ROMANIA

Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Strengthening the National Institute of Administration's (INA) Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456)

Output 2 – Report with recommendations for institutionalizing a mentoring scheme in the Romanian public administration

Deliverable 2.1 - First draft report

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This report has been delivered under the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Strengthening the National Institute of Administration's (INA) Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456) signed between the General Secretariat of the Government and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on October 29, 2019. This report represents Deliverable 2.1. – First draft report, part of Output 2 – Report with recommendations for institutionalizing a mentoring scheme in the Romanian public administration under the above-mentioned agreement.

ACRONYMS

AC	Administrative Code
CNCISCAP	National Committee for Coordinating the Implementation of the Strategy on Strengthening Public Administration
CSHRD	Civil Service Human Resources Division
EI	Engineers Ireland
EU	European Union
GD	Government Decision
GEO	Government Emergency Ordinance
GOR	Government of Romania
GSG	General Secretariat of the Government
HRM	Human Resources Management
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMI	Irish Management Institute
INA	National Institute of Administration
IPAA	Institute of Public Administration Australia
NACS	National Agency for Civil Servants
NAE	National Agency for Employment
NAFA	National Agency for Fiscal Administration
NAQ	National Authority for Qualifications
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPM	New Public Management
NRP	National Reform Program
NSLL	National Strategy for Lifelong Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPAC	Operational Program Administrative Capacity
RAS	Reimbursable Advisory Services
RCC	Romanian Competition Council
ROF	Rules of Internal Organization and Functions
SCSD	Strategy for Civil Service Development
SPAT	Strategy for Public Administration Training
SSPA	Strategy for Strengthening Public Administration
WB	World Bank
YPS	Young Professionals Scheme

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Executive summary

The report represents Deliverable 2.1 of Output 2[1] of the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Strengthening INA's Capacities to Improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (henceforth INA RAS)[2]. Output 2 aims to provide recommendations to the INA on the scope, design and implementation of a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration. Per the RAS legal agreement and in response to requests from the INA, Deliverable 2.1 provides the preliminary concept for the mentoring intervention, which would be subsequently validated, further developed and consolidated in Deliverable 2.2 of Output 2. Mentoring was identified and endorsed by the Government of Romania (GoR) as a strategic measure[3] to improve staff performance in the public administration (civil servants and contractual alike) by way of an effective, sustainable and accessible training system. The current deliverable focuses on developing the specifications for the envisaged mentoring program. These specifications are based on a needs assessment for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration, informed by multiple sources, including (i) an in-depth review of international experience with mentoring in the public sector (using information collected from both the academic and practitioner literature, as well as from semi-structured interviews with public sector practitioners from Ireland and Australia), (ii) consultations and interviews with stakeholders in the Romanian public administration, and (iii) a survey among staff in the Romanian public administration on the perceived opportunities and challenges of a mentoring program.

Insights from the reviewed international experience on mentoring in the public sector point to the potential of mentoring as a staff development instrument, but they also highlight the challenges it presents. At a strategic level, effective mentoring can support the achievement of government priorities in areas such as improving the diversity of the public sector workforce in leadership roles or enhancing the employer brand of the public sector. Furthermore, mentoring can address expectations from the new generations of workforce regarding the workplace, such as career variety, recognition of performance and regular and diverse opportunities for personal development. Moreover, in the face of an impending "retirement cliff" caused by an aging workforce in the public sector, mentoring can support organizations to ensure business continuity through a structured and continuous transfer of know-how and institutional memory from experienced and outgoing staff to incoming staff. Indeed, as reflected in Chapter 2, one of the main uses of mentoring in the public sector is that of guiding and, potentially, accelerating the development of the current workforce and enabling staff to perform better in their respective job. Alongside enhanced staff capabilities, mentoring can also serve to improve staff engagement, which, in turn, feeds into a virtuous circle of improved performance. However, achieving these results requires a committed and regularly trained pool of mentors, who engage with their mentees under an established program and process, governed by clearly defined

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[1] "First draft report" under "Report with recommendations for institutionalizing a mentoring scheme in the Romanian public administration".
[2] P169456.
[3] Strategy for Public Administration Training 2016-2020 (SPAT).

objectives and rules and sustained through dedicated resources and structures and explicit institutional ownership.

