# TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING CURRICULA

Training and capacity-building curricula for Bulgarian local government officials

April 2024

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **EU** | European Union |
| **HRM** | Human Resource Management |
| **IMC** | Inter-municipal cooperation |
| **KPI** | Key performance indicator |
| **LMS** | Learning Management System |
| **PB** | Participatory Budgeting |
| **PPO** | Public-private partnerships |
| **Q&A** | Question and answer |
| **SWOT** | Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats |
| **TNA** | Training Needs Analysis |

# INTRODUCTION
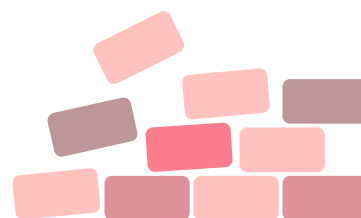
This training curriculum is designed to enhance the capacities of local authorities in the Republic of Bulgaria by supporting them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to effectively engage with the challenges of the system of local governance. This curriculum is based on the results of the needs analysis conducted by the Foundation for Local Government Reform with the support of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria from April to July 2023.[1] This analysis, which included 158 out of 265 municipalities in Bulgaria, has led to the development of a report titled "The Training Needs Analysis of Local Government in Bulgaria". Report served as the foundation for the curriculum's objectives and content.

This document is developed in the framework of the project "Developing fiscal decentralisation and improving local financial management in Bulgaria"[2], a joint project financed by the European Union through the Technical Support Instrument (DG Reform) and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance3 of the Council of Europe.

By drawing on the Committee of Ministers' recommendation on the principles of good democratic governance, in particular the ones that advocate for "efficient, effective and sound administration throughout government and public institutions" (Principle 7), "consistent and sustainable efforts towards strengthening the organisational leadership of government and public institutions" (Principle 8), "sound financial and economic management throughout government and public institutions, and by all public officials" (Principle 10), "openness to change and innovation by government, public institutions and public officials" (Principle 12)[3] , this training aims to:

■ Enhance financial management competencies for more effective local budgeting, taxation, and resource allocation.

■ Improve administrative efficiency through better human resources and project management practices.

■ Foster leadership qualities and a proactive approach to addressing local community needs. Participants will gain practical tools and insights to drive innovation, improve transparency, enhance citizen engagement, and ensure the sustainable development of their municipalities.

■ Equip participants with cutting-edge e-government implementation strategies to improve public service delivery.

■ Develop strategic planning and management skills for sustainable local development.

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[1] Link to the document https://www.flgr.bg/filesystem/8989./

[2] See more about the project here - https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/bulgaria

[3] Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good democratic governance (EN / BG)

# TRAINING FOUNDATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE: *ENHANCING LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN BULGARIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT*

In the evolving landscape of local governance, the capacity to adapt, innovate, and lead is more crucial than ever. The three training threads are developed in response to a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA), aiming to fortify the foundations of local government in Bulgaria by addressing three key sectors: **Enhancing Local Government Capacities, Decentralisation and Local Governance,** and **Personal Development and Leadership**. Each sector is designed to address specific challenges and opportunities identified within Bulgarian municipalities, drawing from both the rich insights of the TNA and the strategic objectives outlined by the Council of Europe and the European Union.

**Enhancing Local Government Capacities** emerges as a foundational pillar, targeting the essential skills and knowledge local officials need to navigate the complexities of modern governance. From implementing cutting-edge e-government services to mastering strategic planning and financial management, this sector aims to equip participants with the tools to improve administrative efficiency, financial management, and service delivery. The curriculum is designed to not just respond to current needs but to anticipate future challenges, ensuring local governments are resilient, responsive, and ready to use the benefits of digital transformation for community development. This thread also draws on the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' recommendation to member states "to recognize clearly the importance of local government capacity to deliver high quality local public services, where the capacity of local government hinges essentially on the skills of elected representatives, the corporate management capacity of the organisation, the workforce capacity and financial and project management skills." Moreover, the Council of Ministers recommends to member states to co-operate with local authorities, their associations and other stakeholders to develop a strategic approach to capacity building of local governments, to review the conditions of service of local government employees to ensure high quality staff and services, as well as to encourage international exchanges between local authorities[1].

In **Decentralisation and Local Governance**, the focus shifts to the broader structural and systemic changes required to empower local authorities. This sector goes deeper into the fundamentals of decentralisation, legal frameworks, and the cultivation of inter-municipal cooperation, underpinning the importance of legal literacy and collaborative governance. It aims to enhance understanding and practical skills in navigating the decentralisation process, fostering legal and operational autonomy while promoting effective citizen engagement strategies. Through this, municipalities are encouraged to develop stronger, more meaningful connections with their communities, enhancing transparency, accountability, and participatory governance.

Lastly, **Personal Development and Leadership** addresses the human element of governance,

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[1] Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on capacity building at local and regional level (EN)

recognizing that the strength of any institution lies in its people. This sector is dedicated to nurturing leadership qualities, communication skills, time management, and well-being among local government officials. It underscores the belief that effective leadership and personal resilience are critical to overcoming challenges, driving change, and achieving sustainable community outcomes. By focusing on personal growth, this sector aims to inspire a new generation of local leaders who are visionary, ethical, and committed to the well-being of their communities.

Together, these sectors form a comprehensive training program designed to elevate the standards of local governance, ensuring that officials are not only equipped to meet the demands of their roles but are also empowered to lead their communities forward.

## TRAINING THREAD 1
## ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITIES

4 **EFFECTIVE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION**

3 **LOCAL FINANCE AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT**

2 **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

1 **E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

## TRAINING THREAD 2
## DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

4 **ENGAGING WITH CITIZENS**

3 **INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION**

2 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE**

1 **FUNDAMENTALS OF DECENTRALISATION**

## TRAINING THREAD 3
## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

4 **STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING**

3 **TIME MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY**

2 **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1 **LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS

## Target Audience

The intended participants are mayors, deputy mayors, municipal council members, and senior administrators and administrators within Bulgarian local government bodies. Prerequisites for the training include:

■ Enhance financial management competencies for more effective local budgeting, taxation, and resource allocation.

■ Holding a current position within local government.

■ Basic familiarity with local governance operations and structures.

■ Motivation to implement change and improvements in local governance practices.

## Duration

Considering the breadth and depth of each topic, a suggested duration for each module could be as follows:

**Full-Day Workshop (7-8 hours):** Given the complexity and the need for interactive exercises, this format would be suitable for modules like «Communication and Public Relations» or «Leadership Skills for Local Government,» where role-playing, simulations, and detailed discussions are essential.

**Two Half-Day Sessions (2 sessions of 3-4 hours each):** For modules like «Stress Management and Well-being» and «Time Management and Productivity», which could benefit from reflection and practice between sessions.

**Multiple Weekly Sessions (2-3 hours each over 2-3 weeks):** For more comprehensive modules like «Legal Framework and Local Self-Governance» or «Inter-Municipal Cooperation,» spreading out the sessions could allow participants to absorb the information more thoroughly and perhaps undertake some fieldwork or real-world observation between sessions.

The decision on duration should also take into account the officials' schedules, their availability for training, and the overall training program's timeframe. It's essential to balance thorough coverage of content with the practicalities of participants' time constraints and to allow sufficient time for application and reflection of the learned material.

