
CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING
in the context of
Public Administration Reform

*A Comparative Study
of selected countries from
Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union,
(1989 to 2003)*

LESSONS ON BEST PRACTICE
IN THE APPROACH TO
EFFECTIVE CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING

May 2003

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Richard Lucking

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Country codes for particular acronyms:

AL Albania, AR Armenia, HU Hungary, LV Latvia, LT Lithuania, SL Slovenia

| | |
|--------|---|
| AA | Administrative Academy SL |
| ASPA | Armenian School of Public Administration AR |
| BiH | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| BODA | Bureau for Organisation and Development of Administration SL |
| BPAR | Bureau for Public Administration Reform LV |
| CCF | Country Cooperation Framework |
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CoM | Council of Ministers |
| CSA | Civil Service Administration LV |
| CSC | Civil Service Council or Commission |
| CSL | Civil Service Law |
| DFID | Department for International Development UK |
| DODA | Directorate for Organisation and Development of Administration SL |
| DoPA | Department of Public Administration AL |
| DSR | Department of State Reform LV |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| EC | European Commission |
| ECU | European Currency Unit (pre-Euro) |
| EIPA | European Institute of Public Administration |
| EPI | European Policies Institute |
| EU | European Union |
| FBH | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| FYROM | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| GTZ | German technical assistance organisation |
| HIPA | Hungarian Institute of Public Administration HU |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IMPA | Institute of Management and Public Administration AL |
| IMTF | Inter-ministerial task force AL |
| IPAC | Institute of Public Administration of Canada |
| IT | Information Technology |
| ITPA | Institute for Training in Public Administration AL |
| LESA | Law on Employees of the State Authorities SL |
| LGTC | Local Government Training Centre LV |
| LIPA | Lithuanian Institute of Public Administration LT |
| LSPA | Latvian School of Public Administration LV |
| MoI | Ministry of the Interior |
| MPARLA | Ministry of Public Administration Reform and Local Authorities LT |
| MSApr | Minister of Special Assignment for public reforms LV |
| MSR | Ministry of State Reform LV |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OPS | Ontario Public Service |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |

| | |
|--------|--|
| PATC | Public Administration Training Centre LT |
| PM | Prime Minister |
| PUMA | Public Management and Governance (in OECD) |
| RRP | Reform and Recovery Programme |
| RS | Republika Srpska |
| SIGMA | Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries |
| SIPAR | State Institutions and Public Administration Reform AL |
| SPA | School of Public Administration SL |
| TNA | Training Needs Assessment |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Assistance for International Development |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contributes to ongoing civil service reform at all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It reviews approaches to civil service training in six countries of Central and Eastern Europe between 1989 and 2003, based on documents and the personal experience of the author and others in Albania, Armenia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia. To highlight comparisons and contrasts, four were written in pairs: Latvia with Lithuania; Albania with Armenia. The final section draws out the comparative lessons and warnings from all six.

Latvia developed a coherent framework in 1993 that encompassed all three key components of a civil service system, which emerged quickly or slowly in most other countries: a high-level political body to guide the civil service as a whole (hereafter the “oversight bureau”); a non-political body to regulate, but not execute, personnel management in government (“regulatory bureau”); and a training school to establish the form, content and national standards of civil service training, and to contract the delivery of training courses (the “training bureau”). These three bureaux were created and combined in different configurations by other countries during the 1990s. In Latvia, despite economic problems which curtailed its ambitions, the general framework still stands. A distinctive feature was the ability of the system to train over 23,000 civil servant applicants by 23 contracted training centres over four years.

Lithuania forwent a strategic approach and followed a gradualist path. It had poorly coordinated ministries, each with its own training centre. It established a public training school in parallel with both these centres and the private sector market. Personnel management was decentralised. The outcome was a fragmented pattern of training and personnel management, badly coordinated and of variable quality. Poor coordination of training strategies persists.

Albania and Armenia had delayed starts in public administration reform. Two attempts to establish an Albanian training school have not yet delivered a sustainable institution. All three key bureaux now exist but ill-judged regulations govern their interrelationships. Armenia set up a new training school in 1994 but established combined oversight and regulatory bureaux only in 2002. This now regulates the training school as well, and training has begun.

Hungary had a long tradition of pre-service law-based training for the public service. Early decentralised training and public administration structures increased inefficiency and poor coordination. Firmer structures working across government ministries, while keeping the implementation of personnel management decentralised, were introduced. The three key bureaux were combined as one structure, which also supervises civil service examinations and undertakes public administration research, under the Prime Minister’s Office.

Slovenia only slowly developed a system of coherent public administration reform and in-service training. Early reform policies faltered, and lacked political commitment until 2000. The three bureaux have all been established separately within the Ministry of the Interior. The first Civil Service Law will introduce stronger provisions for civil service training.

These cases suggest five external factors or basic choices which together shape the form and effectiveness of the civil service training systems. These are sustained political commitment, without which all fails; strategic vision to guide the process and avoid pitfalls; the goal of a professional career-based civil service to shape the human resource management structures; the strength of the financial and human resource base, with appropriate funding mechanisms and donor coordination; and the end-goal of good quality services and good governance.

Lessons On Best Practice
in the approach to
Effective Civil Service Training

1. Aims and Purpose In Undertaking the Study

Many indicators clearly show that Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), following a period of conflict and civil war, has fallen behind most other states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and many states of the former Soviet Union, in its economic, political and social development. To overcome this deficit and catch up, public administration has emerged as a critical factor in providing the appropriate environment for economic growth, and the essential stimulus to social and political development along the path to rejoining the family of prosperous European nations. So public administration reform is recognised as overdue in BiH, as a key step in building this environment for change.

Public administration reform has started, with donor assistance. But the piecemeal nature of this assistance, probably as a response to the extraordinary complexities of the public administration structures and associated political environment, and the need to disaggregate the field into manageable domains, has resulted so far in a fragmented approach to the reforms and the potential loss of a strategic perspective.

However the need for reform, and for a strategic approach, has been restated clearly and forcefully at the highest level, within the last year, by the new High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paddy Ashdown. In his inaugural speech he emphasised the need for change to achieve justice and jobs, through reform, on the road to full statehood. His case for public administration reform cited several examples of the scale (and obstructiveness) of government bureaucracy which has become disproportionate to the scale and prosperity of the country and its citizens. Among the details of his speech were references to the need for a non-politicised and accountable civil service, the speedy implementation of the Civil Service law and his vision for excellence in the standard of civil service training, rooted in the values of integrity and professionalism.

It had already been realised that the creation of a respected and professional civil service is an important step on the road to reform. Recent legislation has included Civil Service laws at the state level and in Republika Srpska (RS), with another in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) apparently imminent. These need to be fully implemented as key building blocks in the reform of public administration. Enacting laws provides a framework but adopting legislation, alone, does not represent implementation. As we will see below, many examples of this confusion between adopting a law and implementing a law abound in the traditions and mentality of the transitional countries. This is important, because the creation of a modern public administration is primarily not about changes in laws or regulations, but about changing people's attitudes, behaviour, styles of conceptualising and undertaking their work. And thus it is also about how the public service is organised, and how human resources are managed and developed.

If implemented properly, Civil Service Laws (CSL) are essentially about management in the public service. Their purpose is to promote the creation of a new professional ethic built on accountability and transparent values, dedicated to the delivery of public services in a cost effective way, to the best standard, for the whole population. The detail of the law will concern definitions, authority, rights, responsibilities and so forth, but the goals are to facilitate *good governance*, to ensure the delivery of public benefits, impartially and at reasonable cost, and to establish government as a model employer.

The reform of public administration, and the implementation of a Civil Service Law (CSL) and its associated secondary legislation or regulatory instruments, must be built on the development of human resources. This implies a large investment in training and education:

- to enhance the value placed on, and the prestige earned by, the new generation of civil servants;
- to achieve visible and measurable improvements in standards of performance and service;
- to match improvement in professional integrity and ethical standards with commensurate rewards.

The context of this paper is therefore the development of civil service in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) at all levels of government. The focus is the approach to training and education as the engine of change within the public service, to achieve a modernised civil service capable of promoting the economic, social and political transformation essential to the long term viability of the state of BiH. Our method is to use experience, as the best teacher, to provide a practical guide to the way forward. This paper draws on the experience of six states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in their approaches to the training of a modern civil service, and identifies the lessons, positive and negative, which that experience is able to offer.

2. The Method of Study

This paper, and particularly its core case studies, have drawn upon the extensive body of recent documentation which has recorded and commented on key aspects of public administration reform, and civil service training and development, in the group of countries considered for inclusion in the study. Sources included the work of the OECD (SIGMA and PUMA), the UNDP, the World Bank, other bilateral donors, and the websites of governments and public training institutions in the countries of interest. The source documentation is extensive, and provides the opportunity for systematic comparison and cross-reference, and for clear insight into the dynamic aspects of change, with a perspective extending over the 14 years or so since the political framework of CEE changed so fundamentally.

Documentation has provided a solid foundation of factual information and evidence, on which to base the case studies, and the conclusions and lessons which have been drawn from them. But such publicly available documentation is liable to a systemic bias, in its tendency to emphasise the positive outputs and outcomes, and disguise, qualify or even ignore the negative. This is understandable within the context of public administration reform, where a high public profile, strong political interests, rapid and unpredictable

change in the status, security and financial prospects of public and political officials, lack of precedent and experience in handling such far-reaching transformation, and the vested economic interests which are intertwined with the political, all combine to sustain a self-defensive façade of progress and optimism. These tendencies, natural enough in any period of political or organisational turbulence, have probably been reinforced by the recent history of many of the countries studied. Activities such as research, study, assessment and evaluation became associated to greater or lesser degree with the investigative apparatus of political control and constraint, and so attitudes of suspicion and defensiveness towards similar ongoing research, not surprisingly, persist.

The material presented has therefore been supplemented wherever possible by the personal experience and observation of consultants who have worked in the countries of interest. The author has personally worked or undertaken research in all of these¹, and has had access to other experts during the course of this work who have also had direct experience. This information was particularly valuable in the process of selection of comparator countries from the original shortlist, as it assisted the identification of key issues which were especially worthy of notice, at the levels of both strategic significance and practical relevance to the situation in BiH at the present time.

3. Criteria for Selecting Comparator Case Studies

The overriding consideration in the selection of comparator countries was that each country might provide some particular lesson or pointer to the development of a good quality civil service in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was considered unlikely that any, or indeed even one, country would match the situation in BiH in all respects. But there are a number of obvious factors which should be represented in at least one, and often several, of the countries selected, to facilitate the identification of relevant issues and constraints in the reform process.

One key feature determining eligibility for inclusion was the extent of progress made, however falteringly, by each country up to this point in time. It was considered necessary to have adequate evidence of the initial stages of reform and the approach taken, and for progress to be sufficiently advanced, for there to be useful lessons at all. In many countries potentially of interest, public administration reform started relatively late, and little has been achieved so far. The reasons varied but most were connected with a difficult political transformation, and/or conflict, with an agenda only lately focused on public administration reform as a key issue. Examples include states which emerged from the former Yugoslavia, such as Croatia, the Federation of Serbia and Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and most of the central Asian states of the former Soviet Union. We identify below the main factors considered after this initial filtering.

Reform of the Civil Service and Public Administration

Most of the countries considered were drawn from the former eastern bloc, including the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). All of these have undergone, and continue to undergo, major changes in the area of public administration reform.

¹ The author has worked on long term assignments in government in Albania, Armenia, Latvia and Mongolia, and on short term assignments related to government activities in BiH, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.

Transitional Economies and Societies

For obvious reasons, this group of countries from the former Eastern bloc represent the largest potential sample from which to draw comparisons, as all have faced substantial transformation of their economic, social and political systems over the past fourteen years or so. However, many were eliminated at the preliminary stage, as mentioned above, especially those from the CIS and parts of the former Yugoslavia despite their initial attractiveness as comparators in other respects. A distinctive feature of countries drawn from this group was their need to develop civil service training systems able to facilitate and achieve strategic change, rather than only to improve the individual competences of trainees – more a characteristic of training in developed economies.

Complex Government Structure

The whole range of public services in Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided by a large number of public authorities, organised in a fashion which is complex for a country of its modest size and limited resources. Inclusion of comparators with some similar complexity, such as the number of levels of administration, was considered important for the possible lessons to be drawn on the achievement of common standards of professionalism, and quality of service delivery, across all administrative territories of the country.

Bureaucratic Tradition

Although this criterion suggests a sample of countries which overlaps in many respects with that of transitional government, it tries to identify change regarding issues of service quality, costs and targets aimed at the achievement of *results*, in contrast to the traditional emphasis on formal *procedures*. The inaugural speech of the High Representative provided some specific local examples in BiH and linked these clearly with obstacles to improved economic performance. Some countries demonstrate greater persistence in this respect than others, especially those in the CIS or with weaker Western influence.

National Wealth

National wealth or prosperity may be measured in a number of ways, but all available reports point to the relatively weak economic position of BiH within the Balkan region, even allowing for significant error in the official statistics. This has two important implications for the goals, and the approach to the reform of public administration:

- (i) public administration needs to be cost effective, given the scarce resources available for the development of both public and private sectors;
- (ii) public administration needs to be effective in facilitating and promoting the development of a vigorous private sector if this economic weakness is to be overcome.

Wealthier nations may be able to achieve (ii) with less regard to (i). Indeed, economic success may in some cases disguise weaknesses in the public administration system, simply because other factors have assisted economic strength, and public administration has not been identified as a critical constraint, as yet, on economic development. The selection of cases has deliberately included countries covering a wide range of economic strength to help illuminate aspects of its relevance to the effectiveness of civil service and public administration reform.

Recent History of Ethnic Conflict

The recent history of ethnic conflict in the Balkan region reinforces the need to ensure a post-conflict style and quality of governance which explicitly recognises, respects, and safeguards the rights and expectations of its citizens. In particular, with regard to the development of its civil service and public administration, there is an especially strong need to ensure equity and impartial standards across all aspects of service delivery, across the whole country, through universal enforcement of professional standards of behaviour, service design and implementation. From this perspective, the approaches used to introduce, encourage and ensure impartiality and professionalism, and to discourage illegitimate political bias, in the civil services and public administrations studied, are of particular interest.

Longer Term Goals

The criteria examined above cover issues stemming from recent history, current circumstances, or short term objectives. In the longer term, one can identify a number of other goals of reform which provide a secondary set of criteria for selecting the comparator countries. The most significant of these are good governance, sustainable improvements, and EU accession:

- (i) EU accession will require significant progress in social, political and especially economic standards before it becomes a realistic goal for BiH. However, modernising the civil service, as an agent of change within the context of public administration reform, is an important early step in moving BiH in the right direction. Most of the countries selected for study have short or long term expectations of accession to the EU.
- (ii) Improvements in the structures and procedures of human resource management and development in government need to be sustainable, without recourse to donor support and funding, in the medium to long term. Sustainability as a goal, in turn, implies cost effective public services, on a scale in accord with national resources; wide ranging political support to create the conditions for long term stability and the development of a professional culture; and growth in the level of public trust and confidence in public administration, built on real achievements equitably allocated. The selected group is diverse in terms of the sustainable results achieved in different sectors.
- (iii) While the quality of government will be measured primarily in terms of economic, social and political indicators, it is important not to lose sight of government as a potential benchmark for standards in other spheres, such as a good employer, an honest player and the main defender of the public interest. These are key facets of good governance, and should be among the longer term expected benefits of investment in the development of a modern civil service.

4. Selection of Comparator Countries

The following table summarises the entire sample of countries considered for inclusion, and indicates three groups:

- (i) those included as primary comparators, with the clearest lessons (positive and negative) for approaches to the development of civil service training systems within the context of public administration reform;

- (ii) those included as secondary comparators. These are usually paired with a primary comparator, on the basis of certain broad similarities, to highlight the subsequent comparisons and contrasts which often help to understand the lessons to be learned;
- (iii) those rejected, on the basis of either inadequate progress to provide significant conclusions, or the time constraints in preparing a report such as this, which cannot be comprehensive. However, the final selection rested on the objective of drawing out the clearest lessons, and those countries not included often pointed to similar lessons, or were simply less interesting in this respect.

| Primary Comparator Used | Secondary Comparator Used | Countries Not Used |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Latvia | with | Lithuania |
| Albania | with | Armenia |
| Hungary | | Bulgaria |
| Slovenia | | Croatia |
| | | Czech Republic |
| | | Estonia |
| | | FYROM |
| | | Poland |
| | | Romania |
| | | Serbia and |
| | | Montenegro |
| | | Slovakia |

5. Common Issues of History, Politics and Public Administration

All the countries in this comparative study were, prior to 1990, in the so-called Eastern bloc and had continued under various forms of socialist or communist governments for at least fifty years. However, there were variations among this group and these often had their most significant impact in determining the direction, style and progress made by each country at the starting point of transition.

Slovenia belonged to the family of former Yugoslav republics and had already formed important links with Western Europe through trade and tourism, introduced limited private ownership and avoided a very centralised administration. It had, in many ways, the easiest transition, and built on its trade-based wealth to achieve a modern democratic state within little more than a decade.

Hungary came closest to Slovenia in its initial situation. It had a history very closely linked with mainstream European politics and traditions, through its ties with Austria before 1918, and became a more liberalised state following the uprising of 1956. Hungarians form significant ethnic minorities in neighbouring countries and this has encouraged it to establish structures, in public administration especially, to protect the interests of minority groups within its own borders. So, the Hungary built transition on a relatively liberal and earlier Western tradition, but also with a strongly legalistic one. Administrative capacity was often weak at the level of implementation.

Armenia, Latvia and Lithuania were all republics within the Soviet Union, but their paths since then have widely diverged. The Baltic States were quick and decisive in breaking their political links with the successor CIS framework of the USSR, and in pursuing a Western-oriented foreign policy towards the EU and NATO; while Armenia has developed distinctive relations with neighbouring ex-Soviet Republics: close ties with Russia, weak relations with Georgia and is still not far from conflict with Azerbaijan. But the centralist, bureaucratic and migratory legacies of the Soviet years left their mark on all three.

Latvia adopted a rather formal approach to statehood – its own version of committee-infested bureaucracy – but this resulted in a methodical, strategic approach to reform. *Lithuania*, with a strong centralist mentality surviving within *each* unit of administration of the public service, took a fragmented non-strategic approach which has been less effective and more expensive than that of its close neighbour. The Soviet style has persisted most strongly, among the comparators, in Armenia, and early years of conflict severely delayed serious attention to public administration reform. But when it came, it started quickly.

