

I Annex - Democracy and the rule of law

**10. NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR LOCAL SELF-
GOVERNMENT IN MONTENEGRO**

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European Union



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**NATIONAL TRAINING
STRATEGY**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MONTENEGRO**

July 2008

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SUMMARY

NTS STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1. Build the capacities of municipalities for good local governance.**
 - 1.1 Establish human resources capacity in municipalities.**
 - 1.2 Establish standards of human resources management in municipalities.**
 - 1.3 Ensure the proper implementation of applicable regulations and standards on employment and promotion of officials, and eliminate political interference.**
 - 1.4 Introduce a system of performance appraisal for officials.**
 - 1.5 Establish an internal training system in each municipality.**

- 2. Strengthen the capacities of the Union of Municipalities (UoM) to support capacity-building in municipalities and to oversee the implementation of the NTS.**
 - 2.1 Secure the sustainability of the implementation of the NTS within the UoM.**
 - 2.2 Create institutional capacity for the implementation of the NTS within the UoM.**

- 3. Develop a professional training environment.**
 - 3.1 Establish a system of Quality Assurance.**
 - 3.2 Establish a library of training materials.**
 - 3.3 Establish a capacity for curriculum development.**
 - 3.4 Establish a systematic approach to the evaluation of training programmes.**

- 4. Improve the legal and financial framework for local government.**
 - 4.1 Define the appropriate working and legal status of officials and the responsibilities of the key bodies.**

- 5. Develop an institutional framework for training.**
 - 5.1 Build the capacity of the Human Resource Management Authority to:**
 - (i) provide support to professional training for local government;**
 - (ii) improve the professional training environment;**
 - (iii) improve the capacities of Ministries to cooperate productively with municipalities.**
 - 5.2 Define mechanisms for improving cooperation between central and local government.**
 - 5.3 Establish a National Training Council (NTC) for local government (Union of Municipalities, Ministry of Interior and Public Administration, Human Resources Management Authority).**

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

THE CHALLENGE

Local government in Montenegro is facing some key challenges:

1. There is a demand for greater **decentralization**. On the one hand, this is the responsibility of Government, which needs to establish new competences, resources and assets to local self-government, in the light of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. On the other hand, municipalities have to show that they have the ability to exercise these competences effectively and be accountable for a growing proportion of public funds.

“Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.”

Article 3, European Charter of Local Self-Government

2. The **expectations** of local people, organizations and business are increasing. They see the standards and life quality of people, organizations and business in well-organized and educated local self-government are getting higher and higher. The internet and mass media expose them to the wider world. They look to municipalities to make a difference for them, to provide jobs and services to their communities and to improve their standards of living.
3. **Integration** into Europe provides strong motivation throughout the country. European standards are seen as essential in, especially, attracting business and investment, protecting the environment and increasing public health. Municipalities have a key role to play in raising the standards of public services.

THE CAPACITY

What is the ability of municipalities to exercise their competences effectively, to meet the expectations of citizens and to improve public services? Within any organization, capacity is derived in particular from the staff and leadership. Municipalities are complex; their capacity also depends on the ability of the Mayor and the Assembly to engage local people and organizations, to work constructively together and give proper political direction. They must take particular responsibility for **improving performance** because they do not face the competitive challenges of the private sector.

If municipalities are to meet the challenges they face and drive up the standards of local population, they must provide education to their staff and to their leadership and management abilities.

Staff is the greatest asset of any organization.

Staff

Staff must be fit for the job before them. The right staff must be recruited; they must have the necessary expertise; they must be motivated not just to do their duty but to do the best they can. They must see themselves as part of a wider team committed to public service. They must feel that their managers have confidence in them and will support them in their work. They must be treated as an important asset of the municipality. Good performance should be recognized. Poor performance is unacceptable; where staff does not perform well, they must help to improve or be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Leadership and management

It is not possible to have a good municipality without good leadership and management. Good leadership creates and shares the vision of where the municipality wants to go, what it wants to achieve, how it can get there. It creates an organizational culture that develops the commitment of staff to good local government. It encourages local people and organisations to participate in decision-making procedures. It ensures local government is ethical and responds to all communities. It draws in partner organizations to share the challenge of delivering good local governance.

Good management delegates authority and responsibilities to staff. This encourages staff to give of their best and deliver the targets for better public services. It encourages them to perform well and improve in areas where better performance is possible. It encourages them to seek out best practice and to welcome innovation and change. It listens to service users to get feedback and to learn from experience.