## Delivery Method

For Bulgarian local government administrators to benefit from the flexibility of online learning while still enjoying the deep engagement and practical learning opportunities that in-person sessions provides, a hybrid approach of delivery method is proposed. This method would also allow for trainings to be more resilient to any external factors that may affect the ability to meet face-to-face.

### ONLINE LEARNING COMPONENTS

**Webinars and Live Sessions:** Conducting live, instructor-led sessions via platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which allow for real-time interaction, Q&A, and discussions.

**E-Learning Modules:** Creating self-paced, on-demand content accessible through a Learning Management System (LMS), where

participants can engage with readings, pre-recorded lectures, and digital resources.

**Online Discussion Forums:** Utilizing the LMS or other platforms like Slack for ongoing discussions and peer learning, where participants can post reflections, ask questions, and share resources.

**Virtual Office Hours:** Scheduling regular times when instructors are available for live online consultations to provide additional support and answer questions.

## IN-PERSON DELIVERY COMPONENTS

### Lecture Sessions:

**Expert-Led Presentations:** Involve subject matter experts to provide deep insights into each module's content, ensuring the sessions are interactive with Q&A segments to encourage participation.

**Guest Speakers:** Invite local and international practitioners with relevant experience to share real-world insights, challenges, and success stories, enhancing the learning experience with practical perspectives.

### Interactive Workshops:

**Group Discussions:** Facilitate small group discussions on specific topics or case studies, encouraging sharing of experiences and ideas among participants.

**Role-Playing and Simulations:** Conduct role-play exercises and simulations that mimic real-life challenges faced by local government officials, focusing on practical problem-solving and decision-making.
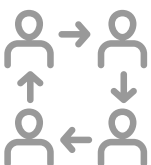
### Hands-On Activities:

**Project-Based Learning:** Assign participants to work on projects that address real issues in their municipalities, encouraging collaboration and application of knowledge gained during the training.

**Skills Practice Sessions:** Design sessions for practicing specific skills, such as communication techniques, stress management exercises, or time management tools, providing immediate feedback to enhance learning.

### Networking and Community Building:

**Peer Learning:** Encourage participants to learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, fostering a community of practice that extends beyond the training.

**Networking Events:** Organize informal networking sessions, such as coffee breaks or lunches, allowing participants to build relationships and share knowledge in a relaxed setting.

### Reflection and Feedback:

**Daily Wrap-Up Sessions:** End each day with a reflective session where participants can share what they've learned, pose questions, and discuss how they can apply the insights in their work.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement continuous feedback loops through surveys or feedback forms at the end of each session or module, using insights to adjust and improve future sessions.

### Field Visits:

**Site Visits:** Organize visits to municipalities or projects that exemplify best practices in local governance, providing participants with firsthand experience of successful initiatives.

## ADDITIONAL HYBRID ELEMENTS

**Flipped Classroom:** Assigning online materials for participants to review before in-person sessions, where the focus can be on deepening understanding through discussion and application of the content.

**Project-Based Learning:** Encouraging participants to work on real-world projects throughout the module, utilizing both online and in-person sessions to develop, dis-

cuss, and refine their projects.

The proposed delivery methods for the training modules were influenced by the preferences and current realities outlined in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) report which reveals critical insights into the preferred learning styles, barriers to effective learning, and the perceived needs for capacity building within local administrations. This understanding has informed the selection of delivery methods to ensure they are not only effective but also aligned with the preferences and practical requirements of the target audience.

Firstly, the TNA highlights a strong preference for practical, hands-on learning experiences among local government officials. This preference underpins the emphasis on interactive workshops, simulations, and role-playing exercises across several modules. Such methods are conducive to adult learning, allowing participants to directly apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios, thus enhancing retention and the ability to implement learned concepts in their work environments. The interactive nature of these methods also addresses the TNA finding that many officials face challenges in areas requiring practical application, such as e-government implementation and effective communication strategies.

Secondly, the TNA points out the significant interest in continuous professional development and the necessity for training programs to be directly relevant to the administrators' day-to-day responsibilities. This insight has led to the integration of expert-led presentations and guest speaker sessions, particularly in modules dealing with strategic planning, legal frameworks, and financial management. By bringing in experts and practitioners with real-world experience, the training can bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering insights that are immediately applicable and tailored to the specific challenges faced by Bulgarian local governments.

Furthermore, the TNA underscores a desire for more collaborative and peer-based learning opportunities, reflecting a broader trend towards learning methods that leverage the collective knowledge and experiences of participants. This finding supports the incorporation of group discussions, peer learning, and networking events into the delivery methods. Such approaches not only facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices but also foster a sense of community and mutual support among local government officials, which is particularly valuable in the context of Bulgaria's diverse and often resource-constrained local administrations.

Lastly, the acknowledgment in the TNA of logistical and resource-related barriers to training participation led to the decision to propose varied delivery methods, including both in-person and potentially blended formats, to accommodate different learning styles, geographical locations, and time constraints.

# TRAINING THREAD 1
# ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITIES

**4** **EFFECTIVE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION**

**3** **LOCAL FINANCE AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT**

**2** **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

**1** **E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

## Module 1 - E-Government Implementation

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

In an era where digital transformation is reshaping public administration globally, the adoption of e-government strategies has become essential for enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of government services. This module, «E-Government Implementation,» is tailored for Bulgarian local government officials, focusing on the imperative shift towards digital solutions to meet the evolving expectations of citizens and businesses. It draws upon the successful model of e-Estonia, showcasing how digital governance can significantly improve public sector operations and citizen engagement.

### 1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**1.** To comprehend the fundamental principles and benefits of e-government and its impact on local governance.

**2.** To identify the key components and steps involved in implementing e-government

solutions within local administrations.

**3.** To analyse challenges and barriers to e-government adoption and strategies to overcome them.

**4.** To explore successful global and regional examples of e-government implementation, with a focus on the e-Estonia model.

### 1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES:

**1.** Participants will have a thorough understanding of e-government frameworks and their significance in modern public administration.

**2.** Participants will be capable of designing a basic e-government strategy, taking into account their municipality's specific needs and constraints.

**3.** Participants will be equipped with the knowledge to address common challenges in e-government implementation, including technical, regulatory, and user adoption issues.

**4.** Participants will gain insights into best practices and lessons learned from successful e-government initiatives, enabling them to apply these insights to their contexts.

### 1.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

Module covers the following key areas, designed to provide a well-rounded understanding of e-government implementation:

### 1. Introduction to E-Government
Definition, scope, and benefits of e-government. The evolution of digital governance and its impact on public services.

### 2. Key Components of E-Government Implementation
Infrastructure requirements, digital platforms, online services, data protection, and cybersecurity considerations.

### 3. Steps for Implementing E-Government Solutions
Strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, legal and regulatory frameworks, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 4. Challenges and Solutions
Common obstacles in e-government adoption (technical, financial, cultural) and strategies for overcoming them.

### 5. Case Studies and Best Practices
Detailed examination of the e-Estonia model and other successful examples of e-government from around the world and within the region.