Albania has the most distinctive communist history and process of transition. It is the poorest country in the sample with a strong tradition of clan-based loyalties. Albania is situated in the Balkans but comparative statistical analysis often links it with the central Asian states. The removal of a particularly command-oriented style of repressive regime left virtually no institutional capacity in public administration, and governments have struggled to develop this ever since. Internal and external conflicts have severely damaged the rate of progress.

6. Options of Overall Design

This comparative study concerns civil service systems in public administration, and focuses on the institutional structures of training and human resource development to support those systems. There are a huge number of options in the design of all public administrations, and therefore civil service systems, and these need to be matched with training schemes which complement their design. We briefly summarise here the key aspects of two types of civil service – *position based* or *career based* – of two training systems – *pre-service* or *in-service* – and two arrangements for state funded training – *supplier-funded* and *buyer-funded* - which are three important issues running through many of the case studies included here, and which are better described at this preliminary stage.

Career – Based and Position –Based Civil Service Systems

Career-Based civil service systems, as their name clearly suggests, are those where each individual has a good expectation of spending much of their working life in one public administration. It immediately follows that such systems must be designed to allow for the following issues.

- Security of job means that financial benefits may be slightly lower than for the more risky private sector, say, but benefits for health, pensions, redundancy etc may be better because of the long tenure within one organisation;
- Security against early termination of employment means that higher standards of conduct, behaviour and work may be expected. Employees should not take advantage of their job security by lowering their standards.

- Systems for developing a career path for each individual need to be developed, through upgrading of qualifications, promotion, incremental financial rewards, and these in turn require training, performance and evaluation systems to be organised.
- Promotion should be based on merit, but a long-term career implies everyone gets some satisfaction from the system. So opportunities for fast-track promotion and annual financial increments subject to satisfactory performance may be included.
- Advancement for an individual may be achieved through mobility – promotion to a higher grade in a parallel organisation or another location, by direct transfer or competition.
- The possibility for advancement by moving upwards via several different ministries, say, implies the need for substantial generalist training to achieve good standards wherever the appointment.
- Mobility is facilitated by a common framework – of standards, grades, job classifications, remuneration – across all branches of the same public administration so employees know where they are in relation to where they were.
- Posts will generally be filled by selection from within the service, and this still allows competition.

Position-Based systems imply that each post is filled by open competition between all applicants, internal and external. So, internal candidates may apply, but they do so without any comparative advantage with respect to candidates from outside the service. This implies a different set of issues.

- The individual does not expect promotion within the system and so will leave the service when the job is complete. This may be according to contract, retirement, redundancy, dismissal or other reasons.
- The financial rewards will reflect the open market and there will be few additional long-term benefits (health, pension scheme) unless written into the individual contract.
- The person is selected largely on the basis of their expertise before taking the job, so in-service training is unlikely to be offered except at the very start of the service where special knowledge, skills or regulations have to be imparted to the individual.

Position-based systems are applied most frequently in the private sector. The public service has selectively adopted this approach in some Western developed countries, and is most likely to use this system at the highest levels, where the government may wish to attract the best candidates from within or outside the service, for particularly important or novel posts, where internal selection may not find the highest calibre of qualified or experienced applicants.

Career-based systems have traditionally been used in Western countries, and most transition countries aspire to building such a career-based system, but features such as mobility, transfer, competition, uniform national systems of pay, grading, fast-track promotion, are not all included in the early stages. It is a more complicated system in that it requires a much more elaborate system of personnel records to be kept, to track individual career records and allow fair treatment.

Nowadays, public administrations have begun to mix the systems, with some features of each. This is to allow new people and ideas to enter the service at levels higher than entry level, and to keep the best by retaining features of a career-based system. As indicated, the

position-based system may sit “on top” of a career-based system, for positions at the very highest levels of the public administration hierarchy.

Pre-service and In-service Training Systems

Some civil service systems, such as the British, pay relatively little regard to pre-service training. Selection takes account of the individual’s general level of education (say graduate level) but is less concerned with the subject (except perhaps to classify some posts as *Scientific* for technical branches of public administration). However, once in the service, great regard is paid to a continual process of training and retraining to ensure that skills, knowledge and ideas are kept up to date. The in-service training is generally undertaken on the basis of short courses, as its goals are focused and specific.

Other systems, such as the French, have traditionally paid more attention to the level, content and style of education received prior to entry into the civil service. The national schools of public administration in France are famous for the standard of their preparation of civil servants. As a result, in-service training was, until recently, relatively neglected.

However, the distinction is again not so clear cut as it once was. Reliance on pre-service training runs the risk that ideas, skills and knowledge are not kept up to date so uniformly, as it relies more on the initiative and willingness of individuals to ensure they train themselves. In-service training systems traditionally take less notice of the original specialisation of individuals’ prior training and education. To persist in this direction, however, would be to ignore the advantages of recruiting people who have taken courses in public administration to degree level.

In the countries of CEE, the cases examined here show that the usual progression in public administration training – where it has been separate from ideology-based matters - has started from lecture-based degree level courses, especially in Law, has then moved towards a wider curriculum (including economics, management and administration, and perhaps human resource management) - and has therefore been largely *pre-service* in nature. Later, the use of in-service short courses based on interactive training methodologies has slowly developed, based on Western models, but it has often taken assistance from elsewhere to get going. This help is needed partly because of a different classroom attitude which has taken time to spread. Lectures lend themselves to command style societies – the teacher knows best (and possibly everything). Participative training methods are more risky, less predictable, and raise more questions. It takes the values of a more open society to be able to face and accept the challenges which this approach brings.

State Funding of Civil Service Training

There are two basic systems for the state to fund training, by funding the *supplier* (that is, the training institution) to develop, organise or deliver training; or by funding the *buyer* (that is, the ministries and departments requiring training). We refer to these two extremes as the *supplier-funded* and *buyer-funded* models. Mixed systems are also considered.

In the supplier-funded model, the training organisation is funded by the state budget directly. It can invite the selection of participants from administrative units in government, and no charge is made to the trainee or the unit. This has the advantage of simplicity, the government may determine the level of overall training budget centrally, and it appears to

be “free” to the end user. This creates the general problem that attendance at training courses is seen as a free good, and the benefit of attendance may not be measured by the recipient – individual or organisation. It is thus supply-led and thus fairly insensitive to the real training needs, because the training institution is free to design and offer what courses it wishes to deliver (based on internal capacity rather than real need) and does not suffer if participants get little benefit.

In the *buyer-funded* model, the administrative unit, a ministry say, can decide an allocation for training in its budget. It will then buy the quality and quantity of training it feels it needs, potentially from both state funded and private sector training suppliers. The buying unit will be more sensitive to the content and quality of the training, and to the benefit the unit receives from this expenditure. One problem in this model is that the training budget might be vulnerable to being diverted to other purposes, in a ministry which has a financial resource problem and weak interest in training its staff. It is also more difficult to ascertain the overall government training budget as decisions are decentralised. Most of these problems can be overcome through regulation – on the proper use of training budgets for example. This second system is better at relating training to the real needs, as it creates a *training market*, but it requires more sophisticated human resource management and development skills within *each* administrative unit to assess training needs and plan career paths. It is therefore more appropriate for well-developed and sophisticated systems of human resource management.

In either model, the training organisation may not deliver the courses itself, but contract outside institutions and trainers to do this. However, this might be more unlikely in the supplier-funded model, *if the training institution has traditionally delivered the training*, as it would be contracting competitors to undertake its own business.

There are two mixed systems worth examining. In one model, the training coordination institution receives the budget (supplier-funded) but there is an allocation of places to the competing ministries, so there is some sensitivity to the demands of the buyers.

The pure buyer-funded model has a weakness. If income is drawn only from courses sold, it may encourage a short term perspective, as the training institution has fewer resources to undertake research and development work, which generate the longer-term benefit. A mixed system, whereby the state *directly* funds the basic overheads of the institution (supplier-funded model), but the training institution covers operating and direct training costs from training course delivery (buyer-funded), overcomes some of the difficulty and provides a greater measure of security without disabling the benefits of an internal training market. So, there is some direct state funding, but training activity and performance generate the additional income required.

7. Case Studies

The summary case studies follow. The full versions are attached as Annexes 1 to 4.

1. Latvia and Lithuania
2. Albania and Armenia
3. Hungary
4. Slovenia.

LATVIA and LITHUANIA

OVERVIEW

Challenges after Transition

The three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, all regained their independence in 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. They immediately faced enormous challenges in rebuilding their economic, social and political systems. Urgent attention was directed towards their weak economies, still closely linked to that of Russia and now in even worse difficulties, and to directing basic humanitarian assistance to protect vulnerable groups. For a number of historical and cultural reasons, the three small states followed very different paths in their process of transition, and Latvia and Lithuania are compared and contrasted in their approaches to public administration reform and the development of their civil service training systems.

Latvia – the Strategic Option

From 1993, the Government of Latvia pursued a vigorous pro-Western policy in an attempt to secure the country's strategic economic, political and defensive future within the EU and NATO. This vision was reinforced within government by the inclusion of many young repatriate Latvians from North America and Europe, who brought into government experience, skills and knowledge which proved invaluable in facilitating the process of Westernisation, and formulating a strategic approach to public administration reform in particular. The Ministry of State Reform, created as the focus of reform, designed new structures and procedures, and established the supporting institutions. The Civil Service Administration was given the task of developing the regulations to govern the administration of a new non-political professional civil service; the Latvian School of Public Administration (LSPA) was established to manage the entry qualifications and in-service training requirements, and the 1994 Civil Service Law provided the framework for the new, modern, highly qualified public service. This vision, built around a comprehensive, strategic approach, has now provided the foundation for public administration in Latvia for nearly ten years, despite major problems and adjustment of expectations.

The economic environment constrained public expenditure throughout the 1990s, and hindered the introduction of uniform schemes of improved remuneration for the public service to attract the desired calibre of civil servant. It also took much longer than expected to prepare and train sufficient numbers of candidates, even with international assistance, to the required level for entry into the civil service. However, through a network of regional training centres coordinated and resourced through the LSPA, over 23,000 civil servants candidates were trained to a uniform national standard over four years. Together with the other reforms undertaken in the period up to 2001, Latvia was recognised as approaching the necessary standard of public administration required for accession to the European Union.

Lithuania – the Piecemeal Option

The approach Lithuania took to public administration reform was, by contrast, fragmented and not guided by an early strategic vision. The Public Administration Training Centre (PATC) was first established in 1993, before any concept or policy, on civil service training or public administration reform, had been developed. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Authorities followed in 1994, charged with developing regulations on public appointments, employees' rights and job descriptions. It worked on, but never completed, a general public sector personnel training policy.

The strongly centralised government ministries in Lithuania, a legacy of the Soviet tradition, developed their own training schemes and centres, outside PATC, and were resistant to the introduction of a uniform national policy on personnel management in the public sector which would have deprived them of their traditional control over human resources. This mirrored the isolated centralised style of decision-making in each ministry, largely uncoordinated with other branches of government. The consequence was a multitude of training institutions in, or partly funded by, the state in partial competition with the private sector, and delivering courses with little or no foundation in systematic training needs analysis. Real reform floundered until criticism from the European Union, in its annual appraisal of states moving towards accession, prompted renewed momentum for change.

The Lessons

The marked differences of approach between Latvia and Lithuania reveal, at the general and detailed levels, strong contrasts in the results. The coherent framework developed by Latvia, encompassing civil service regulation, development and in-service training, under the guidance of a focal ministry or department, enabled the large scale preparation of candidates for civil service status, using limited but nationwide resources, to a uniform national standard. The Lithuanian approach resulted in a more chaotic picture of training resources, inefficiently used and unable to generate the materials and methodologies to achieve similar results. A training framework emerged much later, prompted by the EU, and still criticised for weak coordination.

The first steps taken by each government were critical in determining what followed. Neither path was without problems, but the evidence points to the additional benefits which flowed from the strategic approach taken early on by Latvia compared to the piecemeal approach of Lithuania. Given their proximity, the lack of communication between the two governments on reform issues, and the missed opportunity for learning from each other's experience, are also rather remarkable.

ALBANIA AND ARMENIA

OVERVIEW

The Difficult Start

Both Albania and Armenia suffered a turbulent decade of post-communist government as they struggled to build the basic institutions of democracy and market economies. Albania achieved some stability by 1992, made a slow start on reforming its public administration, but then approached a state of near-anarchy after the collapse of fraudulent pyramid financial schemes in 1997, and had to start rebuilding its economy and institutions a second time. The Kosovo crisis of 1999 put further strain on its economy with the temporary advent of nearly half a million refugees. Armenia emerged from the collapse of the USSR in 1991, while still at war with Azerbaijan and reeling from the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in 1988. It showed remarkable resilience during an extended economic blockade, and managed to rebuild the basic institutions of government during the 1990s, but with little attention paid to fundamental reform in public administration, or public service training, until the end of the decade.

Albania – Two Attempts

Albania has been very active in adopting new laws for reform, but particularly weak in their implementation. It has passed two laws for civil service reform. The 1996 Civil Service Law concentrated responsibilities in the Council of Ministers and required it to set up an Inter-ministerial task force of about 50 persons to establish a civil service management system; it created a Civil Service Commission of five, with numerous Appointment Councils, to manage appointments; and made one slight reference to the already functioning Department of Public Administration in connection with the content of personnel records. The UNDP had already helped to set up the Institute of Management and Public Administration, for public service training, over three years 1993-96, which was not referred to in the Law.

No public service training strategy ever emerged from any of these institutions. IMPA built contacts in the national and international training community but was unable to link into the real needs of the civil service, as proper appointment, examination or training systems, which might have used its services, were never implemented. Appointments on the basis of family networks made qualifications and training largely irrelevant, and professional standards were generally, though not universally low. The pyramid scheme crisis of 1997 led to a new government, and most civil servants, having lost the source of their tenure, left the service.

A new constitution was in place by 1998 and a second Civil Service Law by late 1999. This law created a new Department of Public Administration where responsibilities for the civil service were now concentrated; set up a new Civil Service Commission responsible for legal oversight; and made slightly more reference to training as a right and an obligation. In 2000, the Council of Ministers set up a new public service training institution, the Institute for Training in Public Administration (ITPA), with UNDP assistance again, under the supervision of the Council of Ministers but allowing the Department of Public Administration to manage and decide upon the activities of ITPA, which has never had its own premises. Nothing more happened until 2002 when some preliminary work was done by ITPA, and the UNDP sent in two missions in 2003 to assess the situation. The most significant weaknesses lay in the regulatory framework which had allowed the Department of Public Administration to intervene in ITPA on every matter. The internal structures were weak, particularly the management,

which led to confused roles and under-achievement. Donors ignored the ITPA which further contributed to its inadequate human resources capacity and poor reputation.

Armenia – the Slow Starter

Armenia has been less prolific in passing legislation, a symptom of its more complicated parliamentary politics and the need to satisfy more disparate groups. Like Albania, it also lays great stress on the regulations and has great difficulty in managing the implementation. So, its first Civil Service Law was enacted as late as January 2002 after several attempts. This law set up the Civil Service Council (CSC) as an independent body responsible for most aspects of the new civil service, including training. The Armenian law had addressed training in more detail than the Albanian laws, and had specified the Armenian School of Public Administration, established with EU help in 1994 and strengthened by another EU project in 2001-02, as the institution to deliver the preliminary round of training to new civil servants. Later, more flexibility on training providers was expected and allowed for. Within one year these courses were underway and, as soon as allowed by law, the Civil Service Council opened up training contracts to other state institutions in the capital and the regions.

The Lessons

Albania and Armenia addressed similar problems with superficially similar solutions, but there is a strong contrast in the results they have achieved to date. The Armenian governments persisted with a Civil Service Law despite strong culturally-based opposition, and took pains to get the institutional structures about right. They saw the strengths of an independent body to supervise the civil service and the weaknesses of the only extant training school able to train it. Taking control of the training school and contracting out to other potential training institutions, public and private, has begun to solve the second issue. It is too soon to judge the full impact, but the system is stable and working.

Albania has not yet successfully faced up to the problem of nepotism and its devastating impact on the quality of public service. Adopting new laws does not go very far without implementing the spirit as well as the word. The second attempt in Albania is facing the same problems as the first – the quality of the civil service is not seen systemically and the training component (among others) is unattached and unrelated to the real needs of the public service. Some steps have been taken towards separating administration and politics, by introducing a professional administration at the highest level. If successful, and it develops further, the need for a training system to improve and maintain the quality of civil service administrators more generally will become urgent. Meanwhile Albania has demonstrated only too clearly that donor resources can achieve very little without genuine political commitment to reform. Twice.

HUNGARY

OVERVIEW

Rapid Decentralisation

The Republic of Hungary, soon after its re-creation in 1989, rapidly developed a decentralised system of public administration. It continued its tradition of 20 counties, responsible for major public services, and enabled the creation of over 3,000 local self-governments based on settlements. Within this framework it also established a sophisticated legal and administrative structure to protect the rights of 13 ethnic minorities within its own borders, while keeping a close interest in the 2.6 million ethnic Hungarians resident in neighbouring countries.

A Career-based Civil Service

The Civil Service Law of 1992 provided the early basis for the development of a career-based professional and politically neutral civil service, but the legal framework includes numerous other laws and regulations which deal with specific areas and professions. The personnel function is largely decentralised to the level of the employing authority within government, with no ministry responsible for the overall policy.

The career-basis of the civil service was strengthened in 1997 through the introduction of the *basic* public administration examination, and in 1998 through the *special* public administration examination. Exemption was granted to law graduates and a few others, but were otherwise compulsory for new entrants, and for senior positions, respectively. National coordination was achieved through the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration which is responsible for the standards and training preparation, although the implementation is decentralised to the county level. Both levels of examination have a strong emphasis on law.

Education and Training for Public Administration

Hungary has a very long tradition of education for the public service, and numerous university-level degree courses are now available for those wishing to take up a civil service career. The main emphasis is again legal, with only a few now offering more interdisciplinary degree curricula. There is no training following entry to the service, apart from that linked to the basic public administration examination noted above. In-service training is provided by individual ministries, agencies and county governments, based recently on annual institutional training plans, which in turn are based on a four-year national training programme. The emphasis is rather legal, with particular attention towards the institutional framework of the European Union, in preparation for Hungary's accession in 2004. There is now greater concern about quality assurance, and further reforms in 2000 introduced a new system for both courses and trainers.