A MANAGER'S 16 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Ensure staff is fully aware of their responsibilities and performance indicators.*
2. *Ensure staff is aware of the strategic challenges and priorities of the municipality.*
3. *Create an environment in which staff receives all the support they need to do a good job (i.e. IT, advice, access to information, contacts, coaching, training, budgeting ...).*
4. *Create a culture in which staff wants to keep you informed of progress and involve you in problem-solving if necessary.*
5. *Create a sense of teamwork to ensure maximum cooperation among staff.*
6. *Make best use of the skills of staff with disabilities.*
7. *Assist staff with vertical, horizontal and external communications as necessary.*
8. *Manage a system of results-driven performance appraisal in which staff seek continuous improvement in their work through Personal Development Plans.*
9. *Give credit to staff when they do a good job.*
10. *Keep staff informed of wider developments both in the organization and in the community.*
11. *Help staff to acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and thus take responsibility for their own personal development.*
12. *Instill a sense of personal and team discipline among staff and eliminate bad work habits.*
13. *Give staff sufficient space within agreed parameters to be creative and seek innovative approaches to the challenges they face.*
14. *Seek out best practice from other municipalities and from other countries and share it with your staff.*
15. *Encourage staff to seek feedback from service users and community groups so that they can respond to their needs as much as possible.*
16. *Ensure staff is ethical in their work and that poor performance is not allowed to continue.*

Political direction

Elected representatives are there to work on behalf of the people they serve and to ensure that the municipality meets local needs. They must be allowed to play their full **representative** role. This requires a sense of partnership and a good working relationship between the Mayor and the

Assembly President. Assembly members need to understand the work of the staff; staff needs to understand the priorities of the Assembly members. The Mayor needs to provide a leadership that directs staff towards solutions of key priorities in municipality and towards higher level of the service provision to citizens and legal entities. The councilors should also be directed towards providing of a more quality life and work in a local community.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Union of Municipalities

The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (hereinafter: the Union) represents the interest of municipalities, which are its founders. Municipalities provide resources through their fees. The Union bodies enact Working Plans and Programmes, appoint local self-government representatives in the Union organs and bodies and in the organs and bodies established by the central government and monitor its performance.

The Union sits at the centre of a network of organizations that have a stake in local government. It initiates the legislative changes needed to improve local government, as well as, individual sectoral laws of interest for performance within the scope of local self-government rights and duties to the Government. It can channel external funding to municipal priorities. It can raise the profile of local government in the media and among the public. It can represent municipalities both nationally and internationally.

The Union can also play an important role in helping municipalities improve their efficiency and effectiveness. **The Union can develop programmes to improve leadership in local self-government and raise level of expertise and build capacities of employees in local self-government.** It can run campaigns to encourage greater citizen participation. It can harness the resources of stakeholders to deliver better local government. It can draw in best practice from across Europe and beyond.

The Ministry of Interior and Public Administration

The Ministry of interior and Public Administration (hereinafter: the Ministry) has the leading role and responsibility for developing the right **policy and legislative framework** for local government. It needs to **overlook** the local government fulfilling and to **analyze** problems and keys obstacles in functioning and performance of the local government bodies. It needs to work in partnership with the Union to help municipalities deliver good public services. It needs to work with line Ministries and other state administration bodies to satisfy the needs and capacities of municipalities in exercising shared or delegated competences and in delivering public services to high standards.

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In particular, the Ministry needs to work closely with the Ministry of Finance, not only to develop the appropriate fiscal framework for local government but also to seek a financial settlement where the resources allocated to local government should match both the competences transferred to municipalities as well as their responsibilities for economic, social and environmental development. In particular, funding may need to be allocated to municipalities specifically for training.

Human Resources Management Agency

The HRMA has **experience and expertise** in improving Human Resource management and development in the civil service at national level. This can be put at the service of local government to help Ministries understand how to work more effectively with municipalities. They can work with the Union to develop Human Resource systems that improve the performance of local government. **They can contribute to a training environment where training is planned and delivered to professional standards in response to need.**

Training organizations

There are several NGOs that offer training to municipalities. They contribute in improving the performance of local government and strengthening local democracy. It is general assessment that the training quality oscillates. There is no place for poor and superficial training. Training providers can be strengthened; new training organizations can be encouraged. Only within a **strong training market**, where training provision follows demand, will municipalities have the choice necessary to drive up the standards of training provision.

SECTION 2 SCOPE OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING

STRATEGY

Training can do much to raise the levels of competence of staff and elected representatives. They need new knowledge and core skills to operate as local government officials or councilors. The range of needed knowledge and supplementary skills is large, extending from management and leadership development to using the internet and communicating with the public.

