

Improving Human Resources Management in Civil Service

The multifaceted experience
of Bosnia & Herzegovina



europe

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The Project: devolving a new administrative culture in BiH

The atrocious armed conflict in the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was brought to an end with the general Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia & Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in 1995.

According to this peace treaty and the Constitution, the country consists of two entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Republic of Srpska (RS) that enjoy a significant political, administrative, legal and fiscal autonomy. The Federation of BiH consists of ten cantons that also retain certain decentralised powers.

As a result of arbitration, another territorial and political unit emerged – the Brčko District.

Currently **BiH** does not have a unified model of public administration. It relies on **four autonomous** and very **distinct administrations**, where most administrative responsibilities rest with the entities and with the Brčko District.

In organisational terms, the public administration bodies of BiH share **many common features** that are a legacy of the old **Yugoslav tradition**, with the **Brčko** District standing out partly as an **exception** due to the relevant influence exerted by the international community on the design of its administrative framework.



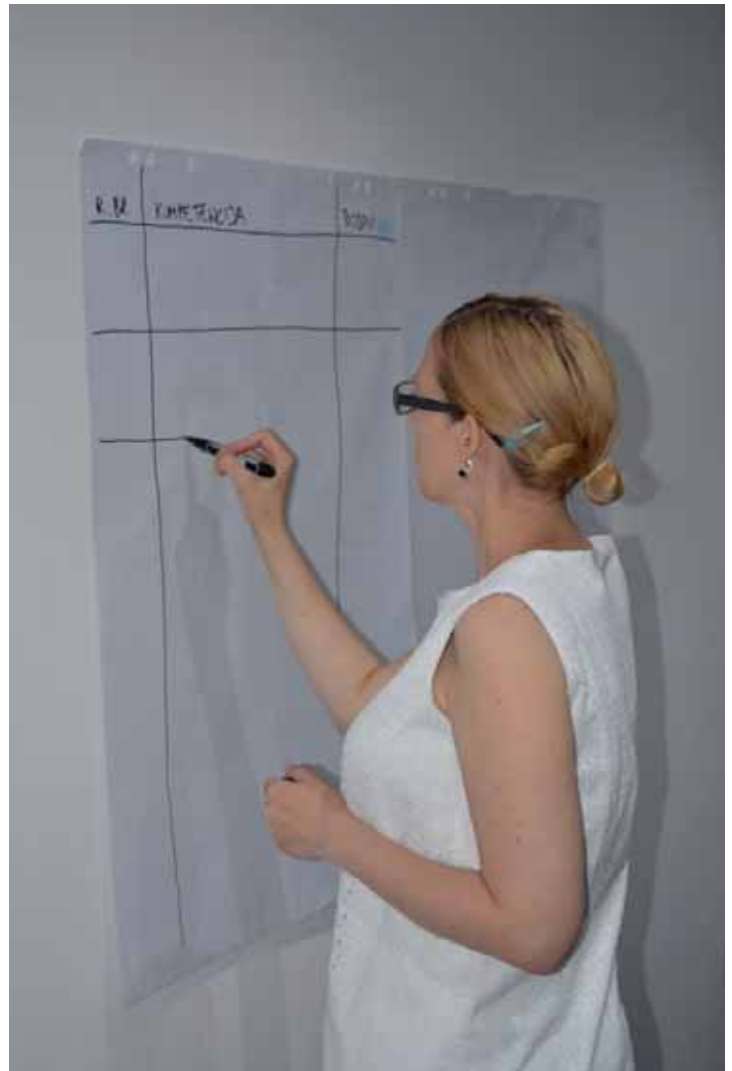
A “new” culture of human resources management in the public administration

All over the world, governments are increasingly acknowledging the importance of recruiting **talented civil servants**, motivating them and working on their lifelong learning to ensure a well performing public administration, able to efficiently provide services to citizens.

This can be achieved only through introducing a modern administrative culture capable of attracting, developing and retaining the **best potential** in the **civil service**.

In **BiH**, a more organized approach to **Human Resources Management** (HRM) within the public administration dates back to early 2003 with the establishment of the Civil Service Agencies and the Public Administration Reform Coordinator's Office in BiH (PARCO).

