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Public Service Training in OECD Countries

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THE SIGMA PROGRAMME

SIGMA -- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries -- is a joint initiative of the OECD Centre for Co-operation with the Economies in Transition and the European Union's Phare Programme. The initiative supports public administration reform efforts in thirteen countries in transition, and is financed mostly by Phare.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organisation of 29 democracies with advanced market economies. The Centre channels the Organisation's advice and assistance over a wide range of economic issues to reforming countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Phare provides grant financing to support its partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe to the stage where they are ready to assume the obligations of membership of the European Union.

Phare and SIGMA serve the same countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

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SIGMA aims to:

- assist beneficiary countries in their search for good governance to improve administrative efficiency and promote adherence of public sector staff to democratic values, ethics and respect of the rule of law;

- help build up indigenous capacities at the central governmental level to face the challenges of internationalisation and of European Union integration plans; and

- support initiatives of the European Union and other donors to assist beneficiary countries in public administration reform and contribute to co-ordination of donor activities.

Throughout its work, the initiative places a high priority on facilitating co-operation among governments. This practice includes providing logistical support to the formation of networks of public administration practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe, and between these practitioners and their counterparts in other democracies.

SIGMA works in five technical areas: Administrative Reform and National Strategies, Management of Policy-making, Expenditure Management, Management of the Public Service, and Administrative Oversight. In addition, an Information Services Unit disseminates published and on-line materials on public management topics

FOREWORD

SIGMA is publishing this report to increase the availability of comparative information on public service training systems in OECD countries. It focuses on the institutional set-up and staffing of training institutions, as well as on training features and curriculum development.

A good training system is crucial for any organisation to develop and retain high professional standards of conduct and performance for its staff. Large international enterprises spend a significant share of their budgets on staff training. Training in the public sector should be just as important as training in the private sector. If not, the public sector may be unable to carry out its tasks efficiently and effectively, thus hindering it from properly serving the citizen and the economy. This is even more important in transition countries where major reforms in nearly all sectors are under way, and where public sector staff face many great changes within a very short time.

Most central and eastern European countries have established training institutions for public sector employees. An earlier SIGMA Paper (*Country Profiles of Civil Service Training Systems*), describes training systems in ten central and eastern European countries as of spring 1996. *Public Sector Training Systems in OECD Countries* examines OECD country practices in civil service training and thus supplements the aforementioned publication. It generally follows the same outline and serves to highlight the differences, advantages and weaknesses of the systems examined. It also aims to aid transition countries in decision-making processes related to the creation or review of public service training systems. This publication does not propose the adoption of any specific training system, but rather attempts to point out the crucial issues to be considered when training systems are designed or reviewed.

This publication should benefit not only politicians and officials in central government who are thinking about ways to improve their public service, but also their counterparts at the local level.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public service in central and eastern Europe has to adapt to an enormous number of changes in a very short time. The staff is faced with a constantly changing regulatory framework which needs implementation and enforcement, as well as new demands from the growing private sector and the citizenry at large. These challenges can only be met if the staff is highly qualified and constantly updating their qualifications. A sound system of in-service training is therefore crucial to keep the personnel within the public service on equal footing with the rapidly changing environment.

This short paper is meant to point out the determining components of training systems, and advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions as they were developed in OECD countries, in order to assist countries in central and eastern Europe to set up a sound training system, while avoiding mistakes already experienced in OECD countries.

Most OECD countries have established public service training systems over the past three decades. These systems vary depending on factors, such as whether the state is central or federal, the type of the civil service system, and the recruitment philosophy. Other key factors include the training system's objectives, legal framework, funding, training institutions, statute of trainers, and content of training. Government policy decisions on these matters determine the overall set-up of the training system.

One common objective of public service training is to support the implementation of administrative reform and modernisation; another is to improve professional skills and qualifications of staff to increase efficiency of the public service. In some countries, the right and/or obligation of civil servants to undergo in-service training is stated in the constitution. In most countries, training is regulated either in the civil service act or in by-laws.

Training may be financed in a decentralised or centralised way. In the former case, funds are allocated to the budget of the employing institution which manages the funds for training of its staff and "pays" the training institution executing the training. In the case of centralised funding, funds are allocated to the civil service commission or to training institutions. Many governments apply a mixed funding system.

In the past, public sector training institutions did not have to compete with private sector training institutions as the latter did not offer any training geared to public sector personnel. However, since in many countries the public service is introducing "private sector" management techniques, private sector training institutions have discovered a new market, i.e. training public servants. Nowadays public sector training institutions are facing market competition, at least in some training areas, and are competing on equal footing with private sector providers.

The development of training policies is in principle assigned to the government bodies which oversee service and personnel policies, i.e. the "training demanders". These may be the ministries in charge of the public service and administrative reform (as in France and Spain), or ministries of the interior (as in Germany and the Netherlands).

In most countries, several training institutions provide public service training, though general training for the common functions within the public service is usually provided by only one institute. Besides the central institution, there often exist specialised training institutions, in particular within the ministries of finance or welfare.

The status of trainers depends more on the training delivered than on national differences. With regard to in-service training, lecturers are usually hired as external collaborators; most in-service training organisations employ few permanent staff.