But staff and elected representatives must want to learn; they must see the benefits. A municipality needs to become a **'learning organization'** so that it can better understand the needs of local communities, learn from best practice and develop the expertise needed to meet those needs.

Every job that a municipality creates, every business it attracts, every person it trains in work skills – each one of these is a milestone towards local community development which follow needs of a modern and dynamic society.

But staff has first to be properly recruited in the light of well-written job descriptions and to be capable to respond on the work performance requirements. A salary system that makes local government an attractive career for staff must be established. There must be performance appraisal system to set clear objectives for their work, assess performance against those objectives and identify areas for further training. Beside that, there must be an organizational structure that does not stifle the energies of staff in heavy bureaucracy. There must be disciplinary procedures that prevent poor performance.

The responsibilities of the leadership must be clear and coherent so that they work as a team to deliver good local governance in the interests of the local population. The Mayor, the Assembly, the Chief Administrator and the Heads of Secretariats must recognize the role that each plays. Senior managers must create an environment for staff to work together effectively and deliver results. **Staff must for ever be seeking to improve their performance.**

The content of the National Training Strategy (NTS) does not refer only to delivering training courses. It is also about the legislation and regulations that set the framework for the roles, responsibilities and obligations of staff and elected representatives. **Legal obstacles - those that reduce the capacity of municipalities to perform well - need to be removed.** Legislation that sets an appropriate framework for good performance but that is not applied in practice needs to be upgraded. Legislation that provides an appropriate framework should be implemented. **Funding has to be provided for trainings.** Otherwise training is less effective.

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Training programmes take place within a wider **professional training environment**. Municipalities must recognize their human resource responsibilities and develop local training capacity; training needs must be established; curriculum must be developed; training information must be available; trainers must be properly trained. This reinforces the effectiveness of training.

You can judge a community by the way it looks after its young and its old. Does every young person have the chance to make a good life? Can older people look forward to a retirement where they can enjoy their twilight years with dignity and respect? It is the opportunities that a municipality creates for its young and old people and persons in state of need (the more vulnerable population) by which it will be remembered.

The responsibility for delivering training programmes and developing a professional training environment is not the prerogative of one institution. Monopolies are rarely effective. Rather, **each of the key stakeholders – the Union, the Ministry, the HRMA and other training providers – has a role to play**. The Union's leadership role is suggested by its legitimacy and authority within the local government community. The Ministry's role is suggested by its responsibility for policy, legal and fiscal framework for local government and its relationship to other Ministries with a stake in local government. The HRMA's role is suggested by its experience and expertise in human resource development and training in the civil service.

SECTION 3 FINDINGS OF THE TRAINING NEEDS

ANALYSIS

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was the first stage in the development of a National Training Strategy (NTS) for local government. It was based on (i) interviews and discussions with key officials and elected members in municipalities, (ii) a survey of all municipalities, (iii) bilateral discussions with key stakeholders, and (iv) an analysis of the legal framework. It thus creates a sound foundation on which to build a training system.

The system needs to be **demand-driven**. Training needs to respond both to the corporate need of municipalities for expertise and to the personal training and development needs of officials and elected representatives; programmes that respond to these needs should be developed following the adoption of the NTS and the establishment of a training system.

Municipalities need to develop a proper Human Resource (HR) function that operates **without political interference**; they need to take responsibility for recruiting good staff on merit, releasing unproductive staff and ensuring staff receive proper training and perform well.

There is no need to create a new training institution for local government; rather, best use should be made of existing institutions. While the HRMA can, with additional capacity, bring extensive expertise to local government training, the Union should use its legitimacy and authority to develop its own training function for both staff and elected representatives and to take overall responsibility for the delivery of the NTS. This is the only road to sustainability.

The NTS should make use of existing training providers and create opportunities for new ones. A system of quality assurance should be introduced to ensure that high training standards are achieved and poor training is eliminated. Training providers should be encouraged to strengthen their own capacities and expertise.

Training takes place within a legal and institutional framework. Parts of the legal framework are an obstacle to good local government and need to be amended; this is for the Government to take forward. In other cases, appropriate legislation is in place but is not followed; this is primarily for municipalities and the Union to resolve.