### 1.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Group Project on E-Government Strategy Design
Participants form groups to develop an e-government strategy for a hypothetical municipality, focusing on a particular public service improvement. This involves identifying needs, proposing digital solutions, and addressing potential implementation challenges.

### 2. Interactive Workshop on Overcoming Implementation Barriers
Through role-playing exercises, participants tackle various scenarios of technical, financial, and cultural barriers, proposing solutions and strategies to overcome these obstacles.

### 3. Case Study Analysis
Individuals or small groups analyse a given case study of successful e-government implementation (e.g., e-Estonia), identifying key factors that contributed to its success and how these can be adapted to their local context.

### 4. Design Thinking Session for Service Digitization
In this exercise, participants use design thinking methodologies to conceptualize digital solutions for a common service offered by local governments, focusing on user experience and service delivery efficiency.

# Module 2 - Strategic Planning for Local Governments

## 2.1 BACKGROUND

Strategic planning is pivotal for local governments aiming to navigate the complexities of modern governance and ensure sustainable development. This module goes in-depth into the art and science of strategic planning specifically tailored for the local government context. It emphasizes creating visionary yet achievable plans that align with the goals of enhancing service delivery, ensuring fiscal sustainability, and engaging with the community. Drawing from successful methodologies like the «Strategic Municipal Planning Toolkit»[1] developed by the Council of Europe, this module aims to equip Bulgarian local government officials with the skills to formulate, implement, and evaluate strategic plans effectively.

## 2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**1.** To understand the principles and importance of strategic planning in the context of local governance.

**2.** To learn the processes involved in formulating, implementing, and evaluating a strategic plan for local governments.

**3.** To identify the key stakeholders in the strategic planning process and the importance of their engagement.

**4.** To explore tools and techniques for effective strategic planning, including SWOT analysis, vision and goal setting, and action planning.

## 2.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES:

**1.** Participants will be able to articulate the value and fundamental principles of strategic planning within local governments.

**2.** Participants will acquire the skills to develop a strategic plan, including setting achievable goals, defining key performance indicators (KPIs), and outlining clear implementation steps.

**3.** Participants will understand the significance of stakeholder engagement and will be capable of involving community members, business leaders, and other stakeholders in the planning process.

**4.** Participants will have hands-on experience with strategic planning tools and methodologies, preparing them to lead the strategic planning process within their municipalities.

## 2.4. MODULE STRUCTURE

This module provides comprehensive coverage of strategic planning for local governments, encompassing:

### 1. Introduction to Strategic Planning
Overview of strategic planning, its necessity for local governments, and its impact on community development and service delivery.

### 2. Formulating a Strategic Plan
Steps for developing a strategic plan, including visioning, setting strategic goals, and identifying strategic actions. Emphasis on participatory approaches that include community and stakeholder input.

### 3. Implementation Strategies
Techniques for translating strategic plans into actionable programs, including resource allocation, project management, and staff involvement.

### 4. Monitoring and Evaluation
Methods for tracking progress, evaluating outcomes, and adapting strategies based on feedback and changing conditions. Introduction to tools like KPIs and balanced scorecards.

### 5. Case Studies and Best Practices
Examination of successful strategic planning examples from local governments globally, with a focus on lessons learned and applicability to the Bulgarian context.

[1] https://rm.coe.int/smp-strategic-municipal-planning/16807470ea

## 2.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Strategic Plan Development Workshop
Participants work in groups to create a strategic plan outline for a fictional local government (if a group of participants is originating from more cities), addressing a specific challenge or opportunity identified through a SWOT analysis.

### 2. Stakeholder Engagement Role-Play
An interactive exercise where participants assume different community roles, engaging in a mock public forum to gather input for the strategic planning process.

### 3. KPIs and Performance Measurement Exercise
Individuals or small groups develop a set of KPIs for a component of their strategic plan, focusing on measurability and relevance to strategic objectives.

### 4. Case Study Analysis
In-depth analysis of a successful strategic planning initiative, identifying key factors for success and potential challenges. Participants discuss how these insights could be adapted and applied to their municipal context.

# Module 3 – Local Finance and Budget Management

## 3.1 BACKGROUND

Effective management of local finances and budgeting is crucial for the sustainable development of municipalities, ensuring that local governments can provide quality services to their communities while maintaining financial stability. This module equips Bulgarian local government officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of municipal finance management, including budgeting processes, revenue generation, expenditure control, and financial reporting.
Utilizing practical tools like the «Local Finance Benchmarking: Introduction And Methodology»[1] developed by the Council of Europe, this module aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of fiscal responsibilities, enhancing participants' ability to make informed financial decisions that align with their municipalities' strategic objectives.

## 3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the principles of local finance and budget management within the context of Bulgarian local governance.

**2.** To learn about various revenue sources for municipalities, including taxes, fees, grants, and other financing mechanisms.

**3.** To gain insights into efficient budgeting processes, including planning, execution, monitoring, and reporting.

**4.** To explore strategies for effective financial management and control, ensuring accountability and transparency.

## 3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will have a thorough understanding of the local finance management framework and its significance in the governance of municipalities.

**2.** Participants will be able to identify and leverage various revenue sources to enhance municipal financial stability.

**3.** Participants will acquire the skills to develop, implement, and monitor municipal budgets, aligning financial resources with strategic priorities.

**4.** Participants will have a thorough understanding of employing financial management and control strategies to ensure fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency in municipal operations.

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[1] https://rm.coe.int/local-finance-benchmarking-introduction-and-methodology/16809ed7b1

### 3.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module covers essential aspects of local finance and budget management through the following components:

### 1. Introduction to Local Finance
Overview of the local government finance system, including the legal and regulatory framework governing municipal finances in Bulgaria.

### 2. Revenue Generation for Municipalities
Exploration of municipal revenue sources, including property taxes, local fees, state grants, and innovative financing mechanisms like public-private partnerships (PPPs).

### 3. Budgeting Processes
Detailed examination of the budget cycle—planning, approval, execution, and adjustment—highlighting best practices in participatory budgeting and stakeholder engagement.

### 4. Financial Management and Reporting
Guidance on financial management practices, including expenditure control, debt management, and financial reporting standards. Introduction to tools for financial analysis and forecasting.

### 5. Case Studies and Practical Applications
Analysis of case studies that illustrate successful financial management strategies employed by municipalities. Discussion on the challenges and solutions in budgeting and finance management.

### 3.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Budget Planning Workshop
Participants collaborate to prepare a municipal budget for a hypothetical scenario, considering revenue projections, expenditure needs, and strategic priorities.

### 2. Revenue Source Brainstorming
In small groups, participants identify potential new revenue sources for municipalities, evaluating their feasibility and impact on the community.

### 3. Financial Management Simulation
An interactive exercise where participants manage the finances of a virtual municipality, making decisions on budget adjustments, funding allocations, and responding to financial challenges.

### 4. Case Study Review and Discussion
Participants analyse a real-life case study of a municipality that successfully improved its financial management and budgeting processes. The exercise focuses on identifying key actions taken and lessons learned that can be applied in their municipalities.