Public administrations have set up structures and procedures to assess public service training needs. Usually, the needs assessment is the responsibility of each ministry or agency. A needs assessment procedure usually draws on information from management and training recipients. To be efficient, it has to be an ongoing process in which the evaluation of training measures in place plays an important role.

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1. INTRODUCTION : TRAINING AND PUBLIC SERVICE SYSTEMS

The need for in-service training for public service personnel has long been neglected. It was only in the late 1960s that governments started to discover the need for in-service training for public servants. This was the time when administrative reform was on the agenda and new management techniques, including budget systems, planning methods and organisation techniques found their way into the public service.

Since the 1960s most OECD countries have set up some kind of a training system. The systems differ from country to country as there are various factors determining their basic structure. For example, in a unitarian state the public service training system tends to be centralised. The central training institution may have regional training centres; however, it is the central institution which usually sets the training objectives and develops training strategies and contents. In a federal state, not only the central administration but also each state administration will have its own training facilities, and thus may set its own training objectives, strategies and contents. If a country's constitution provides for self government of local authorities, there is even room for an independent training system for the personnel of local authorities.

The personnel system of the public service is another factor influencing the training system. A career system calls for a different training system than a post system. A career system implies a training system which offers training necessary to allow for career development. If the civil service is based on a post system such training is less important as specialists are recruited and career development is not a normal expectation in a civil service applying a post system.

In a career system**,** initial training as well as adaptational training is of paramount importance. The newly recruited personnel enters the service without specific expertise for the job. The initial training offers general preparation for the work of the public service. The adaptational training offers specific preparation for a new function after or before transfer or promotion. In a post system training may be less important as specialists are hired for a specific post. However, even specialists may need some training throughout their work life to update their skills with regard to new technologies or other developments.

In the past one could clearly define a public service as applying a career system (the classical continental public service) or as applying a post system (as in the United States and Canada). Nowadays, however, governments seem to organise their public services by merging both the systems. The United States, for example, has departed from a pure post system and has**,** to a certain extent**,** introduced a career system, even for top management posts (the senior executive service), leaving however enough leeway for political appointments. The "classical" civil services with a rigid career system, on the other hand, have introduced more flexibility to allow for direct appointments to other than entry level posts, and/or have excluded posts above a certain level from the normal career path.

Another important factor influencing the public service training system is the recruitment philosophy. Most countries recruit new personnel for the civil service asking for a specific educational background which prepares the candidate for the state service, or, after recruitment, provide rather lengthy and comprehensive training to ensure that newly recruited personnel is equipped with the necessary basic knowledge to work in the public service. This system requires little or no adaptational training in the first years of service. This may be the reason why most continental-European governments have been rather late in discovering the need for in-service training. In the British system where the recruitment process takes into account the level, but not the content, of prior education, and where long-term initial training immediately after recruitment is also uncommon, the value of an efficient adaptational training system was acknowledged much earlier.

The factors mentioned above have a strong influence on the structure of the training system, its size and the costs involved. Moreover, they have an impact on developing, monitoring and controlling training objectives, training strategies and training contents. However, civil service systems (career versus post) and recruitment philosophy (general education versus job-related education) generally result from administrative tradition and philosophy, often fixed in the constitution, and therefore not easily changed.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, there are several main components determining a public service training system, in particular the:

- objectives,
- legal framework,
- funding,
- training institutions, and their statute,
- statute of trainers, and their pedagogical skills, and
- content of training, needs assessment, etc.

The policy decisions taken by a government on each of these components determine the overall set-up of the training system. In general, a decision taken regarding one component has implications for the other components. For example, the determination of the objectives should have an impact on the content of training and most likely on the status of trainers. The independence and/or the decentralisation of training institutions has necessarily an impact on the need to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate training to ensure a certain standard of training.

In general, western European countries have, over the years, evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of their respective training systems. Though none has undertaken a complete overhaul, they have taken measures to profit as much as possible from the advantages and to diminish the inherent weakness of their training system.

2. OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING

The objectives governments pursue with in-service training for public service personnel are usually defined in the civil service legislation, either in the civil service act or in specific regulations on training; in some cases the objectives are fixed in the constitution. Though these stated objectives differ from country to country in content and concreteness, one common goal of public service training can be observed throughout, and that is *to support the implementation of administrative reform and modernisation.* Other, more operational objectives stated are:

- adaptation of skills and qualifications to technological and other changes in the public service to improve the performance of civil servants by helping them to adapt to changes in the work routine due to new technologies, new legislation, etc.;
- increasing efficiency in executing the tasks to reduce costs;

- promoting horizontal mobility by providing training to acquire the expertise necessary to fulfil a new task on the same hierarchical level to improve the flexibility and adaptability of civil service staff;

- improving staff motivation;

- improving human resources management (equal treatment of men and women, etc.);

- improving the relationship between the public service and the user and improving the services provided to the public;

- supporting staff development (career paths) ; and

- developing international co-operation and European integration.

2.1 Training for change

It can be observed that training gains significant importance when governments undertake far-reaching public service reforms. For example, in Western and Northern Europe this was the case in the 1970s and 1980s, when comprehensive administrative reforms were on the political agenda, i.e. democratisation (Spain), “debureaucratisation” (Germany), decentralisation (France), “administration at the service of the user”, preparing for entry in the European Community, and creating the European Union.