TYPICAL PROBLEMS FACED BY MUNICIPALITIES

(from the Training Needs Analysis)

- ***Knowledge of legislation is poor;***
- ***Legislation is too complicated to be interpreted and implemented;***
- ***There is a lack of professional and skilled staff, especially in the strategic planning, inspection and urban development departments;***

- ***Salaries for all employees are inadequate, leading to poor motivation;***
- ***There are difficulties in participating in EU programmes;***
- ***There are difficulties in preparing and implementing the Urban Plan;***
- ***There is too much illegal construction, making the work of the local inspection teams difficult;***
- ***The communal infrastructure is inadequate;***
- ***There is a lack of local EU departments and entrepreneurial centers;***
- ***There is a lack of planning documentation;***
- ***EU legislation is not adequately adapted for the Montenegrin context;***
- ***Crowds in the summer are excessive, causing long working hours;***
- ***Property registries are inadequate and not up-to-date;***
- ***Some of the One-Stop-Shops have been established inappropriately;***
- ***Local people are mostly not informed about procedures;***
- ***There are no Complaints Books or other systems of communication with citizens;***
- ***Citizens do not show interest in participating in the decision-making process;***
- ***The organization of work is very poor; most employees do not have good "working habits" ;***
- ***Citizens have free access to all offices without any protocol; this interrupts office work and prevents the proper performance of duties;***
- ***Assembly members represent the interests of political parties before the public interests and good local government.***

The following key recommendations are made in the TNA:

- ***Municipalities should develop effective Human Resource departments, with support by the Union through an HR service.***
- ***Officials should be subject to performance appraisal.***
- ***Recruitment and promotion should be subject to transparent procedures and without political influence.***
- ***A Quality Assurance system should be established to provide a framework for core curricula, Training of Trainers programmes etc.***
- ***High priority should be given to programmes in such areas as:***
 - ***Leadership development;***
 - ***Citizen participation;***
 - ***Management and organization;***
 - ***Tax collection, asset management and budget management ;***
 - ***Local economic development.***
- ***The Union should take the lead responsibility in delivering the NTS. In that respect Union should develop a training function comprising a resource centre, specialized training provision, a trainers network, an information service, curriculum development etc.***
- ***The HRMA should offer its expertise in curriculum development, Training of Trainers, generic training, training evaluation etc.***
- ***The Union and the HRMA should work closely together to ensure that municipalities get the training and support they require.***
- ***A national body, comprising the Union, HRMA and the Ministry, should be established to oversee the delivery of the NTS; it should meet with all stakeholders at least once a year to make best use of resources and promote coordination.***
- ***The NTS for local government should be linked to the NTS for central government.***
- ***Ministries should ensure proper training for their officials who work with local government and should support the training of local government officials in exercising shared or delegated responsibilities.***
- ***Changes should be made to the legislation to:***
 - ***Establish an HR function in each municipality;***
 - ***Regulate recruitment, promotion, discipline etc and establish a performance appraisal system in municipalities;***
 - ***Provide for flexibility in the salary system to allow for the recruitment of properly experienced and qualified staff;***
 - ***Place an obligation for professional development on officials and a responsibility on municipalities to arrange for the training for staff;***
 - ***Set out clear competences, rights and duties for the Chief Administrator and Heads of Secretariats to avoid overlapping responsibilities;***
 - ***Develop an appropriate election system that makes councilors accountable to citizens;***
 - ***Introduce a better equilibrium in the relationship between the Municipal Assembly, as a representative body, and the Mayor, as an executive body;***

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- ***Substantiate the posts of President and Secretary General of the Municipal Assembly;***
- ***Review the system for examination and professional development for local government officials.***

[See the separate reports on the Training Needs Analysis.]

SECTION 4 STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Strategic Goals and Objectives are based on the outcome of the Training Needs Analysis.

There are 5 Strategic Goals of the National Training Strategy:

- 1. *Build the capacities of local government for good local governance.***
- 2. *Build the capacities of the Union of Municipalities to support capacity-building in local government units (to supervise NTS implementation).***
- 3. *Develop a professional training environment.***
- 4. *Improve the legal and financial framework for local government.***
- 5. *Build an institutional training framework.***

Strategic Goal 1

Build the capacities of local government for good local governance

Objectives:

- 1.1 *Build capacities for human resources management in local government units.***
- 1.2 *Define human resources management standards in municipalities.***
- 1.3 *Ensure adequate implementation of applicable regulations on the employment and promotion of local employees and servants (hereinafter: local employee), and eliminate political interference.***
- 1.4 *Introduce a performance appraisal system for local employees.***
- 1.5 *Establish internal systems for the provision of training in local governments.***

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of training, it is essential that training moves from a supply-led to a **demand-driven** process. It should be the municipalities themselves, with whatever support is necessary, that take leading responsibility for the training of their staff and elected representatives.