## Module 4 – Effective Local Administration

### 4.1 BACKGROUND

The backbone of efficient local governance lies in its administration's capability to manage resources, projects, and human capital effectively. This module, «Effective Local Administration,» is tailored to support the administrative competencies of Bulgarian local government officials. It aims to enhance skills in human resources management, project management, and service delivery, crucial for fostering a productive work environment and ensuring high-quality public services. Utilizing insights from the «Toolkit Human Resource Management» by the Council of Europe[1] , this module emphasizes the development of practical skills and knowledge to improve administrative processes, team dynamics, and overall municipal service outcomes.

### 4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the core principles of effective local administration, including human resources management, project management, and service delivery.

**2.** To explore strategies for enhancing the ef-

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1 https://rm.coe.int/hrm-modern-and-effective-human-resources-management/1680746cb9

ficiency and responsiveness of local government services to meet community needs.

**3.** To gain insights into effective team management, leadership, and communication within the context of local administration.

**4.** To learn about modern tools and approaches for streamlining administrative processes and improving service delivery.

## 4.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will have a solid understanding of the key components of effective local administration and the role of good governance in service delivery.

**2.** Participants will be equipped with strategies for improving HR management, including recruitment, training, and performance evaluation, to build a skilled and motivated workforce.

**3.** Participants will be able to apply project management techniques to plan, execute, and monitor municipal projects efficiently.

**4.** Participants will gain practical skills in leveraging technology and innovative practices to enhance administrative efficiency and public service quality.

## 4.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module provides a comprehensive exploration of effective local administration through the following sections:

### 1. Principles of Effective Administration
Overview of effective governance practices, focusing on transparency, accountability, and service orientation in local government operations.

### 2. Human Resources Management
Detailed exploration of HR management practices tailored to local government settings, including talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies. Emphasis on creating a supportive work environment and fostering employee well-being.

### 3. Project Management in Local Government
Introduction to project management principles and their application in municipal projects, including planning tools, budgeting, risk management, and stakeholder engagement.

### 4. Innovations in Service Delivery
Examination of innovative approaches and digital tools for streamlining administrative processes and improving service delivery to citizens. Discussion on the importance of citizen feedback and participatory governance models.

### 5. Case Studies and Best Practices
Analysis of successful administrative reforms and service improvement initiatives in local governments, highlighting actionable insights and strategies that can be adopted.

## 4.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. HR Management Simulation Exercise
Participants engage in a role-play or simulation exercise focusing on HR scenarios, such as conducting job interviews, designing employee development programs, or handling conflict resolution.

### 2. Project Management Case Study
Small groups analyse a case study of a municipal project, identifying key project management practices applied, challenges encountered, and solutions implemented. Groups present their findings and recommendations.

### 3. Service Delivery Innovation Workshop
Participants brainstorm and design an innovative service delivery initiative for a common municipal service, considering factors like cost, technology, and citizen impact.

### 4. Leadership and Team Dynamics Activity
Through interactive group activities, participants explore leadership styles and team dynamics, focusing on communication, collaboration, and problem-solving within local government contexts.

# TRAINING THREAD 2
# DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

**4** ENGAGING WITH CITIZENS

**3** INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

**2** LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

**1** FUNDAMENTALS OF DECENTRALISATION

## Module 1 – Fundamentals of Decentralisation

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Decentralisation is a key process in enhancing local governance, fostering democratic participation, and ensuring that public services are tailored to meet the unique needs of local communities[1] . The «Fundamentals of Decentralisation» module provides a comprehensive introduction to the concepts, benefits, and challenges of decentralisation, with a specific focus on its implications for local governance in Bulgaria. By examining the theoretical underpinnings and practical aspects of transferring authority and responsibilities from central to local governments, this module aims to equip Bulgarian local government officials with a deep understanding of decentralisation's role in promoting efficient and responsive governance.

[1] Making Decentralisation Work, A Handbook for Policy-Makers, [EN], Chapter 4., Decentralisation: Its benefits and challenges [EN]

## 1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the concept of decentralisation and its various forms, including political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation.

**2.** To explore the benefits of decentralisation in enhancing local governance, community engagement, and public service delivery.

**3.** To identify the challenges and barriers to effective decentralisation and strategies to overcome them.

**4.** To examine the legal and policy framework for decentralisation in Bulgaria, drawing comparisons with successful international models.

## 1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will have a thorough understanding of the principles and significance of decentralisation in the context of enhancing local governance and democratic participation.

**2.** Participants will be able to articulate the benefits of decentralisation for local communities, including improved service delivery and increased local autonomy.

**3.** Participants will recognize the potential challenges to decentralisation and possess strategies for addressing these challenges within their municipalities.

**4.** Participants will gain insights into the legal and policy frameworks governing decentralisation in Bulgaria and learn from international best practices in implementing decentralisation policies.

## 1.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module covers essential aspects of decentralisation through the following segments:

### 1. Introduction to Decentralisation
Definitions, types, and overview of decentralisation, emphasizing its importance for local governance and democratic development.

### 2. Benefits of Decentralisation
Exploration of how decentralisation can improve governance, increase public sector efficiency, and enhance community participation in decision-making.

### 3. Challenges and Solutions
Discussion on the common obstacles to decentralisation, such as capacity constraints, financial limitations, and resistance to change, alongside potential solutions.

### 4. Decentralisation in Bulgaria
Detailed analysis of Bulgaria's legal and institutional framework for decentralisation, including recent reforms and ongoing challenges.

### 5. International Models of Decentralisation
Examination of successful decentralisation initiatives from around the world, highlighting lessons that can be applied to the Bulgarian context.

## 1.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Group Discussion on Decentralisation Benefits and Challenges
Participants split into groups to discuss the benefits they hope to achieve through decentralisation and the challenges they anticipate, followed by a plenary sharing session.

### 2. Case Study Analysis
Small groups analyse a case study of successful decentralisation in another country, focusing on key factors that contributed to its success and potential applicability to the Bulgarian context.

### 3. Role-Play on Negotiating Decentralisation Reforms
Participants engage in a role-play exercise simulating negotiations between local and central government representatives on proposed decentralisation reforms.

### 4. Strategic Planning for Decentralisation Implementation
Working in groups, participants draft a strategic plan for implementing a specific aspect of decentralisation within their municipality, considering legal, financial, and administrative factors.

# Module 2 – Legal Framework and Local Self-Governance

## 2.1 BACKGROUND

The legal framework governing local self-governance establishes the foundation for the operation and autonomy of local governments, outlining their powers, responsibilities, and the nature of their interaction with the central government. This module provides Bulgarian local government officials with a deep understanding of the legislative underpinnings that shape local governance. It focuses on enhancing knowledge of laws, regulations, and policies affecting local governments, emphasizing rights, obligations, and the mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency. By examining the Bulgarian context and drawing on comparative international examples, this module seeks to empower participants to navigate legal complexities and leverage the legal framework to improve governance practices.

## 2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the key components of the legal framework for local self-governance in Bulgaria, including the Constitution, local government laws, and related regulations.

**2.** To explore the rights and responsibilities of local governments under the current legal framework, focusing on autonomy, financial management, and service delivery.

**3.** To identify legal mechanisms for ensuring transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in local governance.

**4.** To examine challenges in the legal framework and explore reforms and best practices from other countries that could enhance local governance in Bulgaria.