In the early stages, the rapid drive towards decentralisation, multiplication of administrations at the local level and absence of an overall human resources policy led to lower efficiency, higher costs and poorer services. Coordination was also very weak within the state level of government, which hindered the control of costs and numbers of civil servants. Reforms since 2000 have addressed these problems, with greater emphasis on quality of the civil service through recruitment and training, the introduction of performance appraisal procedures linked to a national pay scheme, and improved standards of conduct. Improved coordination has allowed improvements in efficiency and nation-wide standards, while retaining the benefits of decentralised decision-making and implementation.

SLOVENIA

OVERVIEW

A Fortunate Starting Point

Slovenia, among all the states of central and eastern Europe, has been favoured by geography, recent history and the economic and structural endowments it inherited from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The limited measure of decentralisation, private economic activity and trade links with the West, prior to 1990, put it in a stronger position than its ideological neighbours to withstand the trials of transition. Its relatively homogenous population, and political agility, helped it avoid the turmoil of the Balkans in the 1990s. It started, and remains, the wealthiest of the East European States to transform its social, economic and political systems to those of a modern democratic state.

The Slow Path of Reform

Basic changes to the system of public administration were made very quickly after 1990, as much as to support the process of economic restructuring as to enhance public service. The adoption of a general public service employment law, and later pay law, the creation of a new system of local government, and the deconcentration of central government activities were the primary indicators of change. But the fundamental reforms in public administration took longer to achieve, stage by stage, and did not follow a simple path laid down by an initial vision or scheme. There was a logic to the reforms, but the timing was often subject to the vagaries and constraints of political will, administrative capacity and national interest groups.

The Ministry of Interior emerged as the main engine of administrative reform in 1995, and included the specialised unit for directing and implementing the reform process from 1997. The Ministry also housed the Administrative Academy which, together with the School of Public Administration in the University of Ljubljana, forms the main foundation for the public service training system. A master plan for reform was developed in 1996, covering the period up to 1999, but it was neither fully implemented nor kept on schedule. A Government Personnel Office was established in this period, but other initiatives such as a Programme Council for Public Administration Reform failed to operate successfully. The main achievements were made after 1999, following repeated criticism from the European Union, not so much on the adoption of detailed regulations required by EU accession, as on the administrative capacity of Slovenia to implement them. Public administration reform was given a higher status, important laws, such as the Civil Service Law, were passed in 2002, and administrative capacity was reinforced through recruitment and a national training programme.

The Enhanced Status of Training

There is a wide diversity of education and training institutions in Slovenia, but in-service training for the public service is coordinated by the Administrative Academy, based in the Ministry of Interior. Most trainers are contracted, and the Academy's main role is the organisation rather than the delivery of training courses. The new Civil Service Law, to be implemented from June 2003, includes a whole chapter on training and introduces a competitive element into the training selection process. Recent emphasis has moved towards a more user-friendly, accessible public administration serving the interests of all citizens. Improvements in efficiency and responsiveness, and the long-term introduction of performance measures, are being supported through the development of an intensive and continuing programme of in-service training for the new civil service.

8. Conclusions and Lessons to be Learned

This final section focuses on *civil service training systems*. The particular conclusions which may be drawn from each individual case study have been included with that study. In this section we want to take advantage of the comparative aspect of these studies, and to highlight the general lessons and conclusions on key issues which may be drawn from comparisons across the whole group. So the main structure of this section is based on those issues which seem to be important for the style, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and ultimately success (or otherwise) of civil service training systems in transition states generally.

Political Commitment

It is a truism, but one important to restate, that any system in public administration which does not have the support and political commitment of the governing elite is unlikely to make much progress. It could be argued that without that support it will not make *any* progress, but there are external factors (such as long term goals of accession to the EU) which bring in wider political players than the purely national, and these can influence the internal balance of political perceptions to allow grudging or reasonable progress.

Latvia provides the clearest example of strong political support for public administration reform, which was evident at the very beginning of the process. This commitment sustained the momentum of reform for several years, and the original vision was never lost. Latvia also demonstrated the results of changes in the political status of the supervisory body responsible for the reform process at the highest level. The six supervisory organisations which have controlled public administration reform in Latvia since 1993 have alternated between political (minister-led) and non-political (civil servant-led). The drive for reform (judged by the pace of change) seems to have reflected this, with a political head giving greater impetus. This may or may not have resulted from the resources which were made available by political forces, but the political support was a critical factor.

Armenia also made its greatest progress when the President took a personal (though low-profile) interest. Forthcoming elections and a general perception of poor public services, related to weak administrative capacity, no doubt influenced this late interest – but the lesson is that it made a difference.

Slovenia showed less consistent support to public administration reform. The overarching goal of accession to the European Union was significant, but political structures seems to have been strengthened when reform had stalled or was proceeding too slowly. Political support was used to correct a situation rather than lead it. Hungary was similar. Another reorganisation of HIPA in 2001 created a national coordinating institution in the Office of the Prime Minister.

By 1998 the Government of Albania was under enormous pressure from donors, and did not have the administrative capacity to implement many programmes. However, systems of recruitment and selection which focused on merit rather than personal acquaintance were alien to the culture and unattractive to a highly networked society. Political commitment to real change was difficult to generate – it cut across too many interests. Without a merit-based system, training was not of much interest either, apart from the opportunities for study tours and well-paid posts which donors generated.

The weak coordination of administration in Lithuania, with fragmented political support for reform, resulted in a very uncoordinated approach to training systems. Again, the relationship between political structures and reform structures was a significant one.

Strategic Vision or Pragmatic Evolution

Latvia pursued an early strategic vision in public administration reform, and achieved an efficient, functioning and stable structure for coordination of the civil service and its training system:- neat and relatively cheap, with relevant donor assistance linked into the activities. Latvia's strategic approach also side-stepped the internal problems of government coordination by introducing a goal-oriented approach. Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia are good examples of more pragmatic approaches. All three had problems with overall coordination in public administration, in different areas. Slovenia was fortunate in having a small administration in a small country, and forces for fragmentation were politically weak. So it moved towards a coherent system of training in stages, but was not very successful in actually following its own, slowly designed, master plans. Lithuania did not have the same degree of internal coherence in government, each ministry following its own human resource management and development policies. So, its pragmatic approach resulted in fragmentation and duplication of effort, and thus a relatively ineffective and inefficient structure for civil service training. Hungary lost control of civil service numbers early on, through a very decentralised system of human resource management, and later regained coherence through reinforced structures, including a key institute, HIPA, within the Prime Minister's Office. The explicit strategic approach of Latvia, combined with political commitment, avoided these problems of fragmentation and incoherence, and so the country is achieving its goals, despite lacking the strong economic base of Hungary and Slovenia.

Human Resource Management and Development Structures

Most of the countries studied aspire to a career-based civil service, an approach which implies:

- uniform frameworks for job pay and grading, promotion, appraisal etc to facilitate transfers and mobility across the whole public administration;
- the need for civil service training systems capable of enforcing and upgrading standards across the whole service.

However, there is a balance to be struck between the components of human resource management which are better undertaken at the most devolved or local level, and those which require close coordination to satisfy the issues above. The more advanced countries moved quickly (Latvia) or slowly (Hungary and Slovenia) towards the policy definition and management of uniform standards, regulations, remuneration etc for the whole civil service, through a single authority, of which the Latvian Civil Service Administration provides a good example. In parallel with this, the actual management of recruitment, selection, job definition, performance appraisal (where it exists), retraining, and disciplinary matters, within the national regulatory framework, is undertaken at the most local level, usually through the head of the administrative unit concerned.

Similar observations may be made about the training systems. Responsibilities for the definition of overall training policy, of the broad curricula, of standards and levels of provision, of civil service examinations and so on, have been, quickly or slowly, located in

coordinating units such as the Latvian School of Public Administration, the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration, the Administrative Academy in Slovenia and the Civil Service Council in Armenia. These institutions are also responsible for organising programmes of training, but not generally for conducting the training. This framework has allowed the wide use of other regional training facilities and institutes and of contracted trainers, while maintaining uniform national standards. This semi-market approach encourages some competition, efficient use of the whole range of national facilities and scarce human resources, while not losing control of the overall goals and standards of the training provided.

Lithuania has achieved a large training market, in terms of supply, but the government has never achieved much coordination of standards or content, because it lacks the institutional mechanism, and supporting regulatory framework, to manage this. Albania has tried, through its Department of Public Administration, to achieve coordination of a national policy, but in this case other factors have hindered the development of any viable civil service training institution to take over the coordination role.

Resources

There is a wide range in the relative economic strength and *per capita* wealth of the six countries studied. This does not seem to have affected the approach taken, but has influenced progress where financial constraints on the public sector have been most severe (e.g. Latvia). The two wealthiest, Hungary and Slovenia, have the strongest economies and this has been the most important factor in their progress towards EU accession, for example, but the capacity of their administrations has not always kept in line – again, political commitment seems to have been more important than finance. Latvia's economy is significantly less strong, and the government had difficulty in attracting high quality candidates to its new civil service – with pragmatic arrangements taking precedence over the formalities of the Civil Service Law at one point. With renewed political commitment, and an eye on accession, the strategic path was regained. So, economic resources appear to be a possible constraint on pace of reform, but do not prevent a strategic approach.

The choice of *supplier-* or *buyer-funded* training model is related to the efficient use of resources in civil service training systems. It was suggested earlier that less developed training systems, where human resources management is not well-developed within administrative units, would be more likely to use the supplier-funded approach (the state pays the training organisation directly), and this was the case in Armenia prior to 2002. Where human resource management is better developed the advantages of a training market can be exploited, and a buyer-funded or mixed approach used. Slovenia uses such a system, and goes further by introducing competition for training places under its new Civil Service Law.

There are other options. Both Latvia, and very recently Armenia, fund a single buyer (the Latvian School of Public Administration and Civil Service Council respectively) which then contract training through several institutions, not just one. Both act as training coordinators, and in the case of the LSPA define very clearly the form, content and standards to be applied. This has the advantage of developing training facilities and resources in several locations, though training needs are assessed nationally and not for each beneficiary institution. This is appropriate at the early stages of civil service development, when the needs are similar across all government departments, but less useful when greater specialisation is needed. This approach may later be transformed into a full

buyer-funded system when individual departmental human resource management capacities have developed.

The development of *human resources* in the training profession itself is crucial. For some aspects of public administration reform, outside experience is helpful, at least at the beginning. Training courses are clearly better if they use trainers with practical experience of the reforms, of the difficulties encountered in their implementation elsewhere, and of their relevance to the current situation. So, training of trainers, and donor assistance are valuable assets in the new training systems. Latvia used these resources well, Lithuania and Albania did not.

Albania provides the clearest example of how substantial donor assistance does not guarantee progress, let alone success. Certainly, in the case of Albania, a long-term perspective is needed and the UNDP supported programmes may have been too short, and not programmed in a manner which would have given early warning on problems developing. However, it is also apparent that the political and organisational structures for the design and creation of a new training institution were not appropriate, either before or after the 1997 crisis. The first attempt with control located at Council of Ministers level was too high; the second attempt based on a relationship with DoPA might have worked better if that relationship had been set up with less opportunity for interference. (The project is still ongoing, and the recent reports may help to correct the situation.)

Why Reform Public Administration?

The purpose of public administration reform has been defined as good governance, among other objectives. The focus of concern in this area is the quality of service to the public, measured by its accessibility and openness, its speed of delivery, its fairness and lack of bias across client groups and so forth. Is there a connection between civil service training and the quality of public service?

The general objectives of training might be concerned to achieve greater efficiency, for example, through improved procedures. Greater efficiency might be achieved through:

- the same level of service with the consumption of fewer resources, so the main benefit to the public will be lower taxes;
- a higher level of service using the same resources, so the benefits might be faster service through the use of better technology, or simplified procedures.

Through successive chains of such improvements, it would be reasonable to expect advances in public administration methods in general to gradually offer better service if measured in terms of time saved, quicker responses, lower taxes. These are real benefits, but attention to measurable gains in efficiency does omit many improvements in service quality, where the attitude or behaviour of a civil servant is more important: perhaps he or she is more sympathetic, pays greater attention to detail, understands the particular combination of procedural problems which have resulted in poor service, and so on. These improvements are unlikely to develop by themselves, they need explicit inclusion in training courses.

There is mixed evidence on service quality. In the more advanced systems, such as in Slovenia and Hungary, greater attention is now being paid to quality assurance, for example, in terms of both the quality of training itself, and the service delivery. Hungary

approaches the issue rather formally, and has set up elaborate frameworks for small communities and ethnic minorities to be able to express their political preferences, for example. Latvia showed resentment towards its Russian minority and has slowly moved towards a more liberal approach through pressure from the European institutions, such as the EU and the Council of Europe.

The EC Reports are useful in assessing public service. They have tracked the backlog of legal court cases in Slovenia, for example, which at one time reached over half a million. This observation resulted of course in the appointment of more judges, and related resources, and the backlog fell. But, it was external pressure pressing for higher resources, rather than training, which achieved the improvement. In other areas of public administration where Slovenia was criticised (return of real estate to original owners is an example) civil service recruitment *and* training were the solution. These EC reports also explicitly assess administrative capacity. Although the context is accession to the European Union, a general assessment is made of the ability of the public administration to handle a large workload with detailed procedures, and this can be a useful indicator of service quality. Hungary uses these reports carefully to guide the development of its internal administrative competences. An important impact of the accession process is that proper procedures must be introduced into areas where the regulations had lapsed or were unclear. Sometimes compliance with new EU-compatible procedures led to improvements simply because there were no credible procedures before. (Foreigners' residency permits in Lithuania is an example.)

Another interesting but less reliable indicator is personal experience: how do people feel about the quality of service? Anecdotal evidence is abundant, and Albania, Armenia, and to some extent Lithuania, fare badly on this indicator. These three countries are also the least reformed, measured against their respective starting points. And they also have the least developed civil service training systems. One interesting insight is that the services which improved most markedly in Lithuania over the last four years were those which had been transferred to new agencies outside the main system of public administration. Investment in equipment, accommodation and personnel achieved real results.

Which Civil Service Training System?

From the evidence presented, it is clear here that there is no single system of public administration reform in general, and of civil service training in particular, which can be recommended as the "best" approach. Each of the outcomes in the six states was the result of economic, social and political history shaped from 1990 onwards by circumstance, conscious choice and mixed fortune. Nevertheless, patterns have emerged, and despite the diversity of routes followed, and distances covered, there are some similarities in the apparent destinations. This final section identifies some key signposts to effective civil service training systems.

- the institutional structures need to encompass
 - overall strategic guidance at the political level, providing the goals of the civil service training system, and how it relates to, and supports, the type of civil service which is required: scale and scope, quality, career or position-based and so on;

Examples: Ministry of State Reform and successors (Latvia)

Ministry of Public Administration Reform and Local Authorities
(Lithuania)

Ministry of the Interior (Slovenia)

Ministry of the Interior and HIPA (Hungary)

- technical regulation of the civil service to ensure common, fair and universally acceptable standards, covering, for example, recruitment and selection procedures, grading and job classification methodologies, appraisal and promotion procedures. This regulatory body should be guided by the strategic level, but be independent enough to develop the professional skills and capacity to operate smoothly and without disruption in periods of political change;

Examples: Civil Service Administration (Latvia)

Civil Service Council (Armenia)

Directorate for Organisation and Development of Administration
(Slovenia)

Hungarian Institute of Public Administration

- technical regulation of the training system to ensure the most effective use of limited national training resources. In particular, it should enable diversity and innovation to flourish, while ensuring that, at any one time, uniform national standards of professional training, examination and vocational qualification can be assured and sustained.

Examples: Latvian School of Public Administration

Hungarian Institute for Public Administration

Administrative Academy (Slovenia)

The Hungarian system is distinctive in that the political structure to support public administration reform, the administration to regulate the framework of the civil service, and the training institute for the civil service, are all located in the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration. This is headed by a Minister under the Prime Minister, and the most senior appointments are political. But the technical aspects of the work, such as the training-related matters, are run by professionals, not by politicians. The separation of functions and powers is clearly laid down in the regulations of HIPA.

- The most *efficient* training structures appear to be those which have a *national body* responsible for defining training needs, guiding the training curricula, contracting out training delivery, monitoring quality and evaluating impact – *combined with a network of training suppliers*, distributed across the regions and able to specialise to a degree in the curricula, courses, and specialised topics which they offer. This format takes advantage of a diverse training supply market, engages regional and local resources, while ensuring providing an enabling mechanism for ensuring common national standards. Problems have been apparent where the director of the national training institution has been a political appointment, or more strictly, when his selection has not been on grounds of merit and competence (Albania and Armenia).

Examples: Latvian School of Public Administration
Hungarian Institute of Public Administration
[Administrative Academy (Slovenia)]

- Uniform national standards, in turn, facilitate maximum professional mobility, enhanced learning and growth of experience, and promote optimum use of the scarcest human resources - the very able and highly trained professionals who are capable of supporting policy development and decision-making at the highest levels of government.
- A mixed funding system has many advantages. The state funds the basic overhead charges of the training coordination institution, but most of its income is raised through a buyer-funded system to create an internal market between trainer-supplier and trainee-buyer. This buyer-funded component encourages sensitivity to training needs, as long as the human resource management capacity (in ministries, say) is sufficiently developed to enable good standards of training needs assessment and career management within the buyer's administration. (Slovenia).
- Donor support and contributions to public administration reform need to be coordinated with the framework which has been developed, and not regarded as a separate matter. Their work most often relates to the development of the public administration reform system, development of the training institution or the delivery of civil service training itself (often of a different character). So, good if coordinated, possibly counter-productive if not.
- In the longer term, international, or regional networks of, training institutions, may be important. One example, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht (The Netherlands), already exists. Networks would allow a measure of specialisation, in a cost-effective way, as each institution in the network could offer a key topic (say public finance, or policy development, or service standards and monitoring) at a higher level than possible if delivered by all institutions separately. Such networks would also facilitate mutual learning between training institutions, a shortcoming mentioned in the Baltic examples given.