To achieve this, municipalities need to develop a proper **Human Resource (HR) function**. An HR specialist might be shared among several small municipalities; a large municipality might need a

small HR team. With an HR unit, municipalities should be better able to recruit the right persons for the job, assess the training needs of both staff and elected representatives, provide or commission relevant training programmes and assess the impact of the training.

A **performance appraisal system** will allow managers to assess staff performance, recognize achievement and identify training needs.

A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

(between a manager and each member of staff for whom he/she is responsible)

Beginning of year:

- **Set out and agree clear work objectives for the coming year.**
- **Agree key performance indicators for each objective.**

After 3, 6, 9 months:

- **Discussion to:**
 - (i) **assess progress against objectives / performance indicators,**
 - (ii) **give credit for success,**
 - (iii) **identify opportunities for development and areas where performance falls short,**
 - (iv) **amend objectives as necessary in light of changing circumstances,**
 - (v) **agree way forward.**

End of year:

- **Written appraisal of performance against objectives and performance indicators.**
- **Assessment of such skills as communications, team-working and achieving results.**
- **Agreement on a Personal Development Plan for the following year.**
- **An opportunity for the manager to get feedback from staff on his/her own management.**

A municipality should develop its own **training capacity**. It would need to:

- *allocate training responsibilities;*
- *manage training information;*
- *collect training materials;*

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- *provide basic training programmes;*
- *evaluate the effectiveness of training.*

A municipality could identify and train competent staff as training assistants if they are interested; including responsibilities for training and coaching can enrich a job. It could commission an external training provider for more specialist training.

Each municipality will need to give higher priority to HR development and training. It should set out its own priorities for training and capacity-building within its own Strategic Plan. It will need to identify funding for training in the municipal budget and ensure that any HR unit it establishes has the necessary authority and expertise.

European experience suggests that funding for training should be the equivalent of at least 2-3% of the cost of salaries.

Strategic Goal 2

Build the capacities of the Union of Municipalities to support capacity-building for local government units (to supervise NTS implementation)

Objectives:

- 2.1 Ensure the sustainability of the NTS implementation in the Union of Municipalities.**
- 2.2 Create institutional capacities in the Union of Municipalities to implement the NTS**

The Union has a key role to play in developing an effective HR function in local government. It can use its bodies and Committee meetings to develop greater priority for HR development. It can establish HR standards. It can use its relationships with stakeholders to harness resources and expertise for the development of HR capacity in municipalities. It can identify and disseminate best practice in HR development. It can advocate with the Ministry and Parliament for any necessary changes in the legislative framework.

The Union therefore needs to develop a professional capacity to help municipalities develop their HR responsibilities.

The Union also needs to establish its own training function to:

- a) support the development of local training capacity,
- b) raise the profile of training,
- c) assess training needs,
- d) develop training curriculum,
- e) manage training information,
- f) provide relevant training to municipalities, including training for elected representatives.

These HR and training functions should be brought together in a new NTS Unit; this should comprise some four (4) staff, include experts in HR, training and project development along with the necessary administrative support. Where the Union does not have the expertise, it should commission curriculum development and training provision from the HRMA or other training providers.

The Union will want to continue the capacity-building programmes in which it is currently engaged after external funding is discontinued; this includes, inter alia, the Best Practice, Leadership Benchmark and Public Ethics programmes. It may also want to introduce new programmes for citizen participation, performance management and other aspects of local government. The proposed training unit will need the capacity to do this.

SUGGESTED TRAINING PRIORITIES OVER THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS <i>(from the Training Needs Analysis)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and Strategic Planning • Capital Investment Planning • Performance Appraisal • Implementation of the Laws on Civil Servants, Restitution, General Administrative Procedure • Financial decentralization • Environmental protection • Entrepreneurship stimulation • Development of local regulations • Local administration • Foreign languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization management • Organization structure re-design • Project proposal writing • Communication • Conflict resolution • Reporting • Public Relations • Development of procedures • Implementation of Ordinances on the Local Assembly Rule Book and Local Assembly Committees • Participation of women • Participation of people with disabilities • Participation of minority communities

The Union will want to work in cooperation with the HRMA to deliver the elements that make up a professional training environment (see Strategic Goal 3). This might include:

- *Curriculum development where the expertise of the HRMA can be combined with the Union's knowledge of local government.*
- *The management of training information; this will need a range of communications vehicles and should reach different audiences.*
- *The monitoring and evaluation of training provision, to ensure that lessons are learnt and improvements made.*
- *An accessible library of training materials (hard copy and electronic).*
- *A Quality Assurance system.*
- *Updating the TNA and NTS every 3 years and agreeing future training priorities.*
- *An Annual Training Report on achievements and an Annual Training Plan for the following year to be presented to both the General Assembly of the Union and the National Training Council (see Strategic Goal 5) to ensure proper planning and accountability.*

In addition, the Union may want to commission the HRMA to run a certified Training of Trainers programme for local government trainers to ensure that there are sufficient trainers of the right

quality to meet demand. They might also like to commission 'horizontal' training from the HRMA (e.g. generic management skills). Likewise, they will want to commission training from NGOs and other training providers to make best use of the market.