## 2.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will gain comprehensive knowledge of the legal framework governing local self-governance in Bulgaria and its implications for local government operations.

**2.** Participants will be able to articulate the rights and responsibilities of local governments, utilizing legal provisions to advocate for greater autonomy and resources.

**3.** Participants will understand the importance of legal mechanisms in promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in local governance.

**4.** Participants will be equipped with insights into potential legal reforms and international best practices that could be adapted to strengthen local governance in Bulgaria.

## 2.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module is structured to cover the following key areas, providing a thorough understanding of the legal framework for local self-governance:

### 1. Introduction to the Legal Framework for Local Governance
Overview of the constitutional and legislative basis for local self-governance in Bulgaria, including key laws and regulations.

### 2. Rights and Responsibilities of Local Governments
Detailed exploration of the autonomy of local governments, their financial management prerogatives, and their role in public service delivery.

### 3. Mechanisms for Transparency and Accountability
Examination of legal provisions and practices ensuring local government transparency, accountability, and mechanisms for citizen participation.

### 4. Comparative Analysis of International Practices
Discussion on legal frameworks and governance models from other countries, focusing on lessons learned and applicability to the Bulgarian context.

### 5. Challenges and Opportunities for Legal Reforms
Analysis of current challenges within the le-

gal framework affecting local governance, with a brainstorming session on potential reforms and improvements.

## 2.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1.Legal Framework Analysis Exercise
Participants work in small groups to analyse specific sections of Bulgarian local governance legislation, discussing its implications for municipal operations and governance.

### 2. Role-Play on Legal Dispute Resolution
An interactive role-play exercise simulating a legal dispute between a local government and another entity (central government or private sector), focusing on negotiation and resolution strategies.

### 3. Best Practices Research Presentation
Small groups research and present on an international example of legal frameworks supporting effective local governance, identifying elements that could be incorporated into Bulgarian law.

### 4. Legal Reform Proposal Workshop
Participants collaborate to draft proposals for legal reforms aimed at enhancing local governance autonomy, efficiency, or citizen participation, culminating in a mock legislative hearing.

## Module 3 – Inter-Municipal Cooperation

### 3.1 BACKGROUND

Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) is a strategic approach that enables municipalities to collaborate in providing services, managing resources, and fostering economic development. This «Inter-Municipal Cooperation» module is designed to guide Bulgarian local government officials through the intricacies of forming, managing, and sustaining effective inter-municipal partnerships. By harnessing synergies between neighbouring municipalities, officials can address common challenges more effectively, share best prac-

tices, and optimize the use of resources. This module covers the conceptual framework of IMC, legal and organizational structures, financial mechanisms, and the development of joint projects, all aimed at enhancing local governance and service delivery.

### 3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To comprehend the principles and benefits of IMC, and its relevance to local governance and service provision.

**2.** To understand the legal and institutional frameworks that underpin IMC, including agreements, governance structures, and partnership models.

**3.** To explore financial and management strategies for effective IMC, including joint investments, shared services, and collective resource management.

**4.** To analyze case studies of successful IMC, identifying critical success factors and lessons learned that can be adapted to the Bulgarian context.

### 3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will have a clear understanding of how IMC can improve service efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the capacity of local governments.

**2.** Participants will be capable of identifying opportunities for IMC in their regions and understand how to navigate the legal processes to establish cooperative agreements.

**3.** Participants will develop strategies for effective management and financial planning of inter-municipal projects and services.

**4.** Participants will gain insights from successful IMC examples, equipping them with practical knowledge to implement similar initiatives within their municipalities.

## 3.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module is designed to address the key components required to understand and implement successful IMC:

### 1. Foundations of Inter-Municipal Cooperation
Introduction to the concept of IMC, its scope, and the underlying rationale for municipalities to collaborate.

### 2. Legal and Organizational Frameworks
Examination of the legal provisions, governance structures, and types of IMC agreements that facilitate collaboration among municipalities.

### 3. Financial Mechanisms and Management Strategies
Insight into shared funding models, collective budgeting practices, and strategies for joint procurement and resource management.

### 4. Case Studies and Best Practices in IMC
Analysis of real-world examples of successful inter-municipal collaborations, with a focus on strategies, outcomes, and challenges. Special attention to successful models within the European context and their relevance to Bulgarian municipalities.

### 5. Designing and Implementing IMC Projects
Guidelines on how to initiate, plan, and manage IMC projects, including stakeholder engagement, project management best practices, and performance monitoring.

## 3.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. IMC Scenario Workshop
Participants work in groups on hypothetical scenarios where IMC could be beneficial. They will discuss potential areas for cooperation, outline the steps to establish a collaboration, and create a basic framework for an IMC agreement.

### 2. Case Study Breakdown
Groups are assigned case studies of successful IMC initiatives and tasked with dissecting the elements that contributed to their success, focusing on adaptability to the Bulgarian landscape.

### 3. Role-Play on IMC Negotiations
Participants engage in role-play exercises that simulate negotiation meetings for establishing IMC, focusing on addressing concerns, interests, and crafting mutually beneficial agreements.

### 4. IMC Project Pitch
In a 'shark tank' style activity, participants develop and pitch an IMC project idea to their peers, who act as potential partners, focusing on the value proposition and collaborative benefits.

### 5. Simulation Exercise on Conflict Resolution
Given a simulated conflict scenario within an IMC setup, participants will identify potential issues and work through negotiation and conflict resolution strategies to find a sustainable solution.

# Module 4 – Engaging with Citizens

## 4.1 BACKGROUND

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone of democratic governance, enabling a participatory approach to decision-making and enhancing the legitimacy and responsiveness of local governments. The «Engaging with Citizens» module is crafted to provide Bulgarian local government officials with an understanding of the strategies, methods, and tools to effectively involve citizens in the governance process. This module stresses the importance of transparent communication, involvement in policy-making, and collaborative community development. It will equip participants with the skills to design and implement engagement initiatives that foster an active and informed citizenry, conducive to the success of local projects and policies.

## 4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the importance of citizen engagement in local governance and its impact on policy-making, service delivery, and community development.

**2.** To explore various platforms and methods for engaging citizens, including digital tools, public forums, and participatory budgeting.

**3.** To learn how to design, implement, and evaluate citizen engagement strategies that are inclusive, transparent, and effective.

**4.** To examine challenges to citizen engagement and develop approaches to overcome these barriers and enhance civic participation.

## 4.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will comprehend the principles and significance of engaging with citizens in the context of local governance.

**2.** Participants will be capable of utilizing diverse methods and platforms for effective citizen engagement tailored to their municipal context.

**3.** Participants will be skilled in creating engagement strategies that are inclusive of all community segments, ensuring broad participation and representation.

**4.** Participants will be adept at identifying and addressing challenges to citizen engagement, fostering an environment that encourages active civic involvement.

## 4.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module will look into the following critical areas essential for fostering robust citizen engagement:

### 1. Principles of Citizen Engagement
Introduction to the role of citizen engagement in enhancing the democratic process and improving governance.

### 2. Methods of Engagement
Detailed overview of traditional and mo-
dern engagement methods, including public consultations, town hall meetings, digital platforms, and social media.