The Final Word

The key to the whole process of public administration reform is political commitment. Given this, then the overall organisational structures and procedures can be designed, to deliver the goals defined at the start. This implies a strategic approach. The main lesson to be drawn from the case studies here is that early definition of a strategic approach avoids so many difficulties later on, which are then more difficult or more expensive to solve. To get from A to B you need a map. Or you can travel without a map, but do not expect to get there cheaply or fast, or even to get there at all.

ANNEXES – FULL CASE STUDIES

1. Latvia and Lithuania
2. Albania and Armenia
3. Hungary
4. Slovenia

LATVIA and LITHUANIA

| | Latvia | Lithuania | BiH |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------|
| Size 000 km ² | 64.6 | 65.2 | 51.1 |
| Population 000s (2002) | 2367 | 3601 | 3964 |
| GDP per capita US\$ (2002) | 8300 | 8400 | 1800 |
| Number of local authorities below state level | 33 | 10 | 160 |

The Baltic States – tradition, transition and new opportunity

The three Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia all regained independence in 1991, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Despite the apparent similarity of their size and location, the three states have distinctive languages, cultures and traditions. The history and culture of Lithuania, the largest of the three, has always been closely linked with that of Poland, and at its zenith Lithuania *included* much of what is now Poland, when its borders nearly reached the Black Sea. Its capital, Vilnius, was situated in Poland prior to 1945. It is predominantly Roman Catholic, (Latvia and Estonia are mainly Lutheran) and agriculture remains a significant sector (accounting for 20% of employment, with Latvia at 15% and Estonia 11%). Latvia and Estonia have long borders with mainland Russia, while Lithuania has a common border with Russia only on its western side with the enclave of Kaliningrad.

The Latvian and Lithuanian languages have common roots, and appear to be similar, but they are not mutually understood by the general populations. The Estonian language is quite distinct, belonging to the Finnish-Hungarian family (reflecting Estonia's historical affinity with Finland, while Latvia has been linked to the Swedes, Danes Russians and Germans at different stages of its history). The implication of these language differences has been that the governments of the three Baltic States have always had to communicate with each other in another language, and since 1991 have generally used English, rather than Russian, even though Russian was the *lingua franca* of the USSR. This reflects longstanding tensions between the three small states and their powerful neighbour.

All three countries have significant Russian minorities, resulting from deliberate migration policies of the USSR, including the movement of Soviet military personnel towards its frontier republics. This issue has maintained tensions between Russia and Estonia (ethnic Russians 28%), and Russia and Latvia (30%), which focus on the status of these Russian minorities. Pressure from the European Union (EU), which all three states are keen to join, has helped to gradually improve the situation. In Lithuania, the relatively small minority (9%) generated less tension, and following independence, residents were offered the choice of taking either Lithuanian citizenship or another (such as Russian) but not both. However, Latvian citizenship, with associated full political rights, remains a difficult issue. Conditions of citizenship include emphasis on Latvian language ability, and has thus excluded many ethnic Russians who never learned the language. It created a large class of stateless persons, who had no vote, and who had to renew their "USSR" passport in Moscow, years after the USSR had collapsed. The issue was helped through the introduction of a non-citizen passport, with considerable international assistance. Citizenship in turn is a condition of eligibility for entry into the civil service, so that many former government officials were permanently removed from public service when the Cabinet of Ministers decided to dismiss all ministerial personnel in 1993 and then reappoint. The official language of government became exclusively Latvian. This also resulted in a relatively large intake into the public service of young ethnic Latvians, who lacked experience but were not so imbued with the Soviet traditions of hierarchical bureaucracy. However, the

Latvian style also favours a committee-based approach, probably to take collective, and avoid individual, decisions while political sensitivities remain high. This also generates a sluggish bureaucratic approach to decision-making.

Latvia benefited from the arrival after 1990 of many young educated ethnic Latvians from the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and elsewhere, whose families had left Latvia during the second World War. This had a number of surprising consequences.

Firstly, the Latvian language had broadly developed three traditions – the “classical” Latvian of the early years of the 20th Century used in the literature of the period, the expurgated Soviet version post-1945, and a new technologically advanced version which had grown in the Latvian-speaking communities (such as at Kalamazoo in the U.S.A.) alongside technical developments in English. So, this required an official committee to systematise the language, and incidentally remove words of Russian origin.

Secondly, several of these “repatriated” Latvians (though most had never actually been to Latvia before) quickly entered politics and government service. During the period 1994-97, the posts of Minister of Finance, Minister of Welfare, Minister of State Reform, State Minister for Aid and Credits, State Secretary (civil servant) for State Reform, the Head of the Civil Service Administration and the Advisor to the Prime Minister were at some stage all occupied by a “foreign” Latvian (three of whom were female, who at some point occupied five of these posts). The current President of Latvia is a female Latvian of Canadian origin. This repatriate involvement at the highest levels accelerated the disuse of Russian language in government (the foreign Latvians had never learned it) and accelerated the process of “Westernisation”. Methods and ideas from Western style governments were brought in by the *practitioners*, as well as through the usual donor-financed routes.

Thirdly, this influx also influenced the structure of the national political spectrum. The *Latvian Way* party, which included several of these repatriates, was a key player in Latvian politics in the mid 1990s (alongside nearly twenty other parties) and led the governments from 1993 to 1995, when key decisions in public administration reform were made. The nationalist-internationalist dimension of Latvian politics displayed an anti-Russian sentiment across the board, but the pro-Western influence of the *Latvian Way* also directed interest towards the USA, Europe and eventual membership of the EU and NATO. Its nearest Western neighbours were all directly accessible across the Baltic – Sweden, Denmark and Germany – and all three provided significant assistance and influence during the 1990s. The Prime Minister of Latvia remarked in 1995 that “*before we had to look towards Moscow, now we have to look towards Brussels*”.

Lithuania followed a different route. It had earlier maintained a strong local Communist Party and earned a certain distant respect from Moscow. Following independence, the anti-Russian sentiment was lower, the language issue less of a problem, and returning Lithuanians were less influential on government. So less of the “old” was discarded, and Lithuania retained in stronger measure the Soviet bureaucratic tradition. None of its main nearest neighbours, Latvia, Belarus and Poland, had significant influence on its progress.

Relations *between* the Baltic States was also turbulent at times, though mitigated by the opportunity for quickly organised meetings between government leaders (often in border villages) when the occasion demanded. Latvia and Estonia nearly came to conflict over fish resources in the Baltic; Latvia and Lithuania still have a maritime border dispute in the Baltic

due to interests in oil exploration rights. Lengthy queues at their border posts in the mid-1990s were a symptom of a new strong sense of national identity as well as inefficient procedures, despite these posts having been improved over time through EU funding. Generally the three states followed their own paths, reflecting their different long term differences rather than their recently enforced association within the USSR. So, there was little obvious sign of learning from each other, but more of a sense of competition, especially concerning the race to join international organisations and defending their narrower national interests. To an extent, where reforms followed parallel tracks, this reflected the competitive style and the wish not to be left behind.

The Approaches to Public Administration Reform

The approach taken towards public administration reform and civil service training and development not surprisingly took different directions in the early years. Convergence, insofar as it is being achieved, has stemmed from the joint goal of EU membership and the adoption of EU-based regulations. But Latvia and Lithuania had a common starting point which was the urgent need to recover from the economic collapse which followed the end of the Soviet Union. So the attention of the Latvian and Lithuanian Governments, and of donors, in the years immediately following the events of 1991, was concentrated on humanitarian and economic issues, not primarily public administration reform.

Latvia

Latvia began serious activity in public administration reform as early as 1993 after a *Latvian Way*-led Government took power in September. By the end of 1993, the Government had established the Ministry of State Reform (MSR), as the central body responsible for development and implementation of the reform². It was envisaged as a model ministry to formulate the principles, regulations, structures and procedures of a new style of public administration, which would be gradually disseminated throughout the whole of government, once evaluated and tested. By May 1994, the Government had also passed the first Civil Service Law (CSL) which established the frameworks for the Civil Service Administration (CSA) and the Latvian School for Public Administration (LSPA), which still operate.

The Civil Service Law envisaged a broad career and qualification-based civil service encompassing every public servant who was not a technical worker, thus establishing a uniform civil service for all administrative bodies. Civil servant status was to be tied to duties and obligations, and rewarded by job security and adequate remuneration. At the time, the Government did not have the financial resources (as civil servant status was linked to an immediate 20% increase in salary, a feature to which the Ministry of Finance objected), and the incumbent public servants did not have the knowledge or skills to immediately justify civil servant status. So, a transition period was introduced. Employees above a certain level of responsibility would first gain the status of *Civil Service Candidates*, and would be eligible to take an examination to achieve full *Civil Servant* status, with an increase in salary, after having served 3 to 5 years in a civil service candidate position. A series of laws and regulations were passed to support the Candidate status. In 1994 and 1995 more than 14,000 applicants passed the qualification examination, organised by the LSPA, to acquire Civil Service Candidate status. Extension to include local government officials and other groups was envisaged in further legislation.

² The State Secretary was an American Latvian, who was later persuaded to become Minister for State Reform.

The Civil Service Administration (CSA), initially under the Ministry of State Reform (MSR), was made responsible for the development and implementation of general regulations on the organisation of the civil service. It coordinates personnel policy, and is concerned mainly with the technical details of administering a government wide civil service, ensuring correct procedures on appointments, changes of job, promotion and termination. It also maintains a database of civil servants, provides suggestions on their placing and information on available positions, tracks career histories of civil servants, and coordinates the activities of state institutions relating to civil service activities. Its role developed further in the late 1990s, when it developed a unified database on state institutions relating ranks to responsibilities, began training personnel managers to be able to implement the system of civil service ranks, introduced career management and career development practices, and was involved in a government working group on wage reform.

The Latvian School of Public Administration (LSPA), which has accommodation in the same building in Riga as the CSA, was made responsible for the development of state civil service in-service training programmes, manages and coordinates the training process for state civil servants in other training institutions and centres, and organises public seminars, lectures and workshops on issues concerning public administration. It cooperated with 24 training centres, 14 in Riga and 10 in the regional centres³. Funding is centrally budgeted on a programme-by-programme basis, a funding arrangement chosen by the Government. Once a programme is financed, the LSPA provides a quota for participants from the ministries. Language training has a fixed budget, and is co-financed by the institutions sending the participants. Latvian law specified a training entitlement (though not obligation) of 45 days over three years, at state expense, for civil servants and civil service candidates.

Although the LSPA, originally with 16 staff (now down to 9), does not deliver training courses itself, it does prepare curricula and materials, to be used by other training centres. It contracts these centres to deliver blocks of training, each organised to require one full week of training. Each course normally includes around 20 to 25 participants. The general training programme includes four blocks of materials, appropriate for new entrants to the service and those in middle management positions. During the transition period (1995-98) general training made up the bulk of the training programmes. Over 23,000 participants attended a general week-long course in this four year period, with nearly 12,000 in 1995 alone. According to the LSPA, the total state budget for training was about US\$ 1.11 million in 1995, spent primarily on the training of civil service candidates and the preparation of training materials. This not only gives an idea of scale, but also of the relative efficiency, since the materials prepared in the LSPA were, through regional and Riga-based training centres, delivered to a widely dispersed body of public servants. The LSPA training programme is therefore based on a common curriculum which means that the course syllabus used for training civil service candidates in different training centres is uniform. Each training centre which secures a contract with the LSPA to train civil service candidates is obliged to deliver the course according to the contract, using trainers prepared for instruction and licensed by the LSPA.

Before licensing, the LSPA involves potential trainers in curriculum development, training-of-trainers and related activities. During this stage, trainers have to demonstrate their commitment and skills in training. Training centres choose their training staff from the list of licensed trainers drawn up by the LSPA. There were around 200 trainers in 1996, none of whom were

³ The number of training institutions in the network has gradually fallen since 1996.

full-time staff or had a full-time contract. Almost all have a background in university teaching, and many teach in universities alongside other activities such as private business, or civil service work. Some effort was made to introduce modern training ideas, including interactive methods, group assignments, and so on, into the courses for civil service candidates.

It is not easy to characterise the training centres, which vary considerably in nature, size and profile. Some training centres are located within universities; some, such as that within the Local Government Training Centre (LGTC), were newly established; some are run by education and consulting companies in the private sector; some are primarily focused on other areas (such as the Latvian Bank College) but offer training to civil servants as a secondary activity. All of the training centres are independent legal entities, all have been established as a result of an assessment of training needs and none receive direct support from the state budget. The issuing of LSPA contracts and disbursement of funds is not prescribed by any procurement procedure, therefore contracts are awarded to training centres on the basis of a preliminary assessment by the LSPA of their capacity to deliver and, as regards recurrent contracts, on the basis of participants' evaluation. The definition of quality standards is somewhat uncertain due to the absence of formal criteria. The course evaluation questionnaires form one source of information (most responses have been consistently positive). Representatives from the LSPA pay visits to the training centres, during the courses, without prior notice to check the actual performance, and informal responses and sources are also used to help evaluate quality.

The training centres do not tend to specialise, but cover the entire LSPA curriculum in their programmes. This is especially true for the regional training centres which have to train civil servant candidates from the corresponding region. However, the same is true for the numerous centres in Riga, and it is apparent that greater specialisation among these could add considerably to the range and quality of subjects delivered.

The overall picture on public service training during this early period must also take account of the substantial contribution from foreign donors. Although the course materials for the courses described have been compiled mainly by the LSPA staff, additional materials (in such areas as the Market Economy and Management) were prepared by donors providing assistance for the training of top civil service managers, and translated into Latvian. Latvia received an estimated ECU 165 million of technical assistance between 1991 and 1994, of which a substantial but unknown proportion (one estimate suggests 20%) was used for training in the public sector. In 1994 a substantial EC-Phare public administration reform Programme (ECU 4 million) included ECU 1 million for training, and was focused on the CSA, the LSPA and the Local Government Training Centre (LGTC). This project worked closely with the Ministry of State Reform (MSR) so that the reform process and the associated training resources were closely coordinated. The project was implemented by a Danish, Dutch and Irish consortium, led by the Danish School of Public Administration.

During 1995 it was realised that not all training needs could be undertaken by the LSPA. The School was able nevertheless to design two new courses (on management consulting and audit, and on human resources management) by mid-1996 to meet immediate demands. This was supplemented by additional resources, from Sweden and Britain, to help carry out further training.

Further donor assistance was also used to undertake a Training Needs Assessment (TNA), under the EC-Phare Public Reform Programme, to help re-orient the LSPA towards the needs of the civil service "market". The TNA was based on interviews with the representatives of

civil service institutions (such as ministries and the State Revenue Service) responsible for training, who identified the need for training in EU matters. Based on these assessments, the LSPA launched a programme on European issues.

Some Conclusions on Latvia

At this point it is worth making an assessment of the approach taken to public administration reform and training in Latvia, and to mention some of the aspects which went astray, during the later 1990s. Firstly, it is clear that, from the election of the new government in 1993 onwards, there was immense political commitment to address public administration reform as an issue in its own right, and to build a strategic and comprehensive perspective through the efforts of the Ministry of State Reform (MSR). The problems which developed can to some extent be related to the excess of confidence, optimism and national pride evident at the time. Latvia had regained its independence, and had successfully negotiated its way through the first couple of years of economic hardship. It had asserted its national identity and turned its back on its recent past, with little inclination to quickly appease the concerns of the international community on the issue of stateless persons. With a new style government, employing some foreign Latvians, it felt it could change itself quickly into a modern Western State. It was a government with vision, which put Latvia on a path towards Europe and reform, but it embarked on a programme with several inbuilt weaknesses.

Firstly, it was too ambitious on timescale. The politician who became the first Minister of State Reform in 1993 had included a “sunset” clause in the law creating the Ministry, promising its closure in two years once the reforms had been completed. A year later he became Prime Minister, (an American Latvian then became the second Minister of State Reform⁴) and after the MSR had been closed, or rather transformed temporarily into the much less politically visible Department of State Reform (DSR) in the State Chancellery, he admitted he had made two mistakes. His first mistake was to promise to close down the MSR after two years. His second mistake was to keep his promise. So, the time it takes to implement public administration reform was badly underestimated.

Secondly, the implementation of a new Civil Service Law proved much more difficult than the process of enactment. The centrepiece of reform, the creation of a civil service, based on international examples aimed at a high quality, professional, non-political administrative elite. Two problems were foreseen: the lack of financial resources to match salaries and benefits with an elite status; and the lack of Latvian human resources with the skills, perspective and experience from which to form that elite. For both reasons an intermediate status was created – the civil service candidate. Aspirants to full civil service status could apply for a certificate of such status (involving entry examination and assessment), then apply for a vacant *civil service* post (a matter of legal definition) within six months, and after a minimum of three years and a maximum of five, with in-service training, take the necessary examinations to acquire full civil servant status and receive a pay rise. The law therefore raised severe problems of financial cost, of premature restrictions on flexible employment arrangements (such as combining jobs) which assisted public servants to live on poor salaries, and of inadequate human resource capacity within Latvia to create a modern professional service.

The 1994 Civil Service Law was never in fact fully implemented. Because low public sector salaries made it difficult to attract candidates of good calibre, and civil service candidate status restricted the opportunities to supplement incomes by combining jobs or through other

⁴ She had previously been State Secretary, nominally a non-political post, though it was an exceptional case.

activities, the law aggravated the recruitment problem. The disciplinary procedures, and management control on hiring and firing were also too restrictive for the time. So, many institutions (such as the Ministries of Transport, and Welfare) requested new regulations to release them from civil service institution status. Moreover a number of agencies that raised their own revenues did not become part of the civil service system to retain their freedom in dealing with their financial resources. Momentum in public administration reform faltered with a series of revisions and adjustments to deal with the situation, until impetus for reform was later regained following criticism from the European Union. By 1997 the Government had increased the opportunity to use the more flexible general Labour Code as the main regulation for employment in public institutions. This allowed less restricted remuneration rules than those which applied to civil servants, though in 1999 the two systems were again brought into line. So, the lack of financial feasibility in the 1994 Civil Service Law failed to introduce a uniform system until the enactment of a new Civil Service Law in January 2001. This second law defined an increased number of state employees as civil servants (compared to the confused situation which developed from 1994 onwards) who benefit from a uniform wage and social guarantees system. Civil servants must now also satisfy a uniform requirement for higher education.