THE BENEFITS OF COMMISSIONING TRAINING

The commissioning of training by the Union is an important responsibility that requires expertise. It has several benefits:

- ***It raises the standards of training through competition by allowing the Union to select the best training provider to meet a specific training need based on the clarity of training objectives, the quality of the proposed trainers / programmes and value for money.***
- ***It strengthens the training market as training providers will be forced to develop their own training standards and capacities in the light of the opportunities available and local government's training requirements.***
- ***It gives the Union a strategic role in the development of local government training while avoiding the creation of a monopoly.***

Many staff have skills they would be happy to share. The Union might want to develop a programme for training competent municipal staff who have an aptitude and interest in becoming local trainers as a supplementary aspect of their work.

The Union might wish to sponsor a network of trainers to encourage their further professional development; this could eventually become an Association of HR and training professionals.

The Union will need to ensure proper accountability for HR and training within its structures. This might entail giving policy responsibility to an existing Committee or establishing a specific Committee or Task Force, chaired by a member of the Union's Managing Board. This would focus political responsibility for training and ensure appropriate representation of the Union on the proposed National Training Council. The Committee may want to invite the Ministry, HRMA and other stakeholders to its meetings where their contribution might be helpful.

A new HR and training unit within the Union should be headed by someone with professional expertise who can direct the respect of stakeholders. It will need sufficient staff with the necessary expertise and funding to properly carry out the proposed functions. It will need adequate facilities and administrative capacity.

Initial funding for such new capacity needs to be found externally, but steps should be taken from the start, through training and membership fees, to cover a growing proportion of the Union's costs on a sustainable basis. Membership fees may therefore need to rise and 100% collection achieved.

Strategic Goal 3

Develop a professional training environment

Objectives:

3.1 Establish quality assurance systems.

3.2 Establish a library of training material.

3.3 Establish capacities for developing training programmes.

3.4 Establish a systemic approach to the evaluation of training programmes.

Training needs to take place within a professional training environment.

1. The **curriculum** has to be learning-friendly, up-to-date and fit for purpose. It should be based on assessed training needs. Programmes should be interesting and should make use of modern methodologies. Good curriculum from other countries should be researched and adapted. Different groups of people (eg senior managers, junior staff, elected representatives ...) require different kinds of training to meet their specific needs. Some training will be generic (eg management, communications ...); other training will need to be tailor-made (eg working with the media). It would be sensible to identify core curriculum that can be offered to each category of staff to ensure a satisfactory level of expertise.
2. **Trainers** need to be properly qualified – to have recognised training provision certifications. Some current trainers have attended courses in training techniques; others have not. A recognised Training of Trainers course should be introduced and made obligatory for any trainer not already qualified. A network of trainers should be established to encourage on-going professional development.
3. **Quality Assurance** (QA) is about ensuring that trainers, curriculum and training providers are of good quality. A good QA system will gradually eliminate poor training. The QA system should be seen as independent and not subject to political influence. Core curriculum, for example, could be submitted to a panel of experts for their assessment and approval. Municipalities will have greater confidence in training if they know that the programme will be relevant, interesting and professionally delivered. However, the QA system must not become bureaucratic; it must not deter innovation.
4. A **library of training materials** in hard and electronic form should be established and made available to all training providers and municipalities. **Information** on training should be shared with all municipalities; promotional literature can raise the profile of training. Translation of relevant materials into Albanian language will be necessary.
5. Training should be systematically **evaluated**, both at the end of courses to identify trainee satisfaction, and after 6-12 months to assess how well the trainees have used

their training to improve performance. In this way lessons can be learned for future reference.

Strategic Goal 4

Improve the legal and financial framework for local government

Objectives:

4.1 Identify the appropriate employment and legal status of local employees.

4.2 Identify an appropriate legal framework for the election of councillors.

The legal solutions affect significant aspects of local government performance; it will therefore make a difference to the effectiveness of the National Training Strategy. If officials and Councillors cannot perform well because of the inadequate legal framework, training may make little difference. The TNA showed that, on the one hand, the legal framework creates obstacles to constructive working relationships between the leading bodies of a municipality, while on the other hand the law is not followed in the recruitment, promotion and performance assessment of officials.