### 3. Designing Engagement Initiatives
Steps for planning and implementing citizen engagement activities, with a focus on inclusivity and reaching diverse community groups.

### 4. Evaluating Engagement Outcomes
Techniques for assessing the effectiveness of engagement strategies, measuring participation levels, and gathering feedback for continuous improvement.

### 5. Case Studies of Successful Engagement
Analysis of successful citizen engagement case studies from around the world, with a focus on adaptable practices for Bulgarian municipalities.

## 4.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Citizen Engagement Plan Development
Participants work in groups to develop a citizen engagement plan for a municipal project or policy initiative, considering objectives, target demographics, methods, and evaluation metrics.

### 2. Digital Engagement Tools Workshop
An interactive session where participants explore and test various digital tools for citizen engagement, assessing their suitability for different contexts and objectives.

### 3. Public Forum Simulation
A role-play exercise simulating a public forum or town hall meeting, with participants playing the roles of government officials and citizens, to practice engagement and communication skills.

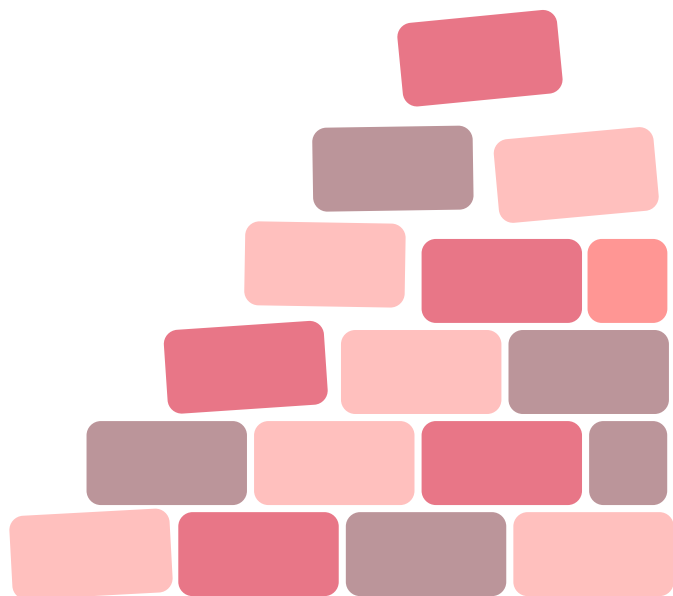### 4. Barrier Identification and Strategy Session
Participants identify potential barriers to citizen engagement in their municipalities and brainstorm strategies to address these challenges effectively.

## 5. Evaluation Exercise

Groups or individuals design an evaluation framework for a citizen engagement initiative, outlining key performance indicators, data collection methods, and analysis approaches.

# TRAINING THREAD 3
# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

**4** STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING

**3** TIME MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

**2** COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

**1** LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Module 1 – Leadership Skills for Local Government

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Effective leadership within local government is essential for fostering a visionary, ethical, and responsive administration that can meet contemporary challenges and serve the community's needs. The «Leadership Skills for Local Government» module offers Bulgarian local officials an opportunity to develop the leadership qualities necessary for driving innovation and managing change in their municipalities. This module draws upon contemporary leadership theories and practices, tailored to the unique environment of local governance. It will provide officials with the knowledge and tools to inspire and guide their teams, engage with stakeholders, and lead their communities toward sustainable development and improved quality of life.

### 1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To comprehend the role and importance of leadership in local government settings.

**2.** To understand the traits, styles, and beha-

viours that characterize effective leaders in the public sector.

**3.** To explore strategies for developing leadership skills among local government officials and staff.

**4.** To examine the relationship between leadership and governance outcomes, including community engagement, innovation, and ethical administration.

## 1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will recognize the critical role that leadership plays in the efficiency and ethical functioning of local government.

**2.** Participants will be able to assess their leadership styles and identify areas for personal development.

**3.** Participants will acquire strategies for fostering leadership skills within their teams, encouraging a culture of innovation and responsiveness.

**4.** Participants will understand how effective leadership can improve governance outcomes, drive change, and positively impact the community.

## 1.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

The structure of this module includes the following key areas, ensuring a comprehensive approach to leadership development:

### 1. Fundamentals of Leadership
Examination of the concept of leadership, different leadership styles, and their applicability in the public sector.

### 2. Personal Leadership Development
Strategies for self-assessment and improvement of personal leadership skills, including communication, decision-making, and emotional intelligence.

### 3. Team Leadership and Development
Approaches for leading and developing teams within local government, fostering a culture of collaboration and empowerment.

### 4. Leading Change and Innovation
Techniques for leading organizational change, promoting innovation, and navigating the complexities of the local government landscape.

### 5. Ethical Leadership and Governance
Discussion on the role of ethical leadership in public administration, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and public trust.

## 1.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Leadership Style Assessment
Participants complete a self-assessment to identify their leadership style and discuss how it impacts their approach to governance.

### 2. Scenario-Based Leadership Challenges
Through group exercises, participants confront various leadership scenarios and collaboratively devise solutions, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

### 3. Team Leadership Workshop
Interactive activities focused on team-building, conflict resolution, and motivational techniques that participants can implement within their departments.

### 4. Change Management Role-Play
Participants engage in role-playing exercises that simulate leading through a period of change, with a focus on communication and stakeholder engagement strategies.

### 5. Ethical Decision-Making Debate
A structured debate on ethical dilemmas faced by local government leaders, encouraging reflection on the principles that guide ethical decision-making.

# Module 2 – Communication and Public Relations

## 2.1 BACKGROUND

In the sphere of local governance, effective communication and public relations are key for fostering trust, encouraging civic participation, and ensuring transparent governance. This module is tailored to enhance the communication skills of Bulgarian local government officials, equipping them with strategies to engage effectively with the public, media, and other stakeholders. By incorporating the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on fifteen procedural and substantive principles for media and communication governance[1] , this module will cover the essentials of crafting clear messages, managing public perception, and utilizing various communication channels to bolster the relationship between local governments and the communities they serve.

## 2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand the role and impact of communication and public relations in local government.

**2.** To learn best practices for crafting and disseminating clear, effective communications to diverse audiences.

**3.** To develop skills for managing media relations and public perceptions in various situations, including crisis communications.

**4.** To explore the use of digital platforms and social media in enhancing public engagement and service delivery.

## 2.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will recognize the importance of strategic communication in achieving policy goals and enhancing public trust.

**2.** Participants will be skilled in developing and delivering effective messages tailored to different audiences and platforms.

**3.** Participants will be equipped to handle media inquiries and public relations challenges with confidence.

**4.** Participants will understand how to benefit from digital communication tools to engage with citizens and improve transparency and accountability in local governance.

## 2.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module is divided into several key segments, each designed to build upon the others to create a robust understanding of communication and public relations in a local government context:

### 1. Principles of Communication
Introduction to the foundations of effective communication, including audience analysis, message development, and the use of language and tone.

### 2. Media Relations
Techniques for engaging with the media, including press release writing, interview preparation, and strategies for building positive relationships with journalists.

### 3. Crisis Communication
Preparation and management strategies for crisis communication, emphasizing quick response, clarity, and maintaining public confidence.

### 4. Digital Communication Tools
Overview of the digital landscape, including social media, websites, and other online platforms, and their role in modern public relations.