The initial strategic vision of the Latvian approach survived. The Ministry of State Reform was transformed into a weaker Department of State Reform, and responsibilities subsequently moved to the Bureau for Public Administration Reform (BPAR), and then to the Minister of Special Assignment for public reforms (MSApr), in 1999. (A further move to the State Chancellery took effect on 1 January 2003.) Each has been responsible for designing effective strategies for public administration reform, overseeing the implementation of government policy on the civil service, and drafting laws and regulations to improve the system of public administration. In December 1997 the Cabinet of Ministers approved the *Strategy of Development of Latvian Public Administration until 2000 (Strategy 2000)* followed in March 1998 by the *Action Plan to Implement Strategy 2000*. At the same time, the large EC-Phare Public Administration Reform Programme (1998-2000) helped to regenerate momentum in the field, and provided support to the development of human resources management in the public services as well as information systems. The Civil Service Administration continues to provide detailed support to the civil service. The LSPA continues to design, organise and deliver, through training centres, the in-service programme of training for the civil service. In June 1998 the LSPA organised a nation-wide conference on Corruption Prevention for the public and private sectors, which was regarded as a milestone in citizen/state relations.

Although the Directors of the CSA and LSPA are subject to approval by the Council of Ministers, both institutions have been seen as technical so not subject to political pressures. It is interesting to note the status of their supervisory organisation within government during the last ten years, as it reflects the value of political support, without political interference.

| Supervisory organisation (SO) | Status of SO | Period |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ministry of State Reform | political | December 1993 – July 1995 |
| State Chancellery | non-political | July 1995 – 1 January 1997 |
| Ministry of Welfare | political | 1 January 1997 – 10 June 1997 |
| Public Administration Reform Bureau | non-political | 10 June 1997 – 1 June 1999 |
| Minister of special assignments for public reforms | political | 1 June 1999 – 1 January 2003 |
| State Chancellery | non-political | 1 January 2003 - |

The greatest impetus to reform took place from 1993 to 1995 (political head) and there was slower progress from 1995 to 1999 (non-political apart from a 5 month temporary home in the

Ministry of Welfare). Momentum was again greater from 1999 (political head) following EU criticism on progress. The Ministers for special assignments were no longer used from 2003 so both are again under the State Chancellery (the secretariat of the Council of Ministers).

Lithuania

The approach taken to public administration reform in Lithuania was, by comparison, more piecemeal and slow. The initial emphasis or reform was clearly directed at economic issues and there are few reforms until the Law on Officials, adopted in 1995, which regulated the status of public employees at the central and local levels. However, the most significant feature of the Law on Officials was the clear demarcation between political and administrative *civil servants* (the term applied to both). Administrative public servants were also covered by the general Labour Contract Law until the adoption of the first Civil Service Law in 1999.

Latvia had aimed, in general, to develop a career based civil service, although in the early stages there were many new recruits to the service from outside, rather than by promotion from inside, before the service properly developed. Lithuania preferred a position based system, with emphasis on entry by public competition or qualification. More posts were advertised and filled by open competition, and few by promotion from within. However the Law on Officials also specified obligatory training, of 15 – 30 days within a two year period, at state expense, to “ensure job quality ... and upgrade qualifications”.

The numerous state governing bodies which had developed by the mid 1990s led to proposals from many quarters for reform, though few seem to have taken a strategic perspective or clear account of economic reality. Some changes took place without an overall government strategy in place, such as the termination of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, with responsibilities transferred to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance. However, the Ministry of Public Administration Reform and Local Authorities (MPARLA) established in September 1994 represented the nearest equivalent to the Ministry of State Reform in Latvia. One of its first tasks was to determine how many civil servants there actually were in Lithuania (estimates had ranged from about 16,000 (state statistics department in January 1996) to 300,000 (trade union estimates November 1995)) and it began to build a database on civil servants. The basic problem was one of definition and MPARLA issued a discussion document on the matter in late 1995.

The President, parliament and the government had agreed that the development of a civil service legal system should proceed step by step, to avoid the need to cover all civil service issues in a single law. Separate laws for separate sections of the public service were envisaged which would then be merged to form a single Code of Civil Service. The Law on Officials was seen as the basis for this code. MPARLA also developed regulations on public appointments (applications, competition and basic qualifications), officials’ rights (dismissal and appeal) and on job descriptions. It also worked on (though seems never to have completed) a general personnel training policy.

No centralised funding was introduced for training, with variable amounts being set aside by different institutions, but the government recommended that no less than 3% of the salary budget should be allocated by each state and local government institution for professional development purposes, in 1993. This was enacted six years later through the Law on State and Municipal Budgets 1999.

The debate about a need for a civil service training system began in mid-1992, and was discussed at a conference held by the new Public Administration Training Centre (PATC) established by the government in 1993; the need for a system was discussed again in 1994 and then again in 1995 at a third national conference. A survey of potential civil service training institutions was undertaken by PATC in late 1995, but results were mixed with few willing to disclose financial resources or training capacities. Several universities and institutes, and some private companies offered various programmes though with little coherence or well-defined relationship to need. Several were longer degree level courses, such as a Masters programme in public administration at Kaunas. In parallel with PATC, a multitude of state funded ministerial training centres were created, whose functions were directly related to the operations of the ministries to which they were attached. Almost all ministries had their own specific training centres or even a system of training centres (Finance, and Social Security and Labour). Some of these extended their training into more general areas, such as personnel and management, and thus overlapped the field covered by PATC. This resulted in uncoordinated oversupply, overlap and gaps, though the lack of information between ministries did not make this apparent to the civil servants themselves. Informal mechanisms, such as discussions between heads of personnel divisions at MPARLA, provided some limited coordination. The only area where significant training coordination developed was European integration, when the implementation of the EU regulations (the *acquis*) became more urgent.

Apart from university courses, and ministry training centres, three specialised non-profit organisations offered training to the public service. The PATC itself (30% government funded and 70% self-financed) with 9 full-time and 45 contractual staff delivered 1800 short seminars, workshops and conferences for administrative civil servants in 1995. The Municipal Training Centre, part of the Kaunas University of Technology, with 1 full-time, 1 part-time and 13 contractual staff, delivered over 440 seminars and conferences, to political and administrative officials, with a combination of municipal, foreign and self-financing. The Public Service Language Centre, with 6 full-time, 5 part-time and 2 contractual staff, delivered over 470 long-term courses, with state, foreign and self-financing. In addition, the Lithuanian Information Institute catalogue included more than 560 institutions which claimed to deliver training occasionally to civil servants.

PATC was set up to establish the basis for a formal civil service training structure, with the help of the Dutch Government and the UNDP, and was then funded by a combination of state and self funding. It was put under the regulatory control of MPARLA when that ministry was established in 1994. Lithuania had retained a more centralist style of government in comparison to Latvia, yet it is interesting to note that its piecemeal approach led to the establishment of numerous government funded training institutions in the ministries, and of a national civil service training institution before the creation of an overall government body (MPARLA) to guide public administration reform. The proliferation of training institutions, within and outside government, adds to the overall sense of uncoordinated supply, only partially regulated by the market or government.

The formal constitution of PATC, designated as the recognised training centre within the civil service (though without a national training strategy) required it to undertake many tasks:

- to design and execute training programmes for civil servants;
- support state institutions in personnel development by providing appropriate training;
- train civil service trainers;
- provide methodological assistance for other civil service training institutions;

- consult MPARLA and other state and municipal institutions on appraisal of civil servant qualifications;
- provide methodological support on setting up a system of qualification requirements for civil servants;
- establish a resource base for relevant educational and training materials for civil servants;
- develop the professional attitude of civil servants.

The full-time staff of nine included the Director, Deputy Director and three specialised programme managers for training ministerial staff, municipal staff and European integration matters. In 1995 the PATC served nearly 1800 clients.

Some Conclusions on Lithuania and Preliminary Comparisons

A comparison between PATC and the LSPA shows a major contrast between their roles and functions. LSPA, with a staff of 16, and contracting arrangements with 24 training centres, was able to organise in one year, 1995, the delivery of standardised one week courses to nearly 12,000 civil servants, civil servant candidacy examinations for 14,000 applicants, and develop new training courses with the assistance of donors. PATC in the same year served under 2,000 clients directly, and from the national picture of training resources and courses, was unable to effectively manage its general responsibilities (defined above) on overall coordination.

A similar contrast emerges when the issue of foreign donor support is examined. About 10 foreign donor organisations and several EU bilateral donors were also providing training or training assistance to the Lithuanian public administration. Some foreign foundations and organisations also provided training to Lithuanian civil servants without coordinating their efforts with other donors or the state institutions, and little information was kept on these. In Latvia, although the overall aid coordination picture was also complicated, the use of donor assistance was much more focused in the area of public administration reform. Significant EU Phare resources were linked to the Ministry of State Reform and its successors, and bilateral assistance was used to reinforce the work of LSPA by supplementing the development of new training materials and the delivery of specialised training courses. The central institution for coordinating public administration reform (MSR, then DSR then BPAR then MSApr) succeeded in creating a focus for directing the majority of donor inputs in public administration reform. It is clear that MPARLA did not carry the same weight. Much foreign assistance was conducted on a bilateral basis between the donor and the individual ministry (such as between the Ministry of Health Care and its Danish counterpart).

The problems of developing a consistent strategic view at the highest levels of government were well illustrated by events following a request by the Prime Minister (PM) of Lithuania in 1997 for Canadian technical assistance to support public administration reform. Two senior officials, from MPARLA and the Office of the PM visited Ontario to study the Ontario Public Service (OPS) model, and a formal request was subsequently made by MPARLA to the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) to lead a project based on the OPS model. The first two fact finding missions by the Canadians in 1997/98, which consulted the Prime Minister, key Ministers and senior officials, led to observations on weaknesses in the Lithuanian central processes and the poorly supported Cabinet decision-making system. By the time the project started, uncoordinated changes had taken place on several fronts. One counterpart ministry no longer existed; USAID had just been contracted to develop one part of the project; EU Phare had contracted a project to develop an implementation plan for the Civil Service Act (still stuck in the legislature); the key contact in the PM's Office to work with the

Canadian advisor had been appointed as Minister of the Interior; and the key members of the project's steering committee were in London on a management training course during the same week as the planned Lithuanian/Canadian workshop.

It is clear that the fragmented situation in public administration reform in Lithuania resulted from the lack of a strategic view. Discussion in 1996 commented on the possibility of specialisation among training institutions in civil service training, though this would “*depend on how successful the MPARLA will be in drafting a civil service development concept*”, so it is clear that by then no overall concept existed. At this time, there were several other weaknesses evident: no attempts at developing an organised study of training needs; or improving the training skills of qualified practitioners (i.e. civil servants) beyond delivering a good lecture; or introducing systematic course evaluation beyond reliance on market forces or a basic end-of-course questionnaire. At this time the MPARLA was beginning to define the type of training needed, how it should be developed, who should organise it and how it would be financed.

MPARLA was responsible for developing a policy on personnel management, setting standards to be followed by public servants and preparing and issuing regulations on personnel matters. By mid-1999 no comprehensive personnel management policy had been developed, despite several attempts to do so. Even the early initiative to establish a network among personnel management specialists in the Lithuanian state and local administration agencies was not implemented. Even at that time it was acknowledged that the understanding of personnel management and managerial control was not well developed in the Lithuanian civil service, with emphasis on *control* rather than *management*. Mechanisms for the management of performance, productivity and expenditure were described as primitive and formal. Evaluation and tools of performance appraisal were regarded as novelties. However, it was also recognised that the centralised style of management in government did not encourage the introduction of modern management methods. Feedback was mainly in the form of citizens' complaints or criticism from senior officials.

Another basic problem was the highly centralised system of decision making which persisted. Most decisions were taken at the leadership level. Civil servants' responsibilities were therefore very restricted as they were not involved in the decision making process. Effective preparatory work in decision making requires that the issues bearing upon the decision be evaluated as broadly as possible, which demands team-based work and networking for effective communication. The Lithuanian politicians and administrators were beginning to understand that the hierarchical leadership model of management were no longer adequate for their future, in which administrative business had to be founded on a broader basis. But without a new management strategy or model, or the training resources to develop the skills and attitudes to disseminate the modern approach, Lithuania remained in a weak position on this front. The issue which prompted real change, even if rather late, was the goal of accession to the European Union. This was the only area where some coordination in civil service training had made progress. The clearest stimulus to further change were the regular EC Regular Reports on the preparation of the various countries of CEE for accession.

View from the European Union

The 2000 and 2001 EC Reports on Lithuania drew attention to some progress in the initial steps towards implementation of the new laws on Public Administration and on the Civil Service; but were critical of the timeframe which extended to 2004. They reported on the merging of MPARLA with the Ministry of the Interior, with comment on the weak inter-

departmental coordination. The implementation of the National Training Strategy of Civil Servants through the new Lithuanian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) had been included as a short-term priority under the 1999 Accession Partnership (Europe Agreement) for Lithuania. However, in welcoming the five international projects, and 140 training seminars (January 2000 – September 2001) involving 2,400 public servants from 70 institutions, the EC also remarked that it was “*important to give them a more systematic character*”.

The September 2001 Report of the EU-Latvia Joint Parliamentary Committee had a rather more gentle tone. It welcomed the commitment of the Government of Latvia to public administration reform, including the improvements in efficiency, accountability and transparency, as well as the adoption of framework legislation including the new Civil Service Law (January 2001), the Public agencies Law (April 2001) and the Framework Law for Public Administration (late 2001). It encouraged further efforts to strengthen its administrative capacity, including a unified system of remuneration in the civil service, with the need for adequate remuneration to ensure the availability of adequately qualified staff and to reduce corruption. It requested better coordination between departments.

Conclusions and Lessons to be Learned

It is now appropriate to draw out some key lessons from the parallel experiences of Latvia and Lithuania in reforming their public administration systems. Although Lithuania has been shown to have a more centralist style and mentality during this period, it manifested itself not so much at the level of government as a whole, but within individual ministries. So, this led naturally to the proliferation of separate, and relatively isolated, systems of civil service training in each ministry. It also led to partial marginalisation of the civil service training system in the official government centre, PATC, which became just one player on a very crowded field. The situation of the ministry responsible for the development of government personnel and training policy, MPARLA, was apparently in a similar position. It had only marginal influence on the individual ministries and the government, and its failure to secure adoption of several national policies is probably a reflection of this.

The Latvian model developed a coherent framework for public administration reform very quickly, which has survived with adjustments (mainly at the political rather than administrative level) throughout its period of transition. The system of regional training centres provided a decentralised approach to training delivery, while retaining the advantages of establishing a uniform national standard of trainers, course quality, curricula and evaluation by means of the Latvian School of Public Administration. It also achieved a higher level of training needs analysis and systematic course evaluation than was ever managed in Lithuania. In particular, it recognised the strategic importance of training in achieving its strategic goals in the reform of public administration generally. Although the Government of Latvia decided to finance training centrally, the system they established lends itself to easy adaptation to the alternative of decentralised funding through the institutions “buying” the training. This would make sense once the general training needs for the entire civil service have been satisfied, and greater specialisation between senior and middle management courses, for example, would become necessary. This could also be linked to some measure of specialisation between training centres, so that national training resources could be enhanced as a whole, by systematic coordination and sharing of these diverse resources.

The comparison between Latvian and Lithuania also emphasises the importance of the first key steps. Although Latvia faced many problems in implementing its first Civil Service Law, and had to retreat on detail, it maintained the overall vision of a professional career-based civil service, and as resources and skills have permitted, has been able to approach its goal in stages. It learned through experience that real change in this area takes time, as it is linked to change in human skills, behaviour and attitude, constrained by economic factors. Lithuania avoided a strategic approach, taking decisions in a piecemeal and not always logical sequence, in a manner which strongly suggested a lack of real political commitment, at least from the overstretched level of the Prime Minister. The tradition of each institutional head in government retaining *control* over his/her organisation, and over human resources in particular, was threatened by the introduction of national policies which aimed at enforcing uniform standards of personnel management and regulation. So, many initiatives faltered or failed. It took six years to enforce a requirement for training budgets to be included in institutional budgets. The overall picture was one of successive mistakes and lost opportunities which could not be regained unless a strategic view could be developed and accepted. The comments of the European Commission in 2001 suggested that a systematic approach to training had still not, in their view, been fully achieved.

The need for new types of skill and attitude placed a premium on the additional value which could be gained from foreign trainers and training systems. Until these novel resources could be developed within country, the importance of foreign contact was a key asset in the reform process. Latvia benefited from absorption of foreign Latvians into the heart of government, which added stimulus to the adoption of new methods. Latvia was also much better at coordinating the use of donor assistance to public administration reform whereas Lithuania clearly was not. An important reason for this contrast was the clear institutional focus in Latvia for reform, and the political vision which underpinned it. Fortunately this survived over a period long enough to achieve real impact, whereas it is doubtful whether it ever really developed in Lithuania, until an external stimulus from the EU prompted further change.

The final lesson, perhaps, is that both states, but Lithuania especially, would have benefited from a greater sharing of experience and resources. The isolation of the Baltic States from each other is surprising given their proximity, even though historical factors underline their distinctiveness. Their separate struggles to reform public administration show lost opportunities in synergy and learning from mutual experience.

ALBANIA AND ARMENIA

| | Albania | Armenia | BiH |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Size 000 km ² | 28.7 | 29.8 | 51.1 |
| Population 000s (2002) | 3545 | 3330 | 3964 |
| GDP per capita US\$ (2002) | 4500 | 3350 | 1800 |
| Number of local authorities below state level | 422 | 944 | 160 |

Transition through Turbulence

Both Albania and Armenia have suffered social and economic turmoil, and periods of serious conflict, since they emerged from communist regimes in the early 1990s and began to build the basic institutions of democracy and market economies. Both are small, economically poor but culturally rich, republics characterised by few natural resources, largely mountainous terrain, and a high proportion of their populations employed in agriculture (Albania 50%, Armenia 44%) and/or below the official poverty line (Albania 30%, Armenia 55%). Both are large recipients of foreign aid (Albania 2000: US\$ 315 million, Armenia 1995: US\$ 246 million).

The history of both countries was dominated by turmoil and warring empires until the end of the first World War. The present borders of Albania were established in 1921. These left one third to one half of ethnic Albanians outside Albania, and current estimates put the global number of ethnic Albanians at around 7 million, with only 50% resident in Albania. Economic hardship has remained a strong incentive for migration.