A new wave of administrative reform has just started in the Anglo-Saxon countries with "reinventing government" in the United States, "Public Service 2000" in Canada, and similar efforts in Australia and New Zealand.

An even greater effort is asked from the countries in transition to a market economy where in most instances, the public sector has to be restructured completely and where the new public service faces enormous challenges in facilitating the economic development of the country.

Changes in the perception of the role of government - from providing services to facilitating and enabling them, and new approaches to the tasks of the civil service - from defending law and order to servicing society, have resulted in enormous in-service training efforts being made to help the existing staff to adapt to the new civil service culture. Where public service training schemes exist, they serve, *inter alia*, to create a corporate culture and facilitate the implementation of administrative reforms. In this context, it should be stated that private sector training schemes put a greater emphasis on creating a corporate culture than on public sector training, a phenomenon which may have an impact on performance. There are hardly any exceptions to this rule. However, if one includes in this comparison the initial training/education schemes in the public sector, the French National School for Public Administration (ENA) has to be mentioned since one of its explicit training objectives is creating an *esprit de corps.*

2.2 Training to serve the public better

For a long time the public service perceived itself as hierarchically superior to the citizen and the citizen as subordinate and petitioner. It was only in the late 1960s and 1970s that the idea of the civil service as offering "a service to the citizen" emerged. Creating a new service culture within the civil service to increase the responsiveness of the public service was a primary objective of training in these years in most

western European civil services. Civil service staff had to adapt to new demands, such as transparency of administrative decisions, the right to appeal, data protection, providing information in citizen offices, citizen hot lines. All these innovations called for a rather fundamental change of mentality which was and still is very difficult to accept by long serving public servants.

Training schemes to meet these objectives have been developed at all administrative levels particularly at local authority level.

2.3 Management training

The public service has had to face and is still facing the challenges of providing more and better services, while at the same time increasing budget deficits call for severe cost containment measures. This situation has resulted in large-scale management reforms in the public services. Introducing new management methods and techniques has been one answer to these challenges. These management changes include different approaches to budget management, reducing hierarchical structures by devolving responsibilities, and investing in human resources development.

This transformation of the public service from a law-executing body to an agent of change, promoting and facilitating economic development and fostering the well-being of the citizen, is still under way. How far this transformation towards private sector management in the public service should go differs from country to country. The United Kingdom seems to have taken the lead in Europe in introducing private sector values in the public service. Other countries, such as Austria, France and Germany have been very reluctant to change the public service value system. However**,** they have reformed the management culture, emphasising flexibility and performance and linking career development to performance and training. To implement this new management culture in a public service, where most managers have never been exposed to management theory, calls for a continuous in-service training effort.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In some OECD countries the right and/or obligation of civil servants to undergo in-service training is stated in the constitution. In most countries in-service training is regulated either in the civil service act or in by-laws. Some countries, such as Spain, Italy and France have, in addition to legal provisions, negotiated collective agreements regulating the details of in-service training for public servants. As far as public employees are concerned (workers whose work relationship is governed by the labour code), in-service training is mostly governed by collective agreements.

In France, in-service training is regulated by laws (e.g. the civil service act) and by by-laws (ordinances, decrees). This legislation obliges the government to put in place an in-service training policy and recognises the right of the public servant to in-service training. This legal framework is supplemented by the *accord-cadre* of 29 June 1989, last renewed on 22 February 1996, which regulates further details regarding in-service training. This *accord-cadre* is worth mentioning as it was the first time that a collective agreement signed for the French public service covered other than remuneration issues.

The United Kingdom lacks general legislation to regulate in-service training, a fact consistent with the British administrative culture. Nevertheless, in-service training has always played an important role in the British administration.

3.1 Rights and obligations of civil servants concerning training: legislation and regulations

Public servants, as well as other staff working in the public service, enjoy the general right to in-service training. Most regulations also state an obligation to undertake in-service training, particularly an obligation to "self-instruction", i.e. an obligation of the civil servant to keep his expertise and qualifications up to date.

A specific right to a certain number of training days per year for each civil servant does not usually exist. An exception is France, where the *accord-cadre* states five to six days (depending on the category; cat. C = 6 days) per public servant during the time the agreement is valid; (three years). In fact, the average number of training days per civil servant has actually exceeded the agreed number of days.

In this context it may be worth mentioning that labour codes or collective agreements for the private sector often include the right to about one week educational leave per year.

Though a specific right to training does not generally exist, the training systems in place usually accommodate most of the training demands of civil servants. Moreover, most civil service legislation provides for the possibility of longer periods of educational leave, to attend further education or specific training programmes, given certain prerequisites are fulfilled. In Italy, for example, there exists the right of the public servant to take up studies leading to a state diploma. In this case the state may agree to up to 150 hours per year paid educational leave for every civil servant pursuing such studies.

The obligation to attend training programmes which has found its way into most civil service legislation, makes obligatory training for civil servants possible. This training may greatly exceed three days per year. In Germany, for example, there exist specific regulations regarding in-service training for public servants working in inland revenue and tax and excise administration, labour administration and social security administration. Public servants (cat. A) are obliged to undergo a two-year training cycle after recruitment. Furthermore, there is a six to eight week training cycle for new entrants in general administration.