After that, several important **regulatory and organisational improvements** helped the process of transformation of the former function of personnel affairs into a modern management function practically irreversible.



The Project: devolving a new administrative culture in BiH



In January 2014, an international consortium led by Eurecna S.p.A. and including GDSI from Ireland and Djikić Consulting from BiH started the implementation of a two year project “**Modernisation of HRM Systems in the Civil Service**” (EuropeAid/132768/C/SER/BA).

The project aimed at overcoming some of the key shortcomings in BiH in the field of HRM at various levels of public administrations through the improvement of the regulatory framework, the development of **internal administrative capacities**, procedures and practices. Most of the activities were implemented within the following set of pilot institutions at State, entities and Brčko District level:

Public Administration Reform **Coordinator's Office**;

Directorate for **European Integration**;

Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Agency for **Market Surveillance** of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

FBiH Tax Administration;

Ministry of Justice and administration of **Western Herzegovina** Canton in FBiH;

Ministry of Justice and Administration of **Una - Sana** canton in FBiH;

FBiH Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts;

Ministry of Finance of Republic of **Srpska**;

Tax Administration of Republic of **Srpska**;

Ministry for Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation of Republic of **Srpska**;

Directorate for Inspection Affairs of Republika of **Srpska**;

Sub-Department for Public Procurement as part of the Department for Expert and Administrative Affairs in **Brčko** District of BiH;

Employment Committee of **Brčko** district of BiH;

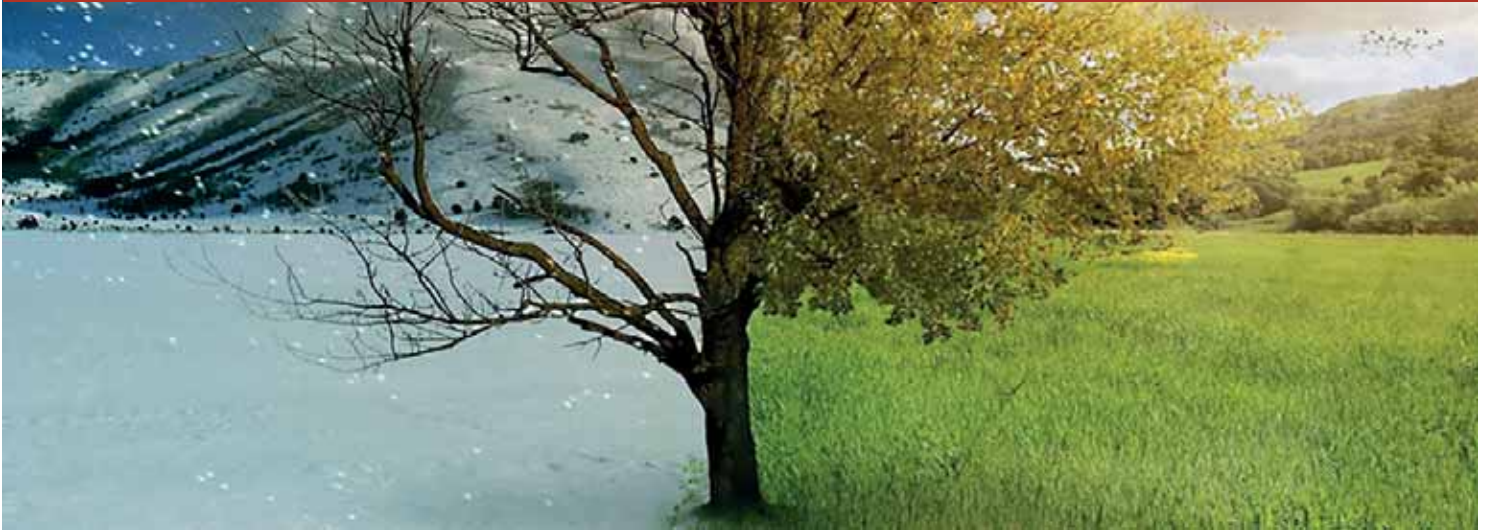
Sub-Department for Informatics as part of the Department for expert and administrative affairs in **Brčko** District of BiH.