A brief republic and kingdom between the two World Wars, Albania became an isolated and particularly repressive communist state under Enver Hoxha from 1945, until five years after his death when, in 1990, it rejected its communist legacy, and introduced a frail democracy. Over the same period there were severe restrictions or bans on local and foreign travel. This isolation reinforced the clan-based traditions which have strongly influenced its recent political culture. A predominantly Muslim (70%) country in Europe, Albania under Hoxha had the dubious distinction of being declared the world's first official atheist state (1967).

Armenia, a Christian country (98%) in Asia, dating its history back to early part of the first millennium BC, claims the distinction of being the world's first official Christian state (301). Armenia enjoyed brief self-rule from 1918 to 1920, but was absorbed into the USSR until its declaration of independence in 1991. The Turkish-Armenian border was one of the two direct points of contact between NATO and the USSR⁵, and it remains closed⁶, with Russian border guards operating at all ports⁷.

Neither Albania nor Armenia experienced an extended period of democratic government until 1991. The first democratic governments in Albania were short-lived due to economic failures, until a market-oriented coalition government led by the Democratic Party took power from 1992, and was re-elected in 1996. In March 1997 the collapse of fraudulent pyramid financial schemes (which wiped out an estimated 60% of private savings) led to violent protest, then chaos and anarchy. The government was forced to resign and new elections in June/July 1997 brought in a broad-based coalition led by the Socialist Party. Albania began to rebuild its

⁵ The other was north of Sweden, between Norway and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

⁶ Armenia and Turkey do not have official diplomatic relations, though trade through Georgia now takes place, and there are flights between Yerevan and Istanbul.

⁷ This also applies to ports far from the border, as at Yerevan International Airport, the main airport in Armenia.

institutions a second time, having lost most of its earlier gains in the turmoil. In early 1999, during the Kosovo conflict, nearly half a million refugees temporarily moved into Albania, causing further problems for its environment and agriculture.

The early years of the new Republic of Armenia were probably even worse. An earthquake in northern Armenia in December 1988 had killed over 25,000 people, left half a million homeless and destroyed 10% of the nation's industrial capacity. In the same year, political tremors between the Soviet Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan had begun over the ethnic Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabagh situated in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The problem rapidly escalated, creating half a million refugees by November 1988. The USSR disappeared in December 1991, Turkey and Iran - sympathetic to Azerbaijan - blockaded Armenia, war with Azerbaijan continued. Later conflict in Georgia completed its isolation. A ceasefire was agreed in May 1994, and an uneasy truce has continued ever since. In the meantime, Armenia had found time to join the UN, the IMF and the World Bank (1992), issue new currency (1993), privatise 18% of its industries (1994) and adopt a new Constitution (1995).

Throughout history, Armenians have established communities far from the Caucasus. Emigration accelerated in the 1990s, and of an estimated 8.8 million Armenians, only 37% live in the Republic. The strongest loyalty is to the family, rather than to the nation state (which has occasionally moved), or to specific ideologies or institutions. The diaspora maintains strong links, remits funds back "home" and undertakes diverse projects, such as rehabilitating the main road system, or building new churches (to add to the 40,000 already in Armenia).

In summary, both the new republics of Albania and Armenia suffered a turbulent first decade, scarred by internal or external conflict, severe economic crises and domestic dislocation and poverty. Both became heavily dependent on substantial foreign aid, have suffered from weak government capacity and damaged infrastructure, while their economies have yet to regain the level before transition, reflected in high rates of unemployment (Albania 17-30%, Armenia 10-20%, 2001). Both benefit from large diaspora which have contributed through financial and educated human resources to the rebuilding of their countries, though not in such a concentrated or focused way as was evident in Latvia. The slow progress in social, economic and political development has constrained this, with the more able and educated inclined to benefit their family through emigration. Diplomatic and economic relations with their immediate neighbours vary from difficult to almost non-existent. This is the source of one aspect of Armenia which is rather different from Albania. Its continuing insecurity has led to a high allocation of national resources to the armed and security forces, to emigration of wealthy young men to avoid military conscription, and to central control of public services in villages bordering Azerbaijan, in an attempt to reduce migration from these areas. This has resulted in government budgets being shaped by security issues, concentration of power at the presidential level and officialdom with little regard for a user-oriented approach to public services.

The Approaches to Public Administration Reform

Albania – the First Attempt (1990-97)

Several preliminary, but eventually ineffective, steps were taken between 1992 and 1997 to strengthen public administration and the public service in Albania. The Council of Ministers (CoM) established the Department of Public Administration (DoPA), and the UNDP helped to set up a new training institution for public administration, the Institute of Management and Public Administration (IMPA), as a three year project (US\$ 900,000) from 1993. Public

service training received nothing from the state budget, but was funded entirely by donors, often included as part of wider projects. There was no overall record of this training which was generally uncoordinated in terms of priorities, needs and target groups. All documentation relating to public service training during this period has an aspirational quality, but there is little evidence of much achievement.

The Civil Service Law (CSL) adopted in March 1996 included one reference to training:

The Council of Ministers shall set up a system of training for civil servants and link it to career advancement and an increase in duties, and set forth training conditions and criteria for inclusion in training activities. The Council of Ministers shall take measures to ensure that training is planned, systematically organised and covers the whole civil service. The Council of Ministers shall take measures to cover the costs of training.

The Civil Service Law required the Council of Ministers (CoM) to set up an Inter-ministerial task force (IMTF) to create and implement a *system of management for the civil service* to include all measures to control and regulate the civil service, and to prepare the subsidiary legislation to implement the Civil Service Law. No regulatory framework for training existed by April 1996 though the detail was expected to be developed by DoPA, IMPA the IMTF.

IMPA by 1996 had contracted a staff of eight full-time professional trainers and a larger number of part-time staff. The training of trainers was reported as inadequate, as well as the level of remuneration. Curricula were not well-defined although foreign assistance was being used to help, and the hope was that a public administration reform strategy would correct the problem. Pre-service training and entrance examinations into the civil service did not exist, though it was expected that further legislation would regulate examinations, and the linkage to civil service entry and career development. The little training which did occur was not focused in terms of content or target group. Trainees were drawn from all levels of the public service, and it was admitted that training did not always fit the level of participant or their duties. High priority was placed on improving the use of training resources. Training methods included workshops, on-the-job training, training information days, consultancies and study tours. The latter were particularly well-received, with the fifty members of the IMTF visiting seven western European countries. The members of this task force were vice-ministers, directors of personnel in the ministries, and IT specialists.

The Institute of Management and Public Administration (IMPA) had been established as the main Albanian training resource for public administration development, and it did collaborate with a wide range of public and private sector managers nationally, and of academics from Austria, Australia, the USA, UK and others internationally. However, it is clear that it had not contributed significantly to the development of the Albanian civil service three years after its inauguration. It was funded by the UNDP and governed by a Board of Directors, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. It was not subordinated to any ministry or government agency.

The 1996 Civil Service Law established a civil service commission, the responsibilities of which covered aspects of recruitment, appointment, probation and career development. It also allocated many responsibilities to the CoM, such as establishing job grading throughout the administration; regulating civil service ethics; approving the form, standards and rules for the maintenance of personnel files; and matters of discipline and special privileges.

Up to 1997, it is clear that the institutional framework in Albania for public administration reform, and for civil service training in particular, had serious flaws. There were four institutions involved in civil service development and management: CoM, DoPA, IMTF and IMPA. The allocation of responsibilities between them was often vague or confused, with the CoM addressing many issues which should properly have been at a lower, non-political level. IMTF had a membership of about 50, very large for a “task force”, and unfocused in terms of membership or experience. The IMPA had a Board of Directors, but was not guided by an institution with political weight (such as a ministry or DoPA) which had the resources to develop an overall policy framework for the civil service. The focus of political interest was on controlling the detail and resources, and not on building the strategy.

These observations are consistent with the predominant political culture in Albania at the time. In 1997, the anarchy which followed the collapse of the pyramid schemes destroyed a lot of the infrastructure which had been built up, and many ministries were looted or damaged. Under severe pressure, the government resigned, and a new administration took power in July 1997. From that point, new ministers were appointed and, gradually, nearly all the “civil servants” from the former administration were encouraged to leave office. Assurances had been given to the international donors that, where good institutional, administrative and professional capacity had been built up (often with their support and resources), this exodus would not happen. But it did, and nothing was documented. The government lost all its professional experience and skills within a year, and in 1998 had to start building again.

Armenia – Slower Start. Quicker Finish

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan subsided in May 1994. In June, the EU Tacis programme started a project to establish a new public service training centre, the Armenian School of Public Administration (ASPA). ASPA occupies a three-storey building, 3 km from the centre of Yerevan, which has never been repaired to a standard which would welcome course participants, apart from a small section rehabilitated through another World Bank project. ASPA is unable to accommodate trainees coming from the regions, as the dormitory has been occupied by Armenian refugees since 1990. ASPA is situated in a residential area some distance from a main road and is difficult to find. In 2003, few taxi drivers can be relied upon to know where it is, and nobody has yet installed a sign on the road, or even on the building, to advertise its location. It was almost a formula to fail.

When founded in 1994, ASPA initially offered only short training courses, but later started a 2-year full-time programme designed for public servants possessing a university degree and having at least 2-years work experience. The programme provides courses in several economic and management disciplines as well as six-months practical training in government institutions.

Until late 2002, ASPA’s trainees were selected competitively from the general public service. The entry tests included an essay, tests in economics, law and a foreign language, and an interview. Each year, the government covered tuition costs for 40 people. Individuals with a university diploma, were charged tuition fees of US\$500 per year for the 30-month correspondence courses.

In 2000, the number of students enrolled in full-time courses was 76, in correspondence courses 70, while for in-service courses the actual number reached 500 rather than the expected 300. The short-term in-service courses (2 weeks full-time or 3 months part-time with classes every Friday) were provided specifically for public servants. By 2002, ASPA had trained 1650 public servants.

ASPAs have 20 rooms with 6 suitable for 20-30 people, a library (3,000 books and manuals) and a computer laboratory with 18 computers. No classrooms (except one) are well furnished or decorated or have normal heating systems. There are no common rooms; the canteen and washrooms are in a bad condition. Usually whiteboards, flipchart stands and an overhead projector are available for training sessions, though few used participative training methods.

ASPAs included 5 departments: Human Resources, General, Methodological Unit, Accounting and Finance, and Directorate. The Heads of these Departments were permanent employees of ASPAs. Other instructors were invited from either educational institutions or the Armenian Government. The practitioners, who were mainly government officers or invited professors, delivered courses on a semester structure. Course modules included: Economic, Political and Legal Basics of Governance; Computer Sciences; and Foreign Languages. Normally, new curricula were developed, discussed within the respective Department, and only then submitted for final approval by the Directorate. The core topics were specified in six-month plans developed in consultation with various government establishments. Once the curricula and dates of training courses had been approved, ASPAs circulated announcements to government and relevant organisations on the courses available.

Governmental institutions selected employees for training. ASPAs's budget included a precise allocation for a specific number of public employees. The short training courses were held mainly in Yerevan, but for potential trainees from elsewhere, transportation and living expenses in Yerevan were prohibitively high. Due to financial problems in regional and local governments, applicants from remote areas were therefore not usually able to attend the training provided by ASPAs.

Training methods persistently relied on lectures. The School published and translated more than 10 handbooks including *Basics of Local Self-Governance*, *Current Issues of Public Administration* and *Collection of Quizzes and Tests*. ASPAs was created with assistance from the EU, and later its activities were financed mainly from the state budget. In 2000 it received US\$ 120,000 from the state budget, too low to cover its current and capital expenditure.

By 2002, the Armenian Government was covering the cost of training for 300 civil servants a year. Although trainers' pay in ASPAs was higher than in other government establishments, it was still too low to attract and retain trainers with the required qualifications. Remuneration for the preparation and delivery of a 60 minutes session was US\$ 2.50 compared to US\$ 60 for courses funded by donors. The total cost of a five-day training course in ASPAs for 30-35 trainees, sponsored by international organisations such as the World Bank, was on average US\$ 6-8,000. Also, ASPAs spent US\$ 30-40,000 from external sources, on its publications.

This description may give the impression that, despite its problems of resources and location, ASPAs was an effective, if lonely, training provider for the Armenian public service. But, as in Albania, the whole institutional framework for public service training had serious flaws. ASPAs came under the Ministry of Education, though intervention was slight. The most recent Director of ASPAs was a political appointment, an ex-diplomat with few management skills. This became more of a problem as ASPAs, hindered by a lack of resources, and institution building and planning skills, was unable to match the changing needs of the public service.

Until 2002, there was no public service training *system*. Many donors had supported aspects of public administration reform, including the World Bank (*Public Sector Modernisation*

Project), EU (*Lori Marz Regional Development Project*, and *Assistance to the Reform of the Civil Service*), DFID (*Public Sector Reform Project*) and GTZ (*Local Government Reform*) from 1998 onwards. For several reasons – project office locations, shared experts, a common government counterpart⁸ - these projects were very well coordinated with frequent liaison between them. All, especially the EU projects, included specialised training as part of the project, particularly in human resources management. Apart from the original ASPA project, however, there was no project *focused* on public service training itself.

The EU project *Assistance to the Reform of the Civil Service* developed an early working relationship with ASPA, and with the agreement of the European Commission Services, later directed substantial resources towards re-strengthening ASPA through the development of new curricula, new training materials (written by young Armenian experts in the Armenian language) and a concentrated training of trainers programme. Fifteen professors (including the Director and Deputy Director) from ASPA participated, using new Management Development Programme training modules, which they had to prepare and deliver to their colleagues, using participative methodologies, in one week. Although the primary goal had been to create a new body of materials, trainers and methodologies, to reinvigorate ASPA, the main achievement was to create a team. It became apparent that it was the first time that the senior core group of ASPA staff had worked together solidly since its founding over seven years earlier.

One particular reason why the EU project supported ASPA at this point was that, as the only public administration training school, it had been specified in the new Civil Service Law (finally enacted in January 2002 after several versions had struggled for several years through the legislature) as the principal initial training institution for the new civil service. This law also established a Civil Service Council (CSC) of seven members formally appointed by the President, which has overall responsibility for developing the civil service. The Council, one member of which retires each year to be replaced by a new member, includes no active politicians, though does include an ex-Deputy Minister and a measure of representation from the President's Office. It adopted a somewhat unpopular style initially, allegedly to assert its (slightly doubtful) independence, but now seems to have earned greater respect in government.

Within a few months, the CSC took over responsibility for ASPA, replaced its Director and several of its staff, and appointed some new trainers. Other training centres were also contracted, in Yerevan and the regions, to provide training for civil servants at the (deconcentrated) level of the Regional Governors' offices. The system is still too new to evaluate fully. However, it is apparent that once a Civil Service Law had been adopted (and this was recognised as a major cultural bottleneck, because it meant a shift away from family network-based loyalties, rife in the public service in Armenia, to professional loyalties) its implementation has been taken very seriously. The hidden political force has been the President, who was under pressure in Armenia, with elections due in 2003, to deliver better services after years of inefficient, corrupt and weak government despite substantial donor assistance. But a sound structure, delegating most of the work of building the civil service to the non-political CSC, avoiding opportunity for political intervention, has a good chance of working. ASPA, under its new name of The Public Administration Academy, is now tied much more closely into the public administration reform process. The other state and private sector training institutions are also developing (trainers can earn more, and they can be more flexible in developing new courses quickly), and the regional universities and colleges are benefiting

⁸ The Public Sector Reform Commission is a government committee of about 12 members, chaired by a Minister without Portfolio, responsible for deliberating on the proposals for reform put forward by donor projects.

from the contracts for training local civil servants. The Academy still suffers from its poor location and low public profile. While it held a comparative advantage in public service training in 2002, it may lose this as other institutions develop. The substantial donor funding available for public administration reform and training has provided the incentive for private sector initiative. The original monopoly with a single state funded School is changing into a more complex market-oriented situation, with perhaps less coherence, including state-funded educational institutions. The delay in enacting the key piece of legislation, the Civil Service Law, meant a slow start (and Armenia is a particularly strong example of the “legislation is implementation” misconception) but then another facet of the Armenian character became apparent – the quick response to entrepreneurial opportunity.

Albania – the Second Attempt (1997 onwards)

The new post-crisis Government of Albania was in office by July 1997. In October 1997 two international donors’ meetings in Rome and Brussels endorsed the *Reform and Recovery Programme* (RRP) based on a document entitled *Albania: Directions for Recovery and Growth*, prepared jointly by the World Bank, the European Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Monetary Fund. The RRP identified seven strategic elements for political, social and economic reform and four sectoral-based themes, one of which was *public administration and governance*. Emphasis in the RRP was placed on *the design and implementation of civil service reforms to provide for an efficient, honest and effective public administration and civil service*. The UNDP took this up in its *First Country Cooperation Framework for Albania (1998-2001)* (CCF) and proposed support to three themes, including *good governance and public administration*.

The weakness of state institutions was recognised as a key factor which led to the 1997 crisis. The Government of Albania decided to adapt its legal system to a more modern market-oriented one, and to radically reform its public sector management practices. It designed State Institutions and Public Administration Reform (SIPAR, budget \$US130 million)⁹, covering many areas¹⁰ such as civil service reform. A new Constitution was in place by November 1998, as the basis for a modern democratic state, which separated legislative, executive and judicial powers. A new Civil Service Law was enacted in December 1999. A non-political Secretary General, the highest level of civil servant, was appointed by each ministry¹¹.

The UNDP, in its first CCF (April 1998), included support for *the establishment of a public service training facility*. This resurrected its earlier support to IMPA which had not survived the crisis. The new facility, the Institute for Training in Public Administration (ITPA) was established by a decree of the Council of Ministers (CoM) in June 2000 with UNDP providing US\$ 665,800 for this two-year project. At this moment, the key points in the legal framework of the civil service and its training provisions were as follows:

- The Civil Service Law (CSL) stated the basic principles of the civil service as *professionalism, independence, integrity, political neutrality, transparency, service to the public, career continuity, accountability, rectitude in the application of legislation*.

⁹ Donors supporting components of the SIPAR programme included the EU, OSCE, EBRD, World Bank, USAID, Governments of France and Italy, the Council of Europe, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA.