In summary, the public servant has a right, and an obligation, to attend in-service training. However, the right is never qualified (except for France) and the obligation translates only under exceptional circumstances into obligatory participation in a training programme. In most cases it is still the public servant who decides whether or not he wants to participate in an in-service training measure.

3.2 Linking training results to career development

Linking training programmes to career development was one of the main objectives when most training institutions were created in the late 1960s and 1970s. However, the objective has not been met. Training measures as a condition *sine qua non* for further career development are still the exception. This is due to various factors: the reluctance of personnel managers to reduce their discretionary powers, the increasing politicisation of promotions to top management posts; the lack of confidence in training; the insufficient availability of training, and the additional cost which the evaluation of "training success" would imply.

It has to be borne in mind that as soon as attending a specific training programme is an obligatory condition for promotion, this training programme has to be made available quickly to all public servants wishing to apply for the promotion. The impact on the personnel budget could be significant as well as the impact on the number of training days per public servant per year. In view of the need to curtail costs, "obligatory training" for promotion is often postponed until after the promotion is made on a probationary basis. It is during this probationary period that the relevant training would be provided.

Examples of obligatory links between training and promotion:

Initial training and recruitment

In France and Germany, for example, there are elaborate long-term initial training schemes which are executed by regional institutes for public administration (France) or public service staff colleges (Germany). The curriculum for these programmes and the exam are regulated in by-laws. Passing the final exam (in Germany) or being ranked at least satisfactory (in France) is necessary for recruitment into the public service. The exam can be repeated once. However, in some German Länder there is no recruitment guarantee, i.e. not everyone who passes the exam is recruited. In France, if the ranking is not satisfactory, the student may be offered an entry post at a lower category or, in special cases, may be allowed to repeat the course

Training measures to enter a higher category

In the continental civil service system, four categories (sub-clerical, clerical, executive and administrative category) still predominate. However, over the last decade or so, the possibilities to be promoted to a higher category have considerably improved. At the same time, several countries have provided training programmes to ease access to a higher category. The training curriculum, as well as the exams, are regulated through by-laws (ordinances, decrees, etc.) In France, there are training programmes to prepare for the internal competition (examination) to enter a higher civil service category. Though these preparatory training programmes are not legally obligatory, at least not those preparing for the entry exam to the National School for Public Administration (ENA), it is almost impossible to pass the entry exam without having attended these programmes.

In Germany it is, *inter alia*, the Federal Academy of Public Administration which offers such a training programme. Passing these exams (entry exam to the ENA in France; and final exam taken by the federal personnel committee in Germany) is compulsory for promotion to the higher category.

Training measures linked to certain promotions

There is a statutory training programme in France, which is obligatory for personnel who have obtained certain posts such as deputy-director (*sous-directeur*). In Germany, the statutes stipulate that specific training "should" be attended when someone is promoted to chief of a branch in a ministry. In practice, it depends on the ministries concerned whether or not this training measure is seen as obligatory.

3.3. Trade unions and training

The public service is highly unionised, so it would therefore not be surprising if the trade unions would have a say in the organisation and content of public service training. However, their influence is rather limited. The only exception is France where - on the basis of the *accord-cadre* - the public service trade unions are involved in the development of in-service training programmes. As the trade unions often lacked the expertise to discuss in-service training strategies on a political level, the French government even provided the necessary funds (FF 14 million for 1991-1992) to train trade union members on the relevant issues. In other countries, trade unions are not really an important player in in-service training issues, though such issues form part of collective agreements (Italy and Spain) or trade unions are represented in the consultative committee of the training institutions (Germany). However, in Germany, trade unions, and in particular the

civil servants association, have their own training institutions, which carry out in-service training not only geared to union activities but also to improving job-related skills.

4. FUNDING

Training is commonly funded in two ways:

- training funds are decentralised, i.e. they are allocated to the budget of the employing institution which manages the funds for training of its staff and "pays" the training institution executing the training; and

- training funds are centralised, i.e. they are allocated to the civil service commission or to training institutions. Thus, the training is carried out free of charge for the employing institution, if the salary paid to the public servant while he is on training is neglected.

Both funding systems need some monitoring and controlling to ensure that the training objectives can be met. In the first case (employing institutions manage the budget allocations for staff training) training funds may be used for other purposes. This is the case if the funds allocated to staff training are not blocked but can be transferred to other budget lines which the employing institution may consider more important. Under such circumstances, training may be neglected. If, on the other hand, training funds are allocated to the training institutions and training is therefore free of charge for the employing institution, it may neglect to carry out a thorough training needs assessment and thus ask for either more training than is really needed or training unrelated to the job.

Many governments apply a mixed funding system. Apart from providing direct funding to one or more government training institutions, they allocate funds for training purposes directly to the ministries or agencies. Training funds are usually not transferable to other budget lines. However, the ministries or agencies have a certain discretion regarding the type of training they want to undertake, the trainers to hire and whether or not they commission the training to a public or private training institution. The ministries or agencies may spend the training funds on training courses organised within the respective ministry or agency, or they may send the staff to outside training institutions, including those working for the private sector.