The Romanian public administration has limited experience with mentoring programs, although there seems to be a strong demand from staff for such a program to address a wide range of development needs. The current analysis identified only one example of an iterative mentoring program that was implemented in recent years in the Romanian public administration: the Young Professional Scheme (YPS). The YPS was part of a broader learning and development component, and was a "fast-track" program for the Romanian public administration, which operated between 2003 and 2009. The mentoring program was aimed at the YPS participants, which would later be introduced in the public administration as "public managers", a category of specific civil servants. Mentors were experienced staff from the institution in which their respective YPS mentee did their traineeship and their role was to guide, facilitate and evaluate the work of their mentees. Mentors operated under a formal mentoring agreement, coordinated centrally by the INA and the NACS and financed through the YPS budget (itself externally funded). However, once external financing ended, the YPS program was terminated and, along with it, the mentoring program, which was never continued under different arrangements. Nevertheless, despite a number of flaws, former key stakeholders in the process, interviewed for this report,[4] perceived that the mentoring program added substantial value to the learning and development component of the YPS. Moreover, in the backdrop of increasingly limited resources allocated for training of staff in the public administration and a misalignment between training needs and available opportunities, mentoring could provide a cost-effective method of building staff capacity in the long-term. Indeed, the survey on mentoring conducted among public administration staff for the current analysis found that most respondents would reportedly benefit from a mentoring program, albeit for a variety of needs.[5] Moreover, respondents to the survey believed that the lack of training of mentors, as well as inadequate guidance for operationalizing the mentoring activities, are among the main challenges for the success of a mentoring program. This points to a necessity for the Government of Romania to clearly define the specifications for the envisaged program and to put in place a robust and sustainable delivery model for it.

The needs assessment for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration serves to identify a consensus on the scope and objectives of the program, based on staff perceptions and current and future organizational priorities. The analysis found that both public administration staff, as well as key institutional stakeholders in the process (the INA, the GSG and the NACS) would see as the main objective of the mentoring program the development of competencies specific to the mentee's job. In addition, staff highlighted (both managers and execution-level staff), through survey responses, the need for mentoring to contribute to developing managerial competencies among managers in the public administration. In line with these needs, mentors should have substantial work experience in the mentee's organization, along with demonstrated technical competencies in the area of interest of the mentee, while the priority for mentoring should be given to staff who are facing difficulties to perform in their job and to managers. Mentoring should be done in a one-to-one format. Given that staff selected as mentors can be expected to be inexperienced in mentoring due to the limited use of the instrument, mentors must go through a training program, to build a set of abilities

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[4] Former coordinators of the YPS from the NACS and the INA and a former representative of the Union of Public Managers in the Romanian Public Administration.

[5] The survey was conducted between September 7th and September 27th, 2021 and collected 512 responses.

critical to effective mentoring, namely interpersonal skill, mentoring techniques, mentoring ethics and managing the transfer of knowledge. The current report proposes a detailed curriculum for these abilities, to be further developed and delivered by the INA. Table 1 below provides a summary of the proposed specifications for the mentoring program in the public administration.

Table 1. Summary of proposed specifications for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration

Elements of a mentoring program	Proposed specifications for the mentoring program for the Romanian public administration
Objectives	General objective: to develop staff competencies Specific objectives: - Supporting staff (execution-level and managers, at all levels of seniority) to adapt to new challenges in the workplace by developing the necessary specific competencies - Supporting managers to adapt to and to lead organizational changes
Target groups	- Staff who face difficulties at work, as identified by or jointly with their respective line manager as stemming from gaps in specific competencies; and - Staff in management positions regardless of seniority (except high-level civil servants)
Format of mentoring	- Voluntary enrollment of mentors and mentees under a mentoring agreement, governed by a mutually accepted code of conduct - Cross-institutional matching, initiated by mentees, under the guidance of their respective line managers and decided by the mentor - Mentoring relationships are separate from line manager-subordinate relationships - One-to-one mentoring relationships, lasting at least six months, with regular monthly meetings - Discussions held in-person or blended , depending on circumstances
Areas of general training for mentors	- Interpersonal skills - Mentoring techniques - Mentoring ethics - Managing the transfer of knowledge

The proposed specifications for the mentoring program must materialize into a structured and sustainable program, rather than into a one-off training initiative. A critical determinant of the effectiveness of mentoring in achieving its objectives of developing staff is the model through which it is delivered. At the present time, the SPAT foresees the mentoring intervention to be supported only through a training program, led by the INA. As such, a coherent framework is absent that can ensure that mentoring is delivered by the right people, to the right beneficiaries, in the right way, to effectively address staff development needs. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the case studies prepared for the current report of three distinct mentoring programs in Ireland and Australia, the success of any mentoring initiative in a public sector setting rests with the degree to which resources and political will are committed to it long-term. Therefore, the mentoring activity must be integrated into a structured program, which sets out institutional responsibilities, ways of collaborating with stakeholders and financing arrangements, among others. The INA should have a central role to play in this mentoring program, although its specific responsibilities would be based on the delivery model for the program and should be validated at the political level, through the CNCISCAP (National Committee for Coordinating the Implementation of the Strategy on Strengthening Public Administration). Deliverable 2.2. of the current RAS will provide recommendations on the different options for a delivery model for the mentoring program.