¹⁰ SIPAR also covered administrative oversight, judiciary, police, security, revenue collection, constitutional reform, expenditure management, reorganisation of ministries and agencies, policy and law-making, Parliament.

¹¹ 4 Secretaries General had been appointed by October 2001. However, the post of Deputy Minister (political) was not abolished and this created a struggle between the two positions with different results in different ministries.

- The CoM retained overall responsibility for the civil service, including the development of secondary legislation, negotiations with civil service representatives on working conditions, and reporting to Parliament.
- The CSL also established a Department of Public Administration (DoPA) under the CoM responsible for the overall management of the government's policies on the civil service. There is considerable detail in the CSL on these matters, but generally it includes all aspects which might fall to a modern department of human resources management. DoPA is also charged with maintaining the Personnel Register for all civil servants in the central institutions of government.
- The CSL established a small (five member) Civil Service Commission (CSC) responsible for legal oversight: appeals procedures and the implementation of the law.
- The CSL mentions civil service training only briefly:
 - *General and special training activities are obligatory for civil servants on probation.*
 - *A civil servant shall have the following duties - To improve their professional capabilities and to take part in training activities to this end. [1 of 10 duties].*
 - *A civil servant shall have the following rights - To be trained in relation to his job on a regular basis, at the expense of the state. [1 of 11 rights].*
- The decree establishing ITPA states that ITPA is *an institution under the supervision of the Council of Ministers*. The DoPA is entitled to manage ITPA and among other responsibilities *decides upon all activities of the Institute*. (It seems UNDP did not object to this relationship, or to the disappointing choice of first Director.)
- The ITPA has an Advisory Board which includes all the General Secretaries (newly introduced posts: the most senior ministry civil servants), two representatives from Tirana University and one from the Tirana local authority.
- The ITPA mission was defined as: *to support the improvement and reform of a sustainable and professional civil service through qualitative and comprehensive training and development*.

Albania: What happened next?

In short, not a lot. The period 2000 – 2003 in more detail:

- The second UNDP *Country Cooperation Framework for Albania (2002-2005)*, (November 2001) makes little reference to the ITPA project. It is not mentioned in the *Results and lessons of past cooperation* but appears in the new Democratic governance Programme under *public administration and civil service strengthening*:

Civil service training. UNDP will support the implementation of a training programme for the core staff of the Institute for Training in Public Administration (ITPA). Additional efforts will be made to make training an integral part of the institutional development process and to develop capacities in personnel departments in the line ministries to conduct training needs analyses.

- In December 2001, *The Newsletter of Public Administration*, published in Tirana with the support of the European Commission, reported on a speech given by the Director of ITPA at the first Advisory Board meeting in October 2001. In his speech the Director referred to a public administration training needs analysis, undertaken by the European Institute of Public Administration with EU support, that produced new guidelines for ITPA. He said that *during the last months, ITPA staff have been working to prepare the final version of the regulation, reflecting the mission and status of the institution, its*

internal organisation structure and administration. The first meeting of the Advisory Board therefore took place 16 months after the legal establishment of ITPA.

- The same *Newsletter* also reports an initiative supervised by the German Foundation Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft: the establishment of the European Policies Institute (EPI), with the goal of creating a *new generation of trainers of the Albanian public administration, with the main aim to prepare and adopt the administration to the new European community environment*, to which Albania aspired. Five seminars had been organised by that time. The focus of EPI is preparation for European Integration.

The development of ITPA had been very slow. The UNDP organised two missions¹² to Tirana early in 2003 to report on progress and make recommendations. The first report refers directly to the lack of progress:

Although the formal legal establishment took place two and a half years ago, due to various reasons, the development and capacity building of the institute hasn't been remarkable. A new stage in the development of the Institute started in Spring 2002. By the end of 2002 there were some advancements in the fields of communicating with stakeholders and in design and preparations of training programmes.

The second report makes numerous recommendations from a strategic perspective of ITPA and the overall framework within which it operates. The observations indicate that the problems derive from two types of factor:

- (i) the external framework, which allows DoPA to micro-manage ITPA, so ITPA has been unable to achieve a high profile in public administration reform;
- (ii) the internal structures and processes which reflect weak management, inadequate resources, and a style of leadership also inclined to micro-manage others' work. (There has been a change of ITPA Director since its inception.)

The relationship between DoPA and ITPA has not been built on professional values, but has responded to political undercurrents. This has undermined mutual trust. Intervention by DoPA has curtailed the independence, initiative and professional development of ITPA. Meanwhile DoPA has not progressed with its own key responsibility, the elaboration of a strategy for civil service training. Overall, the regulatory framework has failed to separate responsibilities clearly, and the confused accountability has weakened the focus on real needs and the achievement of results.

Conclusions and Lessons to be Learned

The internal weaknesses of ITPA are in many ways similar to those of ASPA in Armenia, before the recent changes: poor facilities, poor management and lack of good modern training materials. The appointment of both Directors on the basis of political affiliation, not merit, brought negative results. Whereas, in Armenia, ASPA was isolated and almost irrelevant to much of public administration before 2001, in Albania, ITPA has suffered from too close a relationship with government (DoPA) which has severely hindered its development. The

¹² Ulle Purga, Mission Report: Support to the development of ITPA. January 2003.
Jurgita Siugzdiniene, Development [of] sustainable training system in Albania. February 2003.

conclusions of the second UNDP assessment provide important general lessons for the development of a public sector training institution, as relevant in Armenia as they are in Albania.

- The government body responsible for developing the strategy for public administration (DoPA) should also be responsible for developing the civil service training strategy, but should not be closely involved in the management of that strategy. Respective powers need to be clearly delineated.
- The government has responsibility for a solid framework for civil service training: its management; type (pre-service, in-service, general management development, policy or implementation levels, specialised skills etc); career training; and funding. It does not have responsibility for the detailed training implementation.
- The profile and status of the training institute, in a small country with few resources, has to be built on the efficient use of all national resources. One institution should cover all levels of government (in Albania donors were not willing to finance an institute for local government training as well); the central institution should work through other public institutions and NGOs, to deliver priority and specialised programmes of training in the regions, while retaining control of goals, content and standards.
- The internal structure of training institutions must distinguish *facilitation* of training courses (using permanent staff) and the *design/delivery* of training (using contracted experts). This allows more flexibility in curriculum design, and greater economy.
- The training institution needs good basic facilities for training, whether conducted in its own premises, in the regions, or in rented accommodation, to give a positive, welcoming image to participants. Training is fundamental to the development of public administration, and is not a punishment for civil servants.
- Donor assistance to civil service training should be guided and coordinated through the responsible government body (DoPA), with donors encouraged to work with the principal training institution (ITPA) wherever possible, to develop its training capacity through experience and recognition.

Both Armenia and Albania have highly politicised cultures where the separation of political and administrative officials has been, and continues to be, difficult. In the past, this has manifested itself particularly in the appointment of public officials where family and friendship networks have been far more important than merit or competence. In such systems, training has been almost irrelevant, and standards of governance have been very poor. As reform takes hold, the prevalence of professional standards, quality of staff, and selection on merit increases. This in turn demands the provision of good training facilities at reasonable cost, to increase and maintain the quality of human resources in government.

There are lessons for donor intervention. Political commitment for a project must be secured at the design stage, not acquiescence at implementation; the choice of technical counterparts should be based on merit; and the scale and duration of support must be sensitive to the timeframe within which results can be realistically achieved. The difficult situation in Albania in 1998, with many donors and many projects, may have stimulated crisis management more than a wider perspective on project management.

HUNGARY

| | Hungary | BiH |
|---|----------------|------------|
| Size 000 km ² | 93.0 | 51.1 |
| Population 000s (2002) | 10075 | 3964 |
| GDP per capita US\$ (2002) | 13300 | 1800 |
| Number of local authorities below state level | 20+22+3113 | 160 |

Diversity and Decentralisation

From its inception in 1000, Hungary was a multi-ethnic country. It entered the First World War as a kingdom within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and emerged, defeated, as a republic. There then followed two years of further turmoil, including a brief period under communist rule. Its territory was drastically reduced in the post-war settlement of 1920, leaving one third of ethnic Hungarians outside the new borders. The communists came to power in 1947, and an uprising in 1956 followed a decade of internal political feuds. Subsequent governments became increasingly liberal, and by the 1970s Hungary prospered compared to much of central and eastern Europe. By opening its borders with Austria in 1989 (allowing German migration from East to West, and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall), it accelerated the fall of Communism, and in 1989 became the Republic of Hungary.

The drastic reduction in size in 1920 made Hungary ethnically more homogeneous, with fewer nationalities within its borders but a significant number of Hungarians residing outside. There are now thirteen ethnic minorities forming 10% of the population, most of which are very small (including Croat, Slovak, Romanian), but two minorities (Roma and German) each exceed 100,000 inhabitants¹³. The current legal framework of public administration in Hungary is very sensitive to the interests of these ethnic minorities, which, on the basis of ethnic reciprocity, matches the concern of the Government of Hungary for the interests of the 2.6 million Hungarians living just beyond its borders¹⁴. The structures established to ensure minority representation, particularly in local government, are one example of the high level of decentralisation which has been built, in all spheres and at all levels, into the framework of government in Hungary, though it firmly remains a unitary state.

Structure

The Constitution of Hungary was rewritten in 1989, and has been amended again since then. The 1989 changes were followed up in 1990 by the creation of essentially two levels of local government, based on *Settlements* and *Counties*. The middle level of government, 19 Counties (plus Budapest), runs expensive functions appropriate to larger authorities, such as the major educational, health, cultural and similar institutions. The 22 “Towns of county rank” are responsible for these services as well as those common to all settlements. The *major* public institutions are therefore run by 42 local authorities, in total. There are another 3,112 local governments at the settlement level, including cities, towns and villages. Every settlement has an elected local government, though they often operate through shared offices (particularly for

¹³ Estimates of minority numbers vary enormously, but the main differences arise from definition. The 1990 census for Hungary gave the estimated number of Gypsy/Roma as 400,000-600,000 based on self-classification by “nationality”, and 48,000 based on self-classification by “native language”. Source: Report submitted by Hungary pursuant to Article 25 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Budapest, 1999.

¹⁴ Hungarian populations in neighbouring countries in 1995 were estimated at (000s): Romania 1565, Slovakia 572, Serbia 280, Ukraine 154, Croatia 15, Slovenia 7, Austria 7, and elsewhere in the world 600, total 3.2 million.

the very small¹⁵), and towns may, by invitation, undertake some services on behalf of small settlements in their locality. The system allows considerable flexibility, which is subject mainly to the wishes of the local communities. The state government also has twenty Public Administration Offices in the counties and the capital, in which all the deconcentrated functions of the state ministries are located. These “decos” hold responsibility for legal oversight – ensuring that the actions of the county and settlement levels are lawful.

Legislation in 1993¹⁶ established the rights of ethnic communities to their own form of local elections. This allows for ethnic representation through the full council (if they have an elected majority) or through a local minority self-government (if they do not) which will form part of the municipal government. Nearly one thousand minority self-governments have been formed, and they in turn elect National Councils on a nation-wide basis. These National Councils partner the Minority Office of the state government in regulating appropriate matters, including funds. Further legislation in 1994¹⁷ allows mayors and councillors of local government also to be elected to the Hungarian parliament, which links local, regional and national political elites.

This short summary demonstrates the complexity which the Hungarian government is willing to build into its structures, in order to place responsibility and accountability at the most local level possible. This tendency in Hungarian structures towards decentralisation is repeated in many areas, including those of civil service management and training. Another significant feature of the Hungarian system is the constant process of reform of regulations, which aims at modernising and improving the system of public administration in all areas. This reflects a legalistic approach to public administration, which is also endemic in the system of education and training for the public service.

Civil Service Management

The legal status of public employees in Hungary is not based on a single comprehensive law, but each area of public service has specific regulations. The Act on the Legal Status of Civil Servants 1992 (CSL92), which applies to state *and* local levels of government, aimed to introduce a neutral, impartial civil service with the professional skills to support the work of public administration effectively. It regulates such issues as selection, promotion, rights and duties, salary framework and aspects of training, where it distinguishes between professional and career-related training. Professional training is obligatory and is funded entirely by the state, career-related training is regarded as optional. The Hungarian civil service system is generally career-based although some posts must be open to appointment by competition.

In principle, the government has an overall responsibility for the development of personnel management policy - setting standards to be followed by civil servants, preparing and issuing regulations on personnel matters (CSL92). However, the code of conduct regulating the core ethical standards for civil servants had not been agreed by 1999 despite several attempts. Issues related to the security of employment were not resolved. The government had not fulfilled its responsibilities because it lacked the basic capacity and there was no single minister designated to deal with personnel policy issues. There was some lack of clarity in the relationship between the government and the ministers in these respects. Personnel management was decentralised and central institutions, such as ministries, independently selected their own personnel, appointed and dismissed. The Ministry of the Interior was authorised to control the

¹⁵ In 1999, the Hungarian National Association of Local Governments reported that 1673 settlements had fewer than 1000 inhabitants, and of these, 282 had less than 200 inhabitants.

¹⁶ *Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (Act LXXVII- 1993)*

¹⁷ *Act on the Mayors (Act LVII-1994)*

implementation of the law (CSL92), but this was largely an oversight function, which did not entitle it to issue decrees on personnel management or review individual decisions. This ministry was responsible, however, for the coordination of training and retraining. Because of the lack of a personnel management policy across government, there were plans for the Prime Minister's Office to direct a new policy throughout public administration, and the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) became involved in 1997, though by 1999 it had not yet been implemented.

Great emphasis is placed in the legislation on the relationship between the civil service and the public, based on rules of fair administration, legality and democracy. Hungarian and foreign citizens are equal under the administrative process, and their concerns must be addressed without discrimination or bias. Any person may use their native language in dealing with public administration, and may not be put at a disadvantage because of their lack of knowledge of Hungarian¹⁸. Public authorities are legally required to respond promptly to enquiries (within 30 days, generally); and civil servants are liable for the legality and fairness of their actions.

The separation of political and administrative spheres, specified in the 1992 law, was strengthened in 1997. At this time a system of basic examinations was introduced into the service, to achieve a uniform level of professional and technical qualifications in the service. Examinations were almost unprecedented in the Hungarian public service, but this was an important step in the development of a career-based system.

Every person entering the civil service is required to pass a basic public administration examination within two years after gaining employment, except those holding degrees in law, public administration or economics. The emphasis is on legal regulations (constitutional, procedural, civil service law and so on). In 1998 the special public administration examination was introduced. Every civil servant in a senior managerial position must pass the examination and others may apply to take it voluntarily. Those with a university law degree are exempt.

Training

Education for the Hungarian public service goes back a long way. An Act of 1777 created five law academies to provide education for future public administration practitioners. The Department of Administrative Law at the Royal University of Buda, the leading academic centre for public administration for the next two centuries, was established at the same time. Two characteristics of the education and training systems which followed were:

- (i) their continuing emphasis on law and legal process in public administration;
- (ii) their role to support the successive ideologies in public administration: Austrian absolutist feudalism to 1850; emergent liberal capitalism to 1930; Western scientific management approach to 1945; socialist legal norms to 1990 but with a wider perspective from about 1978; a wider multi-disciplinary approach from 1990 but still with a strong component of general and administrative law.

The end-result of this legal tradition is that law graduates are still considered the most competent general professionals in public administration in Hungary. Within managerial levels of public administration, 30 to 50 per cent are law graduates, and the proportion increases the

¹⁸ Romania introduced similar legislation in 2001, allowing ethnic minorities to use their native language in local administration in those regions where they account for more than 20% of the population. This favoured Hungarians, in particular, who make up 8% of Romania's population.

higher the status of the position. This also applies to county and local self-government. The only other profession which competes with law is economics, accounting for about 9% of the entire civil service. The basic and special public administration examination systems exempt law graduates, with the special examinations requiring graduates to have passed the bar exam.

The overwhelming majority of training institutions are law faculties in universities; another group includes university departments (such as public affairs, political science) which include larger elements of public policy and public management. The College of Public Administration runs degree programmes with an interdisciplinary structure, including public administration, administrative law, management sciences, political science and sociology. Its diverse research activities also include law, civil service, regionalism and minority rights in administration.

Several factors helped to maintain the emphasis on law in public administration in recent years:

- the peaceful transformation from a socialist to a liberal democratic state was based on the creation and modification of a large number of new laws and regulations at all levels of government;
- the general public and interest groups often saw laws as the basis of their security and protection. A legal norm was seen as more difficult to change or circumvent than a decision not based on law. The interests of ethnic minorities, it was noted earlier, are firmly embedded in the public administration legal framework;
- the legal profession has maintained and reinforced its position given the above factors, but has also benefited from the foundation of a long legal tradition in public administration. This pattern is weaker in those areas with a distinctive nature of task, such as tax administration, ministries dealing with financial, economic and trade-related issues and flood control agencies. Here, other professions predominate (accountancy and engineering) so they also have a professional specialism as their foundation.

So, entrants to the civil service in Hungary are generally well-educated and those aspiring to senior positions are likely to be law graduates. There is no post-entry, pre-service training. In-service training activities may be divided into those specified by law, and those organised by individual ministries, agencies and public administration organisations. Civil servants are obliged to participate in training activities organised centrally or by the administrative body for which they work. Training is not a compulsory requirement of career development. It is a prerequisite for participation in the training plan of an institution.

European Union-focused training is important, one of the few areas where early elements of an overall, public administration system policy could be observed. EU-related training of senior civil servants receives special attention from the government cabinet. The general goal has been largely achieved, in that all managers of central government organisations, from the level of departmental heads up, have participated in at least one five-day course devoted entirely to EU topics. Significantly less effort and resources have been devoted to the lower levels of the administrative hierarchy. Nevertheless, ministries and central agencies place a relatively strong emphasis of EU-related training, usually oriented towards sectoral law and policies.

The training for civil servants specified by law is linked to the two levels of examination system noted earlier: the basic public administration examination (to be passed within two years of entering the service) and the special public administration examination which may be taken voluntarily but is compulsory for those civil servants in a senior managerial position (13,000 had taken the basic exam and 4,000 the special exam by late 2002). In both sets of

examinations, the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) organises the training and examinations for central government bodies, and the county level Public Administration Offices organise these for the deconcentrated agencies and local governments. HIPA is responsible for preparing the examination materials (questions and standards in particular), so establishing a common national format despite decentralised implementation. Participation in preparatory courses for the basic examination is not obligatory, though 80-90% of those taking the examination do attend. The role of HIPA was strengthened in 2001, and it now effectively coordinates, in conjunction with the Ministry of the Interior, the overall systemic framework of public administration reform, as well as civil service training, and undertakes substantial research into public administration issues.