In the past, public sector training institutions did not compete with private sector training institutions. Public sector training institutions formed a closed shop, but often concentrated on particular training measures or training topics, thus dividing the tasks between them. Sometimes they even opened up to a certain internal competition. This situation has changed over the years. Nowadays public service training institutions are managed more and more like private enterprises. They have to face market competition and compete on a more or less equal footing with private sector training providers. This is particularly the case for the British Civil Service College and for most training institutions in Nordic countries.

These changes tend to orient training more towards the demand for training, i.e. the assessed training needs, rather than the old system without competition which, over time, had become somewhat inflexible and unresponsive to new demands. In fact, in some cases, training was more and more supply driven, i.e. training programmes proven successful were repeated over and over again. However, opening up to market forces might, on the other hand, lead to some disadvantages, particularly with regard to the training for lower categories whose training needs may easily be forgotten as their lobby may be less powerful; moreover, training measures for this group are often less prestigious and create lower profits.

Exact data on the funds allocated to public service training are not readily available for all countries. This is due to factors such as:

- in federal states there may be a great number of different budgets which would have to be consulted;
- salaries paid during training measures may or may not be included in the statistics; and
- targeted pre-entry training may or may not be included.

However, there are a few countries where data are available. United Kingdom data show that the total amount invested in training of public servants was £381 million in 1989-1990, representing 6 per cent of the government's pay bill. This percentage remained stable during the following three years. In comparison, private sector enterprises in Britain allocate on average only 2 to 3 per cent of their wage bill to training. The average amount spent on training per civil servant was £788 in 1989-1990; and a day of training amounted to £179 per person. The total amount was composed as follows:

- salary costs for personnel in training 43 %
- salary costs for trainers 25 %
- lodging and other costs 14 %
- participation fees 12 %
- travel and per diem for trained personnel 7 %

In France , the *accord-cadre* states the minimum percentage of the overall pay bill which should be allocated to training. For 1992 this minimum was fixed at 2 per cent of the gross wage bill, for 1994 at 3.2 per cent. For 1990 the real spending on training was between 2.1 and 7.48 per cent depending on the ministry. As an example, the following table offers a breakdown of the funds spent for training in the French public service in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total wage bill.

Table 1. French Public Service Training Funds (1990-1993)

	Cost of remuneration for trainees	**Cost of remuneration for trainees**	**Other costs**	**Other costs**	**Total costs**	**Total costs**
	In million francs	Percentage of wage bill	In million francs	Percentage of wage bill	In million francs	Percentage of wage bill
Induction training						
1990	5 919	2.56	2 057	0.89	7 976	3.45
1991	6 483	2.66	2 497	1.02	8 980	3.68
1992	5 942	2.34	2 541	1.00	8 484	3.34
1993	6 288	2.26	2 689	0.97	8 977	3.23
Obligatory training						
1990	44	0.02	25	0.01	69	0.03
1991	31	0.01	25	0.01	56	0.02
1992	30	0.01	13	0.01	43	0.02
1993	86	0.03	15	0.01	110	0.04
Adaptational training						
1990	5 835	2.52	1 493	0.64	7 328	3.16
1991	6 297	2.58	1 734	0.71	8 031	3.29
1992	6 492	2.56	1 846	0.73	8 337	3.29
1993	6 472	2.33	2 094	0.75	8 566	3.08
Preparation for competition						
1990	431	0.18	200	0.09	632	0.18
1991	471	0.18	216	0.09	687	0.19
1992	545	0.21	237	0.09	783	0.30
1993	549	0.20	210	0.08	759	0.28
Total of training						
1990	12 230	5.28	3 774	1.63	16 004	6.91
1991	13 282	5.44	4 472	1.83	17 754	7.27
1992	13 009	5.12	4 637	1.83	17 646	6.95
1993	13 395	4.82	5 008	1.81	18 403	6.63

Source: DGAFP information provided by the personnel departments

5. TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AND TRAINERS

5.1. Organisation and structures responsible for training policies and their implementation

The development of training policies is in principle assigned to the government bodies in charge of public service and personnel policies. These may be the ministries in charge of the public service and administrative reform as is the case for example in France and Spain. Or, as in Germany and the Netherlands, the ministries of the interior which are in charge of civil service policy, including personnel policy. In the United Kingdom, as in other Anglo-Saxon administrations, personnel policy and in particular recruitment, career development and training are assigned to the Civil Service Commission.

In practice, training policies are influenced by several other players as well. The impact of forces other than the ministries on training policies depend a great deal on the legal statute of the training institutions, i.e. whether or not they form part of the hierarchical structure of the administration, and to what extent training is decentralised. Furthermore, it can be observed that quite often consultative bodies are called upon to assist in the formulation of training policies. These councils may be accommodated at the level of the body responsible for developing personnel policies and/or directly at the training institutions.

In general, whatever legal status training institutions enjoy, the political or ministerial level assumes its responsibility for developing training policies if and when important administrative reform programmes or political changes, such as entry into the European Community, are at stake, and such programmes need training support for implementation. The implementation of such training policies is, of course, easier if public service training institutions are obliged to follow orders, as is the case in Germany. Also, if the training institutions are independent, the policy would be implemented and the corresponding courses offered, as such training institutions must earn money to survive. It is even possible that private sector training institutions could turn out to be faster in responding to new training needs, especially if the market is very competitive.