Implemented actions

- ▶ Draft **job analysis methodologies** prepared and tested;
- ▶ List of key competences for different CS jobs and proposed competency frameworks developed and tested;
- ▶ **Organisational schemes** for HRM departments and functions prepared and tested;
- ▶ Systematisation of jobs in selected pilot institutions changed;
- ▶ Set of proposed regulatory and procedural improvements related to selection and recruitment drafted;
- ▶ Set of **HRM principles** defined;
- ▶ A strategy for introducing career development approach within BIH civil service prepared;
- ▶ Assistance to **HRM strategies development**;
- ▶ Standard **HRM procedures** defined and **HRM manuals** drafted;
- ▶ Training of Trainers program for HRM trainers developed and implemented;
- ▶ **HR planning procedures** improved;
- ▶ New HR procedures proposed and tested in pilot institutions.



Culturing a new understanding of human resources management



“Growth has its season. There are spring and summer, but there are also fall and winter. And then spring and summer again. As long as the roots are not severed, all is well and all be well.”

— Jerzy Kosiński, Being There

Culturing a **new understanding of human competences**, new organisation responsibilities, and new labour management is a long process, which follows the seasonal rhythm of seeding, caring and tending. When approaching the rethinking of HRM in public administration in BiH, EURECNA committed to follow such a “natural” approach.

In BiH the “soil” was provided by an institutional context characterised by a “traditional” approach to public administration, whereby the turnover of civil servants was managed more or less automatically, as institutions had just been replacing those who left by hiring new recruits.

The introduction of a **modern concept of HR planning** represented the “season of seeding” by promoting a **systematic and strategic approach** to the personnel policy, pivotal for selecting and managing civil service staff systematically and strategically.

The “season of caring” can be represented as the general **rethinking of the HR system** by establishing a direct inter-relation with the processes of budget preparation and budget adoption.

And then the “season of tending” has come, neither at the same time, nor in the same way. But that was exactly what we expected this project to bring: a tentative cultural change - without disregarding systemic differences - providing seeds for regeneration in diverse soils. We knew from the very beginning that the rhythm of growth was not going to be the same within all administrative levels. But we also knew that the only way to support the development of a “new” culture for the **enhancement** of public administration was **providing all the necessary ingredients to let nature take its course**.

Elements of transferability

Competency framework:

It is the architectural structure enclosing the inventory of competences needed for each job position in the civil service. The **competency framework** represents an important novelty in the BiH civil service system, with **special focus on its use** in the process of selection of civil service candidates.

The competency framework was tested through **job analysis interviews** and has proved to be a valuable tool for the **identification of skill behaviours**, which are necessary for an **effective performance** of the civil service.

Once the competency framework gets introduced in the system, it should also be linked to the performance appraisal system, career development and training system.



Gradual approach to renew human resources management:

Due to the complexity of the administrative space of BiH and disparities among the levels of government in terms of HRM, for the whole project period of 2 years our overall approach was gradual and at the same time flexible.

First of all, we went through consultations with the project beneficiaries, and only consequently designed our approach, in order to ensure it would reflect the particular needs identified across BiH administrations.

Even if the proposed solutions had been tailored to the peculiarities for each **specific level of administration**, they were all written and **aligned to the principles set by the EU administrative body**.

The capacity building HRM programme consisted of seminars and workshops, conferences, round tables, training of trainers, and study tours.

The capacity building programme was designed to support on the one hand the **efficient development** of the **competency framework** and on the other hand **human resources management**.



“The highly qualified technical assistance team developed several innovative solutions for BiH, which will be very helpful in improving the management of human resources within our civil service.”

Mr. Mikan Davidović

Head of Department for Public Administration Reform, Ministry of Administration and Local Self-governance, Republic of Srpska

“The impact of this project has been impressively high for our Civil Service Agency and our overall opinion is extremely positive.”

Mr. Neven Akšamija

Director, BiH Civil Service Agency

“This project was very well organized and all experts were extremely supportive and collaborative, ensuring high level communication during the two years of project implementation.”

Ms. Samira Bajrović

Advisor, Directorate for European Integration, Council of Ministers of BiH



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