The special examination consists of two main sections, general and an elective specialism:

A. Public Administration Management with four components

- EU organisational structure;
- legal-constitutional set-up of central government organisations;
- public finance and budgeting;
- modernisation of public administration and related executive tasks.

B. An elective subject, chosen in agreement with the candidate's supervisor, from 47 fields. These subjects are based entirely on the legal regulations governing specific governmental sectors and sub-sectors (such as forestry, commerce, budget etc).

In 2000, a four-year national training programme was introduced, including ministries, national agencies and county administration, each of which had then to prepare their own annual training plan. Civil servants are entitled, based on their own initiative, to participate in professional training related to their own careers for at least thirty hours over four years. Their employers must ensure the necessary arrangements for this training. A key component of this system is the emphasis on quality assurance, for both courses and trainers. The Hungarian Institute of Public Administration and the Public Administration Continuing Education Committee (established in 1999 under the Political State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior) share the operational responsibilities for this.

The training provided for the basic and special examinations is quite general, so specialised training must be organised by the individual organisations of state and local government. Ministries and central agencies may require the participation of local self-governments in various training activities relevant to their field of responsibility. In addition, individual organisations (state and local) may decide to purchase training services from any corporate or public training service provider. Civil servants of administrative organisations (usually state) also participate in a variety of university and similar public administration programmes which are offered by these institutions.

Recent Developments and Conclusions

Within the context of the transitional countries of central and eastern Europe, Hungary is relatively well advanced in the development of its political, economic and social systems, and in its progress towards accession into the European Union. Its system of preparatory education for entry into the public service is mature, with the characteristics of a long history, originating in the German-speaking countries of central Europe.

Many aspects of the Hungarian system mentioned in this brief study are relatively complex. The legal framework of public administration is built on a web of laws and regulations introduced at various stages prior to, and especially since, 1990. It is not based on a few new laws, each covering a major aspect of public service, but is a sophisticated legal code which attempts to secure the democratic rights of numerous local and ethnic communities within a unified national framework. It therefore lays great emphasis on decentralised powers underpinned by improving national standards of service and implementation. The career-based civil service reflects and reinforces this legalistic tradition. Most pre-service education, and much in-service training, has a legal flavour. In many countries, the adoption of regulations, or taking decisions, are often (wrongly) equated with implementation. Is Hungary different?

The 1996 SIGMA report on Hungary made the following observations:

Compared to the pre-1989 period, however, efficiency, effectiveness and promptness of public administration have not improved significantly. More and more experts believe that political transition has even reduced the efficiency of public administration. Public administration has become disorganised and the coordinating activities of government have decreased significantly... A traditional characteristic of Hungarian public administration – namely that it concentrates on the preparation of decisions and hardly functions when it comes to carrying out and controlling these – has become even more pronounced. Yet, more harmful consequences can be observed with regard to the personnel of public administration. The number of employees in public administration has increased from 65,000 in 1989 to 95-100,000 in 1995, a development which threatens the balance of state finances. Reasons for the enormous increase of 50 per cent in a period of five years are found in the decentralisation of responsibilities, the multiplication of administrative organisations, local self-governments and the lack of a human resources policy in public administration.

So, it is apparent that Hungary has suffered similar problems – decisions are not equivalent to implementation, and extensive decentralisation with loose coordination has resulted in lower efficiency, higher costs and poorer service. Countries less well-endowed than Hungary may not have been able to afford the same approach.

This criticism was written in 1995 and since then it is clear that Hungary has made great efforts to correct these faults while keeping the benefits of decentralised decision-making structures. The 1998 programme for public administration reform stressed improvements in efficiency, through improvements in the quality of the civil service. Specific targets of this programme, which was largely implemented by 2002, included:

- Career planning to attract talented and well-educated people into public service;
- Greater emphasis on performance appraisal linked to a national pay scheme;
- Increased stability of the public service, and increased mobility of civil servants among the public agencies;
- Introduction of a code of conduct for the civil service, including declaration of assets;
- Development of a combined training system with a special focus on leadership.

There is a highly developed market of public and private sector training suppliers for the public service, with no single civil service training college. However, the HIPA, under the Prime Minister's Office, coordinates the whole system of public administration reform in tandem with the Ministry of the Interior and is responsible for the examination process, by which standards are set nationally. HIPA combines the functions of the civil service administration,

and of the school of administration, with a permanent staff of about 40, and a temporary staff (including many researchers) of about 10.

Local government is also included within the civil service system (with local personnel management, national examinations and some common training opportunities). HIPA is also permitted to provide assistance to the local level of government. Politicians and civil servants are enabled to serve at both state and local levels of government. The system of public administration has been too expensive and financial aspects have recently had to be controlled more firmly by the state, but the sharing of resources between local governments, and between state and local levels, has helped to contain costs. So, through a number of subtle mechanisms, decentralisation has not been allowed to degenerate into chaotic fragmentation. Relatively late, HIPA has been able to reinforce the mechanisms for coordination of reform and training, from within the high status Office of the Prime Minister.

SLOVENIA

| | Slovenia | BiH |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Size 000 km ² | 20.3 | 51.1 |
| Population 000s (2002) | 1933 | 3964 |
| GDP per capita US\$ (2002) | 18000 | 1800 |
| Number of local authorities below state level | 192 | 160 |

Prosperous Transition

Through several centuries of its history, Slovenia was largely dominated by Austro-German influences, until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. Between the World Wars it was included in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and joined the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945. The interests of Slovenia shifted towards the capitalist north and west during the later years of socialist rule. In early 1990, Slovenia became the first Yugoslav republic to hold free elections and discard communist rule, and in December it voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence. Under a new constitution, the new Republic of Slovenia was recognised by the European Community in January 1992.

Slovenia began its process of transition from a favourable starting point: it was the most export-oriented and wealthy of the former Yugoslav republics, with some good infrastructure, a history of decentralised decision-making and it had established trading links with the West. It had industrialised before the advent of communism and never adopted command planning; private ownership began to develop before independence. This helped it to navigate a comparatively smooth transition to a market economy. Its very open trade-dependent transition economy has generally been stable, with Germany its key trading partner. Regional strife, disrupted trade and population displacements led to economic contraction in the early 1990s, but since 1993 it has achieved nine years of economic expansion. It has benefited, compared to most other republics of the former Yugoslavia, from a more homogenous population and a general cross-party consensus on future development, which has served it well as a first wave EU accession candidate. However relative prosperity and stability have dulled Slovenian appetite for perpetual reform, constraining long-term competitiveness and foreign investment. Political resistance to reform does exist and the perception of advantages in EU membership is mixed, even though it is one of the states most ready for accession.

Slovenia is a strong performer in international services with annual surpluses averaging about US\$ 500 million. Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange earnings. Transfers and workers' remittances from abroad provide a net inflow of funds to Slovenia averaging about US\$ 125 million annually. Slovenia already largely conforms¹⁹ to the necessary criteria for monetary union into the Eurozone. However, Slovenia has been somewhat hesitant to undertake some aspects of reform, notably the restructuring and privatisation of industry and banking. Capital controls, which have impaired foreign investment, and inhibited the development of domestic capital markets, were eventually significantly relaxed in 1999. There is still a strong element of protectionist bureaucracy in place in Slovenia, which is slow to change. Several companies and banks maintain a monopolistic or leading position in the Slovenian market, and are owned by the state, and pressure for further privatisation may yet generate further resistance to reform and change.

¹⁹ The inflation rate is the only remaining problem.

Public Administration Reform

The work of ministries at state level of government is deconcentrated, through common administrative offices, situated in 58 territorial units established for that purpose. At the level of local self-government, legislation in 1994 introduced 147 new municipalities of which 11 were defined as special “city” communities with a broader competence than the “ordinary” municipalities. In 1998, another 45 municipalities²⁰ were created in a rather politicised process, so that 192 local self-governments now operate as independent bodies. Formal supervision by national bodies is only to ensure lawfulness in their activities. Provision is made in Slovenian law for larger inter-community, or even regional, groups to be formed but the initiative has to come from the local level²¹. However, without a regional level of government, and with a relatively high number of small local governments (averaging 10,300 residents and 105 km²) local government is generally responsible for less significant issues.

Slovenia had reformed some aspects of public administration before its formal independence from Yugoslavia. A very broad definition of civil servant had been defined in a Federal Law of Yugoslavia in 1957 which encompassed practically all employees within the public sector. By 1990 all workers enjoyed the very high degree of protection of civil servants, with dismissal only possible for serious offences. More modern labour law was introduced by the new government in 1990, to reduce these rights and provide some unemployment protection, as most of the economy had to be restructured. The government decided to delay the introduction of a comprehensive law for public administration employees, as this would take too long to prepare, and so only the most important items were to be covered at first. The Law on Employees of the State Authorities (LESA) was passed in 1990 (before full independence). Other legislation, including that on pay, was also introduced. This basic legal framework is still in force. The European Union had included public administration reform, and a Civil Service Law in particular, as a short-term priority in the Accession Partnership with Slovenia, and successive attempts were made to adopt it. A policy document (Starting Points for Reform of the Civil Service) was issued by the government in 1996, and a draft law was “finalised” in the Ministry of the Interior in 1999. The reports of the European Commission on the progress of Slovenia towards accession from 1997 to 2001 all remark on the failure to enact a Civil Service Law. The new law was eventually adopted in June 2002 and comes into force in June 2003.

The new law covers most employees in the public sector - state and local level governments, public agencies, public funds, public institutions, commercial institutions and a few others. (It excludes companies where government is a controlling shareholder.) The definition of civil servant is therefore wide, not narrow in scope, and is similar in this respect to the preceding legislation, LESA. It ensures unity in the main regulations covering all levels of government.

The fortunes of the Civil Service Law illustrate well the progress of public administration reform in Slovenia since 1990. An interim law, LESA, was adopted and full reform was postponed. Persistent criticism on the slow progress from the EC, from 1997, was an important stimulus for reform, and results followed in the early years of the new millennium, particularly regarding the strengthening of public administration to enable it to raise the level and quality of services to an acceptable standard.

²⁰ Actually 46 new municipalities were originally included in the law, but there has been a continuing legal battle over Koper, regarding its urban and rural character, which has reached the level of the Constitutional Court.

²¹ This has been an obstacle for the creation of Regions in Slovenia, defined for the purposes of EU law, which are the basis for the operation of the EU Regional Funding systems.

Generally, therefore, the pace of public administration reform was slow up to around 1996. Amendments to LESA, concerning political posts and easing restrictions on the political activities of civil servants, were adopted in 1997. Although LESA had referred to training, the secondary legislation to regulate this was still not in place by 1996 and few administrative units had plans for in-service training. The main exceptions were the Ministries of the Interior and Defence - the Ministry of Interior (MoI) training centre had 3,600 participants in 1995.

The Ministry of Interior was made responsible in 1995, for public administration and its reform. The Bureau (from 1998, Directorate with a State Secretary in charge) for Organisation and Development of Administration (BODA/DODA), within the MoI, worked on the issues of public administration reform, though it covered a broad area, including legislation, systematisation of procedures across government and the implementation of LESA. It had a staff of six persons. By 2000 the Directorate had a staff of four. The master plan for the reform programme up to 1999, to include the new Civil Service Law, was submitted to the government in 1997. However, progress remained slow and the government suffered from staff shortages at middle and senior levels, with a need for enhanced administrative skills and capacity, and improved efficiency and effectiveness.

The 1998 regulations centralised personnel management, in the Government Personnel Office, for operational work, policy development and the coordination of implementation. Agreement with this office has to be achieved prior to making any new appointments. A Personnel Commission was also established, initially a committee of ministers, and now of senior officials, to deal with the most senior appointments, appeals and other strategic matters. Through such mechanisms, regulations on personnel matters are common to all branches of the administration, and the overall staffing plan is centrally managed. Public competition in the appointment system was also introduced for the first time in 1998, which leaves choice of detailed selection method to the head of the unit and opens the public service to applicants from outside. However, it is limited to those cases where the appointment cannot be filled by transfer or promotion. It is also possible for individuals to advance up the hierarchy rapidly on the basis of merit, as promotion is not defined by automatic criteria.

By 1999, despite 250 more civil servants, progress was still slow. The Programme Council for Public Administration Reform, established the previous year, was not operational; the sub-committee of senior civil servants was not meeting regularly; and the training strategy for the civil service was still under preparation. In areas, such as the judiciary, the administrative capacity was too weak to cope with the accelerating needs and rising expectations of the public. By 2001, public administration reform was given a higher priority with the appointment of a ministerial level advisor to the Prime Minister, to ensure its effective coordination, and DODA was strengthened. An additional 1200 civil servants were appointed and 500 trained that year. It was the first year when real progress in public administration reform and capacity building was acknowledged by the EU. Four important laws²² were adopted by the parliament by mid-2002, though the implementation of the Civil Service Law begins only in June 2003, with some aspects from 2004. The provision of training courses for civil servants also intensified from 2001 to upgrade the civil service and facilitate these improvements. From this period, the emphasis in reform shifted towards the quality of services, to create a people-friendly and accessible public administration, to serve the interests of all citizens. Standardisation of many administrative procedures was introduced to enable quicker and better management, aimed at the longer-term goal of establishing *performance measurement* for

²² Public Administration Law, Public Agencies Law, Civil Service Law, Inspection Supervision Law.

organisations and individual civil servants. The connection between training and civil service performance was slow to be recognised as a priority, and despite the affluence of Slovenia, the development of an open, responsive and efficient public administration did not take off until quite late in the reform process.

Training

Education and training for the public service was originally undertaken by two largely different groups of institutions, though this has gradually changed. Education, through degree level courses, is still offered at institutions outside public administration, whereas in-service training was generally organised and delivered by the training centres of ministries and other administrative units situated within the administration.

The School of Public Administration (SPA) was established in 1956, when the basic discipline of public administration as a field of study was law, with economics and organisational subjects making up about thirty per cent. This pattern developed over time and, after independence, the SPA began a three-year university level curriculum in public administration. It now offers a wide range of courses, and from 1999 joined with the Faculty of Economics at Ljubljana University to run a *Management in Public Administration* programme. The SPA now also runs graduate courses for professional upgrading. It has benefited from donor assistance to develop new areas of work, such as human resources management. The SPA, now a part of the University of Ljubljana, has 20 permanent staff, seventeen others on a contracted basis, and 3,000 undergraduates (two-thirds on part-time courses). It also runs a strong research programme. A high proportion of graduates go on to work in public administration (70%) though this depends on available opportunities.

Before 1997, in-service training was based in the training centres of individual ministries. One ministry in particular, the Ministry of Interior, led the field and its centre, renamed the Administrative Academy (AA), was eventually adopted in January 1997 as the specialised training institution for the entire state administration. It is the training part of the public administration system, and not an educational institution. About 600 participants each month attended courses in that year. It is responsible for: organising continuous, systematic and unified training of civil servants; evaluation of existing, and development of new, training programmes; and research. It pays special attention to training needs, in different areas of work. The Academy runs primarily one to three day workshops and seminars. Courses at the AA cover mainly general training, with gaining emphasis on EU topics and issues such as ethics and standards. Its main function is to organise courses and not to run them, though it does deliver where it has the capacity. It had 26 staff and 100 contracted trainers by 2000, when the government adopted a training strategy for the civil service. Some activities are shared with educational institutions where greater capacity is required.

The Administrative Academy also organises the state proficiency examinations for newly recruited public servants. Post entry, pre-service training for the public administration is shared by the School of Public Administration (60%) and the Administrative Academy (40%). Elected representatives also receive training when they gain office, including mayors and municipal secretaries at the local level.

Public service employees are entitled to at least five days training a year under current legislation, apart from obligatory courses determined by the heads of units. (This often applies

when new laws are adopted and must then be implemented, for example.) Courses are free to participants, though if they follow courses outside the state system they may have to contribute to the cost.

There is no centralised training budget at state level. Each ministry includes its own budget for training, and the level, type and quantity of training is an internal decision. This principle continues under the new Civil Service Law. This Law includes a complete chapter on civil service training. No ceiling on training entitlement is specified, but attendance on training courses is determined through competition and by the head of each unit, within the constraints of the training budget. The new law also introduces unusual provisions in the training field. Another chapter is devoted to apprenticeships (though inclusion of this is related to the very broad definition of civil servant adopted in Slovenia). Also, scholarships, awarded through competition, are available for students in public administration.

Conclusions

Slovenia has been lucky regarding the endowments it inherited from its socialist period, and in its ability to maintain a viable wealthy economy to underpin the social, economic and political reforms it has already achieved. Even before 1990, its internal structures, with elements of decentralisation, private economic activity, and trade with the West, created a good basis for transforming itself into a modern democratic market-based economy.

In the area of public administration, the government has achieved a healthy balance between the decentralisation of functions (a process still underway) through deconcentrated territorial administrative units and a single tier of local government, and the coordination of basic civil service functions, such as personnel management and training, through national institutions. Internal and external pressures to improve the quality of public services, through upgrading and expansion of the civil service, strengthening of administrative capacity, standardisation and simplification of procedures, and improvements in accountability have brought results.

However, these successes have not been achieved through a linear progression based on an initial master plan. Progress has been slow and at times erratic. Slovenia did not start with a strategic vision of the public service, and was indeed inclined to postpone this in its early efforts to get basic legal and economic frameworks in place, until it became clear that public administration reform was lagging behind and had to catch up. The existence of a public administration school and the emergence of a core training academy within government were, in some ways, fortuitous. It avoided the fragmentation of public service training facilities evident in Lithuania, because its ministries were less centralist and isolated in their perspective. Its traditional consensual approach, in a small but not over-centralised government, has enabled it to develop, by stages, the structures and procedures for the management of the civil service, including regulations, professional standards and a national training strategy, which will gradually ensure high quality public services. It has also developed more rapidly than elsewhere a more interdisciplinary approach to its public service training, with less emphasis on law and regulation, and more on capacity building and implementation. It has achieved the advantages of a national training Academy without destroying the diversity of other educational and training institutions, which are now good enough to be able to offer their services internationally as well as nationally.

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