### 5. Public Engagement Strategies
Exploration of methods to foster public engagement, including community meetings, participatory design processes, and feedback mechanisms.

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[1] Principles for media and communication governance - Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 and explanatory report (2022) [EN]

## 2.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Press Release Workshop
Participants draft a press release for a hypothetical municipal initiative, receiving feedback on content, clarity, and impact.

### 2. Mock Media Interview
A role-play exercise where participants practice responding to media inquiries, focusing on message control and effective communication under pressure.

### 3. Crisis Communication Simulation
Groups work through a simulated crisis affecting their municipality, developing and implementing a crisis communication plan.

### 4. Social Media Strategy Development
Participants design a social media strategy for a municipal project or service, considering objectives, target audiences, and engagement metrics.

### 5. Public Forum Planning Activity
Interactive exercise in planning and executing a public forum or town hall meeting, with a focus on agenda setting, facilitation techniques, and capturing public input.

## Module 3 – Time Management and Productivity

### 3.1 BACKGROUND

Effective time management is a critical skill for local government officials who must balance a wide range of responsibilities, often with limited resources. This module is designed to help optimize officials' work habits, improve efficiency, and increase productivity. By mastering these skills, officials can better serve their citizens, meet project deadlines, and achieve strategic goals. This module will offer practical techniques and tools to prioritize tasks, manage workloads, and streamline processes within the local government framework.

## 3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To grasp the principles of time management and understand its impact on personal and organizational productivity.

**2.** To identify common time-wasters and learn strategies to avoid or minimize them.

**3.** To master techniques for effective prioritization, goal setting, and delegation within the context of local government operations.

**4.** To explore tools and technologies that can aid in time management and productivity enhancement.

## 3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will recognize the importance of time management in improving personal effectiveness and contributing to organizational success.

**2.** Participants will be able to evaluate their current time management practices and implement strategies for improvement.

**3.** Participants will develop the ability to set realistic goals, prioritize tasks, and delegate effectively, enhancing team productivity.

**4.** Participants will gain hands-on experience with time management tools and software, understanding how to integrate these into their daily routines.

## 3.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module is organized into several focused sections, each aimed at building comprehensive time management and productivity skills:

### 1. Understanding Time Management
An exploration of the concept of time management and its significance in the context of local government work.

### 2. Self-Assessment and Time Auditing
Techniques for assessing one's current time management efficiency, including identifying personal and workplace time-wasters.

### 3. Prioritization and Goal Setting

Methods for prioritizing tasks based on urgency and importance, aligning daily activities with long-term objectives.

### 4. Delegation and Team Productivity

Guidelines on effective delegation and strategies to foster a productive team environment, ensuring optimal use of available human resources.

### 5. Technology and Time Management

Review of various time management apps, software, and tools that can streamline scheduling, task management, and collaboration.

### 3.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Personal Time Audit Activity

Participants conduct a personal time audit to identify patterns and areas for improvement in their workday time allocation.

### 2. Prioritization Matrix Exercise

A hands-on exercise to practice categorizing tasks using the 'Eisenhower Box' or similar prioritization matrix, focusing on decision-making for task urgency and importance.

### 3. Delegation Role-Play

Interactive role-playing scenarios where participants practice delegating tasks to others, considering factors such as skill sets, workload, and developmental opportunities.
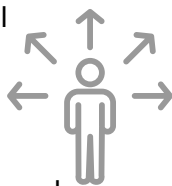
### 4. Goal Setting Workshop

Participants outline personal and professional goals, breaking them down into actionable steps, and aligning them with their time management plans.

### 5. Time Management Tools Trial

A practical session where participants explore and evaluate different time management and productivity tools, determining which might be most effective for their specific needs.

## Module 4 – Stress Management and Well-being

### 4.1 BACKGROUND

Ensuring the well-being of local government officials is crucial, not only for individual health but also for the efficacy of governance. This module offers a holistic approach to well-being, while also taking into account the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work (2021-2027)[1]. It underlines the importance of creating good working conditions that allow for the development of all employees, regardless of gender. The module will provide Bulgarian local government officials with strategies to manage stress effectively while fostering an inclusive workplace that supports the professional growth and well-being of both women and men. Emphasizing the equal opportunity for development also aligns with the broader goals of gender equality and diversity in the workplace.

### 4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1.** To understand stress and its impact on health, well-being, and productivity, within the context of gender and diversity.

**2.** To learn about the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work and its implications for local governments.

**3.** To adopt inclusive stress management practices that support the needs of a diverse workforce.

**4.** To implement strategies that ensure good working conditions and opportunities for all employees to develop in their roles.

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[1] EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work, COM/2021/323 final [EN], [BG]

## 4.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1.** Participants will be familiar with contemporary health and safety standards, particularly those outlined in the EU framework.

**2.** Participants will have the skills to create and maintain a supportive and inclusive work environment.

**3.** Participants will be equipped with strategies to manage stress in ways that are mindful of gender and diversity considerations.

**4.** Participants will be capable of fostering an organizational culture that prioritizes development opportunities and well-being for all employees.

## 4.4 MODULE STRUCTURE

This module consists of the following ensuring an inclusive approach to workplace stress management:

### 1. Understanding Stress within an Inclusive Framework
Analysis of how stress can manifest differently across diverse groups, and the importance of an inclusive approach to well-being.

### 2. EU Strategic Framework Overview
Detailed review of the EU's strategic goals for health and safety, and how they can be translated into the local government setting.

### 3. Inclusive Stress Management Practices
Development of stress reduction strategies that are effective across a diverse workforce, including gender-sensitive approaches.

### 4. Creating Opportunities for Development
Strategies for ensuring that all employees have equal opportunities for professional growth, drawing from best practices in the EU and beyond.

### 5. Case Studies in Inclusive Well-being Initiatives
Examination of successful initiatives that have improved workplace well-being while fostering gender equality and diversity.

## 4.5 PROPOSED MODULE EXERCISES

### 1. Stress and Diversity Workshop
Activities to understand personal stressors and their impacts, taking into consideration diversity and gender perspectives.

### 2. EU Framework Compliance Audit
Participants review their municipality's policies and practices in light of the EU Strategic Framework, identifying areas for improvement.

### 3. Inclusive Program Development
Groups develop a stress management and well-being program that addresses the needs of a diverse workforce, focusing on gender inclusivity and equal development opportunities.

### 4. Role-Playing for Advocacy
Interactive role-play scenarios where participants advocate for inclusive health and safety practices within their municipalities.

### 5. Action Planning for Well-being
Creation of an action plan to implement an inclusive well-being initiative, including specific goals, timelines, and metrics for success, ensuring alignment with the EU Strategic Framework.

# CONCLUSION

This training and capacity-building curricula, tailored to enhance the foundational capacities of local governance, has been crafted from a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie within the current municipal landscape. It reflects a commitment to support skills, cultivating leadership, and encouraging a forward-thinking approach to public service.

In connecting the areas of administrative efficiency, financial management, e-government, and strategic planning, this curriculum has sought to equip participants with not just knowledge, but practical tools and the confidence to implement change. The modules have been designed to be both responsive and anticipatory, ensuring local officials are prepared to adapt to future advancements in governance and technology.