Besides the personnel departments there are third parties voicing their demand for public service training, such as trade unions, industry and, of course, technical ministries.

The implementation of training differs, depending on the content of training. Usually general training, such as human resources management, organisation and planning, budgeting and law drafting etc., is centralised. Technical training, i.e. specific topics such as adaptation to new tax legislation, is decentralised, and as has already been mentioned, there may be special training institutions for some departments, e.g. finance departments.

5.2 The training network and statute of training institutions

In most countries there exist a number of training institutions providing public service training. Moreover, in Europe, there are a few training institutions funded by more than one government, e.g. the European Institute for Public Administration in Maastricht, which carries out training focused on the European Community, and the European Academy in Kehl, which focuses on training for regional public servants and local authorities in the upper Rhine region, covering mainly the Elsass and Baden-Württemberg.

With regard to domestic training institutions, most countries dispose of institutions providing long-term initial training which might take place before or after recruitment. For this initial training there are special

university courses (e.g. post-graduate programmes in the USA and Canada awarding a Master of Public Administration), special schools (France post-graduate level) and staff colleges (Germany, graduate level and clerical level).

In-service training for adaptation and promotion, i.e. short-term training for up to about six weeks, is generally provided by other training institutions such as the Civil Service College in the United Kingdom and the Federal Academy in Germany. Universities have only recently started to enter this "in-service training market". In some countries the initial training institutions also provide some in-service training, e.g. the French National School of Public Administration provides further training for its alumnae.

In some very specific areas of training such as computer literacy, training may also be contracted out to the private sector. However, for the time being, the use of private profit-making training institutions seems to be very limited, which is at least partly due to the fact that participants' fees are usually rather high, and therefore contracting-in private sector consultants is more cost-effective.

Public sector training institutions, have set up networks on a national and international basis to exchange views and experience and to co-ordinate their activities. There are regular workshops at the national level, international study groups, such as the SCEPSTA (Study group of European Public Service Training Agencies), and associations, such as the IASIA (International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration).

Some national training institutions, particularly within the EU, work in close co-operation with national training institutions of other countries, and have set up training courses targeted to foreign public servants.

Examining the multifaceted training landscape, it seems that an efficient training institution should meet the following conditions:

- enjoy a certain independence;
- receive some institutional funding to be able to develop new training programmes;
- be exposed to a certain amount of competition to force the institution to react quickly to new demands;
- dispose of funds which allow them to work actively in national and international networks to keep up to date on new developments; and
- dispose of a consultative body, joining administration, industry and academia, which could improve awareness of emerging demands and training needs.

5.3 Legal status of trainers

The legal status of trainers differs. The actual status seems to depend more on the training delivered than on national differences. Permanent full-time trainers are mainly used in long-term initial training programmes. This is the case in university programmes in the United States, and in the staff colleges in Germany. The National School of Public Administration, as well as the Regional Institutes for Public Administration in France, hire practitioners in the field of public administration to serve as faculty.

As far as in-service training is concerned, i.e. short courses of up to about six weeks, the lecturers are usually hired as external collaborators. Depending on the topic, they may be practitioners in the field of public administration, university lecturers, or consultants and trainers from the private sector. This system poses the question of adequate fees for external experts. The level of fees usually depends on the status of the lecturer; civil servants generally receive a lower fee than private sector consultants, based on the fact that private sector consultants have to live solely on their fees and to pay their staff, whereas civil servants and university professors have a permanent income. However, the fees have to be attractive to the practitioners, as otherwise they would refuse to lecture and to prepare themselves properly as they are often dealing with a heavy workload.

Most in-service training institutions have a very limited number of permanent staff. This staff provides the administrative back-up to training. It is also responsible for the development of new training programmes, the monitoring of the training delivered, i.e. ensuring the quality of trainers and training material, and the evaluation of training programmes. The involvement of permanent staff in the actual delivery of training is usually very limited. More often than not this "permanent" staff is temporarily detached from a ministry or agency to serve for a limited time in the training institution, thereafter returning to their normal work within the civil service. This rotation scheme has been put in place to ensure that the staff of the training institutions is familiar with the new developments and the day to day problems of public administration. Thus the staff should be in a position to evaluate whether or not the training provided meets the real training needs.

In summary, experience has shown that knowledgeable practitioners are an invaluable asset for in-service training. However, other trainers may be needed, in particular where new management techniques or negotiation skills etc. are concerned.

The disadvantage of using practitioners to lecture is the fact that they usually need training in training techniques and, at least for a certain time, assistance from the permanent staff with regard to the preparation of training material.

6. CURRICULA: DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

6.1 Training needs identification procedures

To meet the training needs of the public service, public administrations have set up structures and procedures to assess such needs. The techniques applied may vary, not only by country and administration, but also with regard to the envisaged training content and the target group. In most countries the needs assessment is the responsibility of each ministry or agency. In some countries ministries have managed to provide not only a training needs assessment for one year but to develop multi-annual training plans for their staff. They have thus linked the training needs assessment to the individual career development plans of their staff. In other countries, where the training needs assessment procedures are the responsibility of the training institutions, it is then not the personnel department of each ministry, but the training institution which undertakes the necessary steps to assess the training needs. However, even if it is the training institution who is in charge of the needs assessment, the personnel departments should still undertake career planning for the staff, including the necessary training.

