to bear the costs of compulsory and optional training programmes.

In certain cases, if the circumstances of their posts allow it, civil servants may be authorized, on their own request, to attend specific training programs for individual professional development, in duration that does not significantly influence his/hers work. In this case, all the costs of professional training programs shall be reimbursed by the individual civil servant, who will maintain the right to receive his/hers salary for the duration of training programs.

According to professional training needs in the Civil Service, annual, multi - annual, compulsory and optional training programs shall be designed, namely: **preparatory programs** for candidates for the positions in the state administration, **introductory programs** for new civil servants regarding general content of the civil service and general procedures common for all state administrative bodies and regarding specific issues relevant for a specific administrative area; **programs for civil servants on probationary period**; programs regarding the **content of the**

existing constitutional, legal, social, economic, cultural and international environment they act in; programs regarding **changes in communication, technologies and other aspects** of their work; **in-service training programmes** aimed on career advancement and professional improvement; training programs in the cases of hierarchical advancement, lateral transfer, programs regarding **building of professional skills** arising due to the changes in the content of work assignments, process or technology of work; various **special programmes** aimed on ensuring the efficiency of management and/or special projects for civil servants occupying managerial positions; preparation of new civil servants for managerial positions and preparation for projects of special importance or complexity.

3. *Implementation of activities of vocational training and professional improvement*

Vocational training and professional improvement of Civil Servants shall be implemented primarily in state administrative bodies through seminars, lectures, advisory sessions, workshops, study tours, publishing of professional literature and other means, and it could be implemented in external institutions outside the Civil Service, in Croatia or abroad (i.e. attending of educational programs, university studies, specialized courses, etc.)

4. *Evaluation of implementation of programmes and the achieved results*

This evaluation includes systematic gathering of information necessary for decision making regarding the quality of delivered programs of vocational training and professional improvement and utilising of new skills in everyday work. Personnel departments in different state bodies, employing civil servants who attended training programs, conduct evaluation of the success of implemented training programs and achieved results.

State administrative bodies that will ensure implementation of training programs are:

Government of the Republic of Croatia, which issues an annual programme of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, based on the proposal made by Central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues,

Central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues, in which a specialised institution for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants shall be established. The named institution shall:

- give proposals to the Government regarding annual training plans of civil servants on the basis of delivered proposals from various state administrative bodies;
- provide for unified methodology of planning, design, implementation and evaluation of results of vocational training and professional improvement. Within the central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues, an independent institution specialized for vocational training and professional improvement shall be established.
- identify training needs and coordinate and evaluate all the activities aimed at vocational training and professional improvement as well as other educational activities for civil servants in cooperation with other internal organisational units in state administrative bodies responsible for human resources management and development (personnel departments) and for specialist vocational training and professional improvement;
- cooperate on national and international level with similar organizations;

- ensure that programmes of vocational training and professional improvement delivered by various state administrative bodies comply with high professional standards and also provide for the quality of institutions outside the state administration system (and their programmes) that implement certain programmes of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants.

Institution specialized for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants shall ensure vocational training and professional improvement for:

- Candidates for the civil service;
- Civil Servants on probationary period;
- New Civil Servants;
- Civil Servants employed in state administration, in order to upgrade their skills and capacities for efficient performance of their tasks, career advancement and adaptation of their skills for performance of same or similar tasks in different state administrative bodies.

Each State administrative body, which shall:

- Systematically monitor the needs for vocational training and professional improvement within their scope of actions;
- Deliver proposals to central state body responsible for general administration issues regarding the programs of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants they employ, which shall include the estimation of funds necessary for the delivery of the proposed programs;
- Implement special programs of vocational training and professional improvement which should be approved by the central state body responsible for general administration issues;
- Report to the central state body responsible for general administration issues on conducted programmes of vocational training and professional improvement and on participants that attended special training programs organized by the institutions outside Croatian state administration.

New role of personnel departments in all state administrative bodies, regarding monitoring, implementation and human resources management and development is crucial for the implementation of this Strategy. Vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants employed in these departments and allocating authority and necessary resources for their work should make management of human resources more efficient and effective. Within personnel departments, special attention shall be paid to:

- Selection and vocational training and professional improvement of personnel in charge of planning of vocational training and professional improvement;
- Vocational training and professional improvement of personnel in charge of human resources management, who will implement new methods and rules in order to modernize civil service, specifically in planning of human resources, performance assessment, management of vocational training and professional improvement, recruitment, career advancement, keeping records on activities related to vocational training and professional improvement;
- Development of drafts of annual plans for performance appraisal of civil servants which should represent the base of an overall plan of vocational training and professional improvement. Estimation of needs for vocational training and professional improvement should be integrated in system of performance appraisal of civil servants, concerning the position they occupy as well as their professional development and career advancement;

- Design of detailed job description for each working place, including appropriate assessments related to permanent vocational training and professional improvement for each civil servant occupying specific working place.

Each state administrative body that conducted a specific programme of vocational training and professional improvement shall issue an appropriate certificate of attendance to the participants who successfully completed the programme.