The journey doesn't end with the final module. Instead, it is recommend moving into a phase of continuous engagement and improvement, where the skills and strategies learned become part of the participants' professional culture. As officials begin to apply their newly developed knowledge and skills, the real work of transforming local governance for the betterment of communities begins. This curriculum aims to be a living document, evolving with feedback and adapted to meet the dynamic needs of local governance.
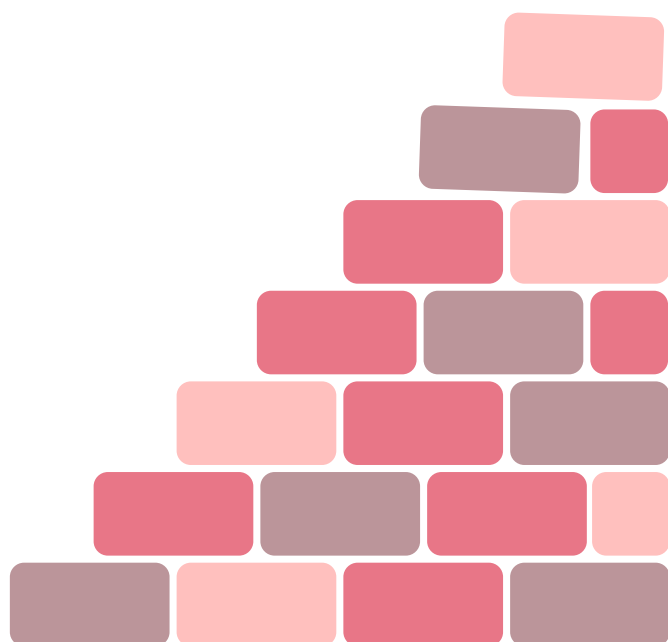
# REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

**Additional materials and Case studies Recommended for Training thread 1 – Enhancing Local Government Capacities**

**e-Estonia** A publication that provides an overview of the main electronic services in Estonia and the creation and management of one of the most advanced e-societies in the world in terms of speed and level of e-society development

**Strategic Municipal Planning Toolkit** Developed by the Council of Europe to help direct the development policy of local government units over time and provide guidance for preparing strategic municipal plans based on citizen participation and a five-step approach

**Local Finance Benchmarking: Introduction And Methodology** – a toolkit developed by the Council of Europe which introduces the general philosophy of fiscal decentralisation behind the European Charter of Local Self-Government and provides methodology and guidance on benchmarking for analytical and diagnostic purposes, as well as for identification of areas for intervention and prioritization of specific policies to be implemented.

**Human Resource Management** A practical guide designed by the Council of Europe to be used by human resource practitioners in local authorities and elected members concerned with improving people management. It is aimed at developing the human resources capacities and management and provides guidance on the key stages in the life cycle of HRM from job descriptions, recruitment and appraisals to performance management and gender perspective.

**Basic Principles of Participatory Budgeting** a booklet on designing and implementing participatory budgeting processes for local governments, including the concept explanation, outcomes and impacts of PB cycles, basic preconditions to be met, general stages of implementation, specialized PB models, use of civic tech tools for citizen participation, and best practice examples.

**Additional materials and Case studies Recommended for Training thread 2 – Decentralisation and Local Governance**

**European Charter of Local Self-Government**, developed by the Council of Europe, contains the basic principles of local self-government and explains fundamentals that guarantee political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities. It is one of the most important international acts on which states are guided in the development of local democracy.

**Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit** This toolkit, developed by Council of Europe, offers an integrated framework that guides local authorities and practitioners, through a step-by-step approach, in the design and implementation of context-based strategies to increase a community's civil participation.

**The Experience of European Countries Regarding the Effective Functioning of Local Governance**, a research article that clarifies the historical aspects of the local government development in Europe, but also examines and compares different local governance models of today.

**Monitoring of the Application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Bulgaria,** a report that assesses the progress Bulgaria has made in implementing a decentralisation strategy, including the analysis of its local government system and recommendations on how to make further advancements, as suggested by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

**Inter-municipal Cooperation** Council of Europe toolkit with templates and frameworks to take municipalities through each step of the process to create, establish, implement and evaluate inter-municipal cooperation.

**Success With a Bitter Aftertaste: Success Factors in Inter-Municipal Cooperation**, a study that focuses on three Norwegian inter-municipal cooperative arrangements in the field of child welfare that are deemed to be successful. The aim of the article is to identify common features across three cases with a focus on the governance structures of the collaborations.

**Horezu Depression Association**, established in 2005, is an intercommunity development association, whose members are Horezu city and rural community Costești, Măldărești, Slătioara and Vaideeni. It serves as a success story of inter-municipal cooperation that gathers 10 municipalities which cooperate in the domains of tourism infrastructure development, tourism promotion, planning coordination, fundraising, project management, and emergency services

**Cities 4 Cities and United 4 Ukraine** are partnership initiatives that joined forces in September 2022. The project helps Ukrainian communities to establish inter-municipal partnerships with municipalities in Europe.

Cities 4 Cities was founded by the city of Sindelfingen, Germany, under the auspices of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. United 4 Ukraine was launched by SALAR International and the City of Lviv, Ukraine, with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Strategic partners are the Association of Ukrainian Cities, All-Ukrainian Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities.

**The City of Copenhagen** is the first Danish municipality to introduce a longer-term citizens' assembly. Randomly selected citizens have an opportunity to give ideas, recommendations and to propose solutions for the future of the city. Citizens are recruited using a stratified lottery system. In addition to the citizens' assembly, the City administration has developed a website that will serve as a participation platform for citizens and authorities to share various initiatives and strengthen citizen engagement.

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**Additional materials and Case studies recommended for Training thread 3 – Personal Development and Leadership**

**Toolkit on Teleworking in Public Administrations**, a Toolkit created by Council of Europe, that can be used by all levels of public administrations and is designed to support human resources managers, senior management, line managers and trade unions in designing and rolling out teleworking for their employees.

**Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond**, a Practical Guide developed by International Labour Organization – provides practical and actionable recommendations for effective teleworking to support policymakers and public sector organizations in updating existing policies and developing or updating their practices. It includes a number of case studies of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, addresses the lessons learned on issues such as working time, performance management

and work-life balance, and offers a list of available tools and resources

**Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on principles for media and communication governance,** which specifically addresses the challenge on how to appropriately include the role of online platforms in the media and communication sector.

**The City of Ljubljana** applies various tools and methods that promote frequent and transparent communication with citizens, encouraging them to engage as active stakeholders in shaping the City's future.

**Leadership Academy Programme** – a course designed by Council of Europe as an interactive training programme for public authorities of all levels (mayors, senior officials and elected representatives) that seeks to develop leadership for organisations, for strategy and for capacity building over 3 stages. It can be delivered over a period of six-twelve months and adjusted to local training needs with the aim to focus on learning areas relevant to local contexts

**Swedish strategy on the good work environment** with an objective to ensure good working conditions and the opportunity to develop at work, for both women and men. It also takes into consideration the **EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work (2021-2027).**

ENG

The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability democracy and sutainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is commited to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

**http://europa.eu**

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all membes of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

**www.coe.int**