Under certain circumstances, for example if new information technology were to be installed or major reforms implemented, the need for specific training would generally be accepted by all parties concerned.

However, though there may be a general consensus on the necessity of training, it is still crucial to assess specific needs and to define the specific content of the training programme with regard to the target group.

For example, major legal changes should always be coupled with adaptational training measures for those who are responsible for the implementation of the new legislation. In such a situation the general need for training is obvious. A specific needs assessment will nevertheless be necessary, to evaluate the varying needs for information on the new legislation depending on the target group of the training measure (management, executing staff, support staff). The same argument holds for introducing new information technology or management training for newly appointed managers at all management levels as well as for technical training, such as budgeting and organisation, for staff newly assigned to such specific posts.

On the other hand there might be training needs in certain areas and/or for specific groups of personnel which are not as easily identified, such as responsiveness to the public, ethics, communications, co-operation and law drafting techniques. In these areas a training needs assessment procedure would first have to assess whether or not a training need for a given subject exists, and then, based on that assessment, the content with regard to the target group.

For the above reasons, needs assessment procedures which are in place**,** try to draw on different sources. On the one hand, they allow for gathering information from the demand side, that is the hierarchies within the public service, and, on the other hand, they allow for gathering additional information from outside sources such as consultative bodies, e.g. a board or a scientific council. Inside the service, it is the target groups, the management and in particular the human resources management units, which are involved in the assessment of training needs. For example, in a performance appraisal, specific training needs should be identified, gathered by the human resources management units and then communicated to the training institutions. The consultative bodies should supplement the internal needs assessment by reporting on new developments in training and by voicing general concerns or even pointing out specific flaws in public administration which would call for training measures. These consultative bodies may consist of representatives from academia, private sector interest groups (e.g. industries, SME's, consumers) and workers' organisations.

The final product - the specific training measure, its objectives, content, and training methods and techniques has to be agreed upon between the training institution, as the training provider, and management, as the one who is requesting specific training. This is obvious if the training institution is funded by the budget. However, it is also true if the training institution is semi-private or private, as these institutions depend on selling their services and are therefore even more demand driven than the training institutions which are fully funded by the budget.

To set up a targeted and responsive training programme, the data collected in the needs assessment procedure are evaluated and the various training demands are prioritised together with management. It has to be borne in mind that any assessment procedure requires follow-up, i.e. evaluation of its efficiency and adaptation to changing structures.

In summary, every efficient needs assessment procedure has to draw on information from management and the recipients of training. It has to be an ongoing process in which the evaluation of the training measures put into place play an important role. A complete needs assessment therefore usually includes:

- diagnosis of training needs;
- analyses of the collected data;

- planning and prioritising the training measures (management together with training institutions);

- implementation of training measures; and

- evaluation and possible adaptation of training measures.

6.2. Beneficiaries of training

According to regulations on training in OECD countries, all staff should have equal access to training. This means that access to training should neither depend on the category, the employment status of the public employee, nor the level of government he or she is working in. In practice, however, this is not always the case. Most countries provide very little training for the highest and the lowest levels of public service staff. The bulk of training is offered to middle and higher management staff.

Many countries, though, have made serious efforts to provide training for top level civil servants, for example offering training to newly appointed permanent secretaries. Specific training schemes have been developed in the Netherlands and elsewhere to establish a coherent top management group within the public service, capable of seeing the government's objectives in a holistic way, and of implementing modern human resources management.

In some countries, public service training institutions also offer training to newly elected members of parliament.

With regard to the lower categories, some action has been undertaken to offer more and better training. One initiative which has been pursued in several OECD countries is training to serve the public better, i.e. improving responsiveness. As it is usually the lower categories who serve behind the counter and who thus have immediate contact with the public, training this staff to improve their behaviour towards the public is crucial.

The reasons why the lower staff in particular often seem inadequately represented in training activities are multifold. One main reason is that in most countries training for the lower categories is mostly carried out within the ministries. Statistical data on such training is often difficult to obtain. It may therefore be that these categories are not actually as neglected as the statistics would have us believe. On the other hand training budgets are almost always too small and this may actually be to the detriment of the lower categories, except where political programmes push for specific training programmes for this staff.

Though the training offered is often unequally distributed among the different categories, there is usually no discrimination regarding the employment status (contract or appointment) of the persons belonging to the target group. Practical difficulties are encountered with regard to training of part-time staff, as part-time training measures are not always possible, depending on the subject.

6.3. Training formats

There are various types of training. Some featured within this wide range of training represent the typical result of a specific administrative culture. The sophisticated British in-service training system is, to a great extent, the consequence of a more or less non-existent pre-entry training programme. The German and the

French systems which both provide elaborate pre-entry or initial training have, for a long time, neglected in-service training.

Pre-entry training is offered in many countries by universities or specialised schools for public administration. In particular, American universities, but also some universities in Europe, offer post-graduate courses in public administration. In Germany and France such training is offered using a slightly different formula, that is students following such courses are actually already recruited to the public service and have been accorded a specific status. Depending on the course they are attending, this status may or may not entitle them to automatically enter the civil service after completion of their studies. In any case they are paid a certain salary while they are attending this preparatory course. The length of pre-entry training varies between about six months and three years, depending on the level of general education and the level of recruitment (category).