A record shall be kept on all training programmes and all participants. Each state administrative body which implements specific training programs shall keep special registers and central state body responsible for general administration issues shall keep central registry of vocational training and professional improvement that shall incorporate all data regarding activities of vocational training and professional improvement. The administrative body that directed a civil servant to attend a specific programme of vocational training and professional improvement outside the state administrative bodies shall keep data on civil servants who attended such programmes.

PRINCIPLES

The vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants shall be implemented for the entire duration of their employment within the civil service. The heads of all bodies of state administration shall be the persons responsible for promotion and implementation of vocational training and professional improvement activities in their respective administrative bodies.

Special attention shall be paid to establishment of a core of civil servants occupying managerial positions in state administration, staff responsible for human resources development and professional lecturers so that they could acquire multidisciplinary skills and knowledge necessary for establishment of a new, modern Croatian state administration.

Vocational training and professional improvement should not be strictly directed to new skills and knowledge, but must also include changes in attitude, values and adoption of appropriate ethical norms.

Vocational training and professional improvement have to be conceived in a way that allows all the civil servants participating in training programs the provision of following principles of conduct in their work in the civil service:

- reliable and predictable administrative actions based on the law;
- open and transparent operation based on public access and public control;
- responsibility of every individual civil servant based on clearly defined personal rights and obligations;
- efficiency and effectiveness.

Vocational training and professional improvement should be based on modern methods and contents. Special attention shall be paid to implementation of methods such as case studies, role – play, and experiential learning (so-called action learning), the use of modern technical equipment and especially internet and computers.

Vocational training and professional improvement must be followed by clear analysis of the training needs and the results expected, as well as the evaluation of implementation of skills and knowledge acquired through training on the work place.

During all stages of vocational training and professional improvement, active participation of civil servants should be ensured, as well as horizontal cooperation of state bodies involved in organization and implementation of vocational training and professional improvement

All Civil Servants must have equal opportunities for participation in vocational training and professional improvement.

Civil Servants who successfully completed certain training programs must be evaluated in the appropriate way.

Identification, selection, training of professional trainers and special rewards for their work shall be essential components of the training strategy. Establishment of the training system requires the work of a large group of people which will act as lecturers, ready to plan, implement and evaluate the efficiency of training programs. Lecturers shall mainly be experts employed in state administration bodies, who possess a high level of expertise in their specific areas of specialization. Due to the lack of their inadequate pedagogical skills, special attention shall be paid to special vocational training activities for their professional upgrading so they could implement didactical methods they adopted in the course of their training. External experts outside Croatian state administration could be engaged as lecturers. A special reward system is to be implemented for the work of the lecturers. Internal lecturers – civil servants – will have on their disposal a certain time period within working hours of the administrative body they are employed in, on their working place or in a specialized training institution, for the preparation and delivery of lectures in the facilities foreseen for training activities.

FINANCING

For the purpose of implementation of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, the Government of the Republic of Croatia shall propose allocation of at least 3% of the total amount of budget estimated for civil servants salaries in the Croatian State Budget. Every year, the Government of the Republic of Croatia shall allocate financial assets from the State Budget on the basis of the annual plans for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia shall also consider the possibility of use of all other domestic and international sources for financing the implementation of training activities.

In accordance with annual plans for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, every state administrative body shall have on their disposal a part of the overall financial assets envisaged for the vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants they employ.

Central State Body responsible for general administration issues shall have on disposal a part of funds allocated for special programs aimed at promotion of vocational training and professional improvement, coordination of variety of specific training programs, networking of all internal organisational units established in state administrative bodies which are responsible for vocational training and professional improvement and monitoring of these activities and shall monitor allocation of all funds envisaged for vocational training and professional improvement for the past year.

EXPLANATION

Development and implementation of Strategy for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants is necessary for two basic reasons – firstly, it is one of preconditions for creation of modern and efficient public administration and quality and speedy provision of service for client citizens and enterprises, which represents a precondition for economical growth and development, and secondly – it is a precondition for fulfilment of one of conditions for EU accession (public administration reform and strengthening of administrative capacities with the purpose of creating capacity for implementation of EU regulations and policies).

According to the results of conducted surveys (project “Croatia in the 21st century – Public administration”, “Report on the assessment of the training needs for civil servants in the Republic of Croatia”, delivered as a part of project “CARDS 2001 – Public Administration Reform” (CARDS – Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation), there is evidently a lack of qualified and trained civil servants in the Croatian Civil Service, due to the absence of appropriate education for civil service employees which would ensure adoption of relevant skills and appropriate professional knowledge. Existing educational system in the Croatian Civil Service is primarily based on theoretical knowledge and does not include practical actions. The need for vocational training and professional improvement is identified at all levels of Croatian Civil Service. Following that point of view, Government of the Republic of Croatia considers a systematic care for continuous training of Civil Servants and other employees in the public sector, with the purpose of solving professional problems, quality of services rendered to client citizens and enterprises and general success and development, to be one the key conditions for functioning of a modern, efficient and effective state (and public) administration. Therefore, this Strategy is delivered with the goal of creating a system of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants which shall contribute to their independence, professional capacity, efficiency and effectiveness, horizontal mobility and the overall improvement of efficiency and flexibility of the Croatian Civil Service. Trough implementation of above mentioned system of vocational training and professional improvement, an adjustment of Croatian regulations in the area of public administration would be made in accordance with the existing EU standards.