The powers between the Mayor and the Municipal Assembly are not well balanced. The Mayor is directly elected, while Councillors are selected from party lists. The Mayor looks to local people for his/her mandate while Councillors tend to follow party instructions. Local people feel they are not well-served by their Councillors and they look to the Mayor to solve their every-day problems.

Thus Mayors tend to spend a high proportion of their time doing the work of heads of departments and staff; this means that they devote less time to the leadership and strategic management. Many Councillors are concerned at the ability of the Mayor to ignore them and at their own inability to play a full role in decision-making in the municipality.

The working relationship between the Mayor, the Chief Administrator and the Heads of Secretariats is not carried out completely in the sense of responsibilities. Some responsibilities are overlapping; accountabilities are unclear.

Thus the legal framework, in certain parts, creates obstacles to good leadership and management in municipalities and needs to be amended. Performance suffers as a result. Training in strategic leadership, for example, cannot be really effective while the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor, senior officials and Councillors remain unclear and incoherent.

Following the law

Good performance depends on good staff. The law sets out criteria for the recruitment, promotion and performance assessment of staff. Yet interference by political parties in recruitment and promotion make it difficult for Mayors to put together an effective senior management team.

There is little performance appraisal in practice. It is difficult to dismiss incompetent officials; shortcomings in performance are ignored. There is low motivation among staff, and a culture of

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good performance is absent. Salaries are low. Training is not seen as important; training needs are not assessed. Local government offers stable work for those who can get it rather than an attractive career for those who wish to serve the public.

Where the law is robust, the Union should work with the Ministry and HRMA to ensure that it is properly implemented. Where it is weak, it should be amended so that the proper development and management of HR in municipalities is given its rightful place and professional development receives a higher priority.

Strategic goal 5.

Build an institutional training framework.

Objectives:

5.1 Establish a National Training Council of local government (Union of Municipalities, Ministry competent for local government, Human Resources Management Authority)

5.2 Build capacities of the Human Resources Management Authority to support professional training for local government;

There are 3 institutions that have key roles to play in delivering the National Training Strategy: the Union, the Ministry and the HRMA.

The **Union of Municipalities** represents municipalities and has the legitimacy and authority to give leadership to the NTS. Local government itself must be the 'owner'; the training is for the benefit of municipalities. They will pay for it. The Union therefore needs the capacity to do this (see Strategic goal 2).

The Government has a commitment to good local government through the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The **Ministry of Interior and Public Administration** has the responsibility for developing the right policy and legal framework for local government and for working with the Ministry of Finance to seek the allocation of the right amount of financial resources for municipalities. It should also be able to influence other Ministries that work with local government.

The **Human Resources Management Authority** has expertise in training provision, curriculum development, Training of Trainers, managing training information, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance. While their focus is on training national civil servants, it is needed that this experience and expertise is made available to support the development of a professional training environment for local government.

Some of the training delivered by the HRMA can be relevant for civil servants at both national and local level; indeed, some local government officials have already attended their training programmes (e.g. on Free Access to Information, etc.). It might offer such training provision upon direct request from municipalities or from being commissioned by the Union.

The HRMA will need to help the Union to update the TNA and NTS and prepare the Annual Training Report and the Annual Training Plan for agreement by the proposed National Training Council.

The HRMA's capacity is currently insufficient to extend its services in training provision to municipalities to any significant extent. It will need to work with the Union to develop proposals for

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external funding to enhance its own capacity to provide certain local government trainings. It will need to work together with the Union in taking participation in its training programmes (e.g. strategic management) that are of relevance to local government.

The way that the Union, the HRMA and the Ministry work together is therefore critical to the effective delivery of the NTS. It may be sensible to set out the working relationship in a Memorandum of Understanding to identify mutual relationships. For example, formal quarterly meetings offer an opportunity where key issues can be considered. However, the delivery of the NTS needs a more formal mechanism to take overall responsibility.

There is consensus that no new training institution is needed; rather, maximum use should be made of the Union, HRMA and Ministry at the core of the system and of competent training organisations to make up the market in training provision. Any monopoly of training should be avoided.