Induction courses and orientation are usually offered within the first two years of working in the administration. These courses tend to be four to six weeks in duration and are usually split up into one-week training courses. Normally these courses provide an overview of such topics as working methods, budgetary regulations, public law, civil service law, etc. Again, the content depends to a certain extent on the educational background of the new recruits. In specialised administrations these induction courses may be much longer, even up to one year within a two year period. For example, this is often the case in tax administration, labour administration or in social security, as these subjects are usually not taught in university.

In-service training courses represent the main type of training in public administration. Their objective is to qualify staff for new assignments in the context of horizontal mobility and/or to prepare staff for promotion. Moreover, these courses are used to inform staff about organisational or legal changes, including more comprehensive reforms. Such training is necessary to enable staff to implement the envisaged reforms.

Training can be carried out in training institutions as seminars or workshops; it may also include attending conferences, but it might equally be "on-the-job" training through development assignments closely monitored by a trained supervisor. In particular, if bulk training is necessary, distance training schemes have been used.

Most countries have made it an obligation for civil servants "to keep their qualification for the job up to date" in their civil service law. This is basically the obligation for "self-instruction", i.e. to follow new developments and legal changes in their field of expertise.

Some countries, such as France, provide in their legislation for special leave for training. This provision allows civil servants to take up to three years special leave (one of which is paid) to pursue further education. Depending on the country, this may be very liberal and can be anything between language studies and university courses, or rather limited, and only applicable to job-related further education.

6.4. Procedures of development and validation of training curricula and materials

Procedures to develop new training programmes are multifold. It seems that the best results have been obtained when new training programmes have been designed within a working group comprising members with expertise in both designing training programmes and in the technical field, preferably including those institutions which voiced the demand for training The working group may also consult with outside experts in the respective area, e.g. user representatives, if these seem adequate.

As already stated, new training programmes are commonly developed following requests expressed during the training needs assessment. Often, however, it actually is the training institution which - pro-actively - should identify a possible training need before the demand is even voiced by the public administration. This emerging need may have been identified through the consultative body of the training institution, the general public, or special interest groups. The training institution would have to identify the possible training programmes which could meet those needs.

Training curricula and training material can only be developed if the objectives and the expected output are clearly defined. In particular in connection with pro-active training activities of the training institution, it is necessary to convince the recipients (public bodies and staff) of the necessity of such training as otherwise training may become an end in itself and the implementation of the training content may be extremely low. To ensure that training measures lead to the expected changes in administrative behaviour, the recipient organisations must foster the implementation of the training content in the day to day work. A way to obtain the support of the recipient organisations is to involve them in the development of the training curriculum. Moreover, it is necessary to validate the training curriculum and the training material in a pilot seminar followed by a thorough evaluation to ensure that the desired outcome will be obtained. The curriculum and the material are to be reviewed on the basis of this evaluation.

Training measures targeted to behavioural change have shown the need for an extremely high level of support measures within the recipient public body to reach a satisfactory implementation rate. In particular, the design of such training schemes has to take account of the organisational and regulatory environment within which the behavioural change should take place; this makes the involvement of the recipient administration in the design of the training curriculum crucial.

6.5. Evaluation of training activities

A reliable evaluation of training activities has proven to be very difficult. Depending on the content of the training, different evaluation methods may have to be applied. The possible indicators to evaluate the success (positive impact) of training depend to a large extent on the training content. How to evaluate and which indicators to chose is crucial to obtain a reliable result. It is self-evident, though often not the case, that the evaluation indicators have to fully reflect the stated objectives of the training measure.

In addition to the evaluation indicators, the "points of inquiry" have to be determined. In general, these points of inquiry are the following; the trainee, his/her superiors and subordinates, the human resources unit, and the public. Depending on the kind of training to be evaluated, these inquiry points may have a different weight for the evaluators.

If training is used to transfer knowledge, such as changes in the regulatory framework or in procedures, indicators based on the application of the new regulations or the observance of the new procedures may be more readily available than if training is geared to behavioural change. An oft-used indicator is the number of justified complaints or reversed administrative decisions, whereas an indicator like the number of decisions taken may lead to counterproductive results.

A common practice is the use of questionnaires which are given to the participants immediately after the training measure. The results of such questionnaires are only of limited value as they reflect only the immediate impression of the participants. They cannot provide information about the depth or extent of the newly acquired knowledge or skills which will be applied in day to day practice or the actual behavioural change, which is visible only on the job. Some training institutions have experimented with sending out a

second questionnaire to participants after a certain period, e.g. six months, however the return rate has often been too low to draw reliable conclusions.

Another means applied in obtaining reliable information about the impact of training measures is to ask the human resources management unit of the recipient organisation to gather and communicate relevant information from the supervisors and the seminar participants.

With regard to behavioural change of staff in direct contact with the public, surveys on customer satisfaction have been used successfully.

In general, training institution have also to undergo a general evaluation of their overall training activities which is often done by their consultative council or the board. Such a meeting would review the annual programme, the priorities set, how demands were met, and how "customer friendly" the institution appears (programme, admission, responsiveness, etc.).