Strategy is to be implemented in the period of five years (form 2005 till 2009). Due to the fact that the whole system has to be established from the beginning, a shorter period for implementation would not be realistic.

Furthermore, a common methodology of implementation of the Strategy is accepted with means of providing a systematic identification of areas in which professional training should be implemented (that task is allocated to the existing Personnel departments which now have new functions regarding vocational training and professional improvement), systematic planning of activities related to vocational training and professional improvement, means of implementation of mentioned activities and establishment of an evaluation system for efficiency of delivered programmes and achieved results.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia shall issue annual programme of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, based on the proposal made by central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues, which shall draft named programme on the basis of proposals delivered from various state administrative bodies.

In the same time, with the goal of achieving efficiency and effectiveness of newly established systems of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants, the roles of various state administrative bodies are clearly distinguished. Following that point of view, a specialised institution for professional training shall be established within the central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues, with the task of providing vocational training and professional improvement for candidates for posts in the civil service, civil servants on probationary period, newly employed civil servants and active civil servants, in order to prepare them for efficient and effective performance of working tasks, professional upgrading and development of general skills necessary for performance of same or similar functions in various state administrative bodies.

Central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues would be responsible for ensuring methodological unified planning, issuing, implementation and evaluation of delivered programmes and achieved results, identification of overall training needs at all levels of state administration, evaluation of all activities of vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants and other activities aimed on education of civil servants (in cooperation with organizational units in state administrative bodies responsible for personnel issues and vocational training and professional improvement), cooperation with similar organizations which implement programs for vocational training of civil servants on the state and international level, it shall monitor that programs implemented by state administrative bodies keep high level of quality and monitor the quality of institutions outside the Croatian State Administration (and programs they implement).

The role of every state administrative body responsible for systematical identification of training needs for civil servants they employ is developed in details. These bodies are to deliver proposals for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants they employ and related proposals for amount of financial means necessary for their implementation. Furthermore, they shall implement special programmes for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants foreseen in annual training programs issued by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, they shall report to Central state administrative body responsible for general administration issues on implemented programs of vocational training and professional improvement and civil servants that attended training programs organized and implemented in institutions outside Croatian State Administration.

New role of Personnel departments in all state administrative bodies, especially regarding monitoring, implementation, and human resources management and development is crucial for the implementation of this Strategy. Special attention shall be paid to the vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants employed in these departments, which are responsible for human resources management and implementation of new methods and rules envisaged for the modernization of civil service, development of drafts of annual plans for performance appraisal of civil servants which should represent the base of an overall plan of vocational training and professional improvement. Estimation of needs for vocational training and professional improvement should be integrated in the system of performance appraisal of civil servants, concerning the position they occupy as well as their professional development and career advancement, design of detailed job description for each working place, including appropriate assessments related to permanent vocational training and professional improvement for each civil servant occupying specific working place.

Establishment of an information system with the purpose of keeping records on all implemented training programmes and all participants is foreseen. Collected data shall be inserted in the personal records of civil servants in order to create preconditions for establishment of an efficient human resources management system necessary for creation of a modern and efficient civil service, able to respond to all made requests.

Strategy for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants incorporates certain principles for the implementation of the training programs, such as: equal opportunity for vocational training and professional improvement for every civil servant, civil servants shall not be charged for participation in mentioned compulsory or optional training programs, lecturers shall be appropriately remunerated for their work, civil servants who successfully completed certain training programs shall be evaluated in the appropriate way, continuity (programs shall be implemented for the entire duration of employment in the civil service), identification of priorities (establishment of a core of civil servants occupying managerial positions in the state administration, staff responsible for human resources development and professional lecturers), changes in attitude, values and adoption of appropriate ethical norms, implementation of modern methods and contents, analysis of needs and evaluation of results, active participation of civil servants and horizontal cooperation of state administrative bodies.

In the end, establishment of an appropriate model for financing implementation of programs for vocational training and professional improvement is foreseen. At least 3% of the total amount of financial assets estimated for civil servants salaries in the Croatian state budget shall be allocated for financing of above mentioned training programs. Every year, the Government of the Republic of Croatia shall allocate of financial assets from the state budget on the basis of annual plans for vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants.

In accordance with that, every state administrative body would have on their disposal a part of the overall financial assets envisaged for the vocational training and professional improvement of civil servants they employ, while central state body responsible for general administration issues would have on disposal a part of funds allocated for the work of the Civil Service Training Center, assets for implementation of special programs aimed at promotion of vocational training and professional improvement, coordination of variety of specific training programs and networking of all internal organisational units established in state administration bodies which are responsible for vocational training and professional improvement.

In addition, in order to be able to monitor overall results of the conducted training programs, central state body responsible for general administration issues shall monitor real results of the implemented programs as well as allocation of all funds envisaged for the implementation of vocational training and professional improvement programs for the past year.