This might be achieved through a **National Training Council** for local government comprising the Union, HRMA and Ministry. It might meet 4 times a year under the chair of the Union. The Union (the proposed NTS Unit) could provide the Secretariat. Its responsibilities would be to oversee the training system for local government, and would include:

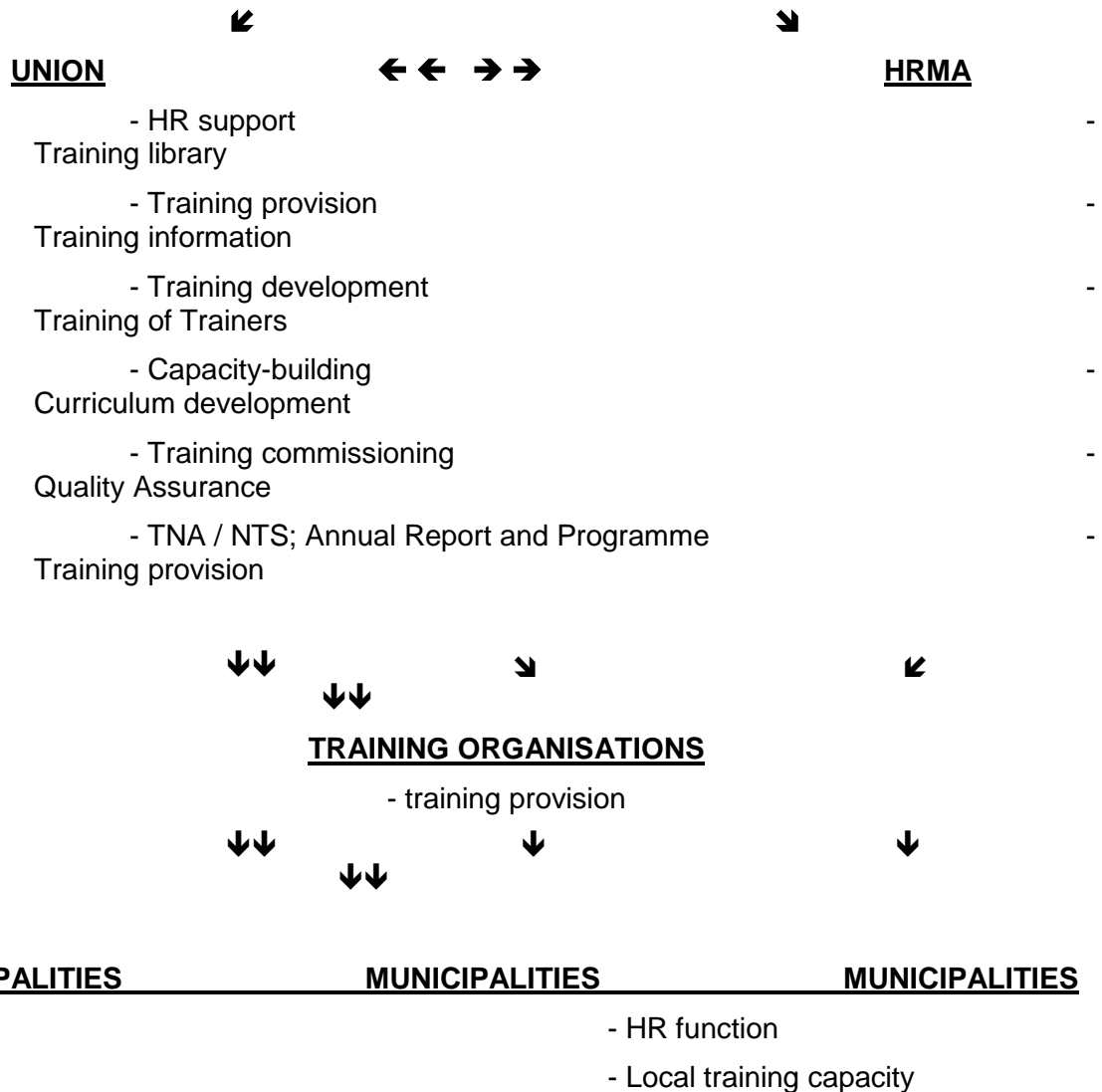
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

- ***Ensuring that the roles of the key stakeholders are respected and that cooperation is achieved in programme development and training provision.***
- ***Agreeing the updated Training Needs Analysis and National Training Strategy every 3 years.***
- ***Setting training priorities each year and agreeing the Annual Training Report and Annual Training Plan.***
- ***Identifying and harnessing additional funding for training.***
- ***Overseeing the Quality Assurance system.***
- ***Advocating for any changes to the local government policy, legal and fiscal frameworks to support training and professional development.***

NATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

(Union, Ministry, HRMA)

- oversee and coordinate local government training
- agree Annual Report and Annual Programme
- agree updated TNA / NTS
- take legislative and fiscal initiatives



This chart reflects the institutional roles in the supply of training within a professional training environment in response to demand from municipalities.