Introduction

1.1 Background

1. **The Romanian Government continues its efforts to reform the public administration and to professionalize staff in the public administration.** Over the past three decades, the Romanian Government has progressed towards strengthening its public administration and improving service delivery. Romania has been committed to professionalizing and depoliticizing its public sector[6] before the European Union (EU) accession and continued to reform it as agreed with the EU for the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 (ESIF 2014-2020).

2. **The strategic and legal framework adopted by the Romanian authorities is a solid ground to enable effective and sustainable public administration reform.** The Government has three strategic documents under implementation in order to address the EU ex-ante conditionality on "the existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member States' administrative efficiency, including public administration reform".[7] These include the Strategy for Strengthening Public Administration (SSPA 2014-2020)[8], the Strategy for the Development of the Civil Service (SCSD 2016-2020)[9], and the Strategy for Public Administration Training 2016-2020 (SPAT)[10]. These strategies, along with the recently adopted Administrative Code, serve as the foundation of the national strategic policy framework for public administration reform in Romania.

3. **Despite this progress and continued reform efforts, Romania's public administration faces significant challenges in leveraging its full economic, social and innovative potential.[11]** According to the 2020 World Governance Indicators of the World Bank, Romania remains one of the least effective countries among the EU Member States. The ineffectiveness in public administration has led to the low quality of service delivery and poor infrastructure. Politicization and clientelism and

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[6] The Parliament passed several laws in support of this commitment, most notably the 1999 Civil Service Law (Law 188/1999), which detailed the regulations of civil servants in Romania and established the NACS, and the 2004 Prefect Law (Law 340/2004), which depoliticized the position of the prefect. Two subsequent government decisions in 2007 and 2008 further professionalized the civil service through improved recruitment and career management processes, respectively. In 2003, Romania also established a public manager program, which was a key tool for attracting motivated and talented young professionals to the civil service until its conclusion in 2009. These efforts have resulted in some important progress in the professionalization of the Romanian public administration and civil service specifically (more details in the Output 1, Deliverable 1.1 "Baseline diagnostic of the national framework for HRM and its institutionalization", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2019).

[7] Annex XI of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/ 2006.

[8] SSPA was approved through GD 909/ 2014

[9] SCSD develops into detailed actions the HRM priorities included in SSPA, but only for civil servants. It identifies the main challenges for the Civil Service as: (1) the institutional and strategic management of HR; (2) the recruitment, evaluation and promotion systems; (3) the pay and motivation systems; (4) the training system; and (5) ethics and integrity. SDCS, 2016. Available at: http://www.anfp.gov.ro/R/Doc/2016/Strategii/strategia%20functiei%20publice.pdf.

[10] SPAT 2016-2020 further operationalizes SSPA and SCSD objectives in the area of training for public administration staff.

[11] World Bank Country Partnership Framework for Romania for the period FY19-23, 2018.

fragmented and inconsistent practices in the civil service[12] human resources management (HRM) have been identified as structural problems in the Romanian public administration.[13] The practices have limited transparency in public employment management and have introduced inequalities in recruitment, career development and performance evaluation. Moreover, they have affected the development of a strategic workforce plan, thus limiting effective staff deployment and hindering the use of motivational tools to empower staff performance. Weak institutional capacity, combined with politicized administration, has prevented the administration from moving to competency-based performance management.

4. **The GoR has embarked on structural reforms in the civil service HRM through several regulatory and institutional reforms.** The World Bank (WB) is currently supporting the Government in its further efforts to professionalize the public administration and increase its performance and effectiveness by defining a new competency framework revising the recruitment, selection and appraisal, performance management, and training systems.[14] Training at entry and continuous learning in career management constitute essential aspects of competency-based performance management. Thus, developing a training policy framework alongside the new policies for recruitment, career development, and performance management will ensure a solid HRM framework, ultimately contributing to increasing public sector productivity and performance.

5. **In response to the request from the GOR, the World Bank provides Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) to the National Institute of Administration (INA) and the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) in developing their capacities for evidence-based policymaking in the area of training for public administration staff.** The ongoing RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System within the Public Administration (HRM RAS) will provide the underpinning for continuing assessments and further developing the HRM framework in the area of training. The two RASs signed with these institutions are complementary and implemented to provide support in four key areas:[15]

   i.   Training needs assessment for the public administration (output 1.1 of INA RAS), which also builds upon the relevant international experience on public administration training (output 1.2 of INA RAS);
   ii. Regulatory impact assessment of the legal framework on public administration training (output 1.3 of INA RAS);
   iii. Development of recommendations on introducing mentoring in the Romanian public administration (output 2.1 and output 2.2 of INA RAS); and

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[12] See https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports
[13] See the Output 1, Deliverable 1.1 "Baseline diagnostic of the national framework for HRM and its institutionalization", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2019 and Output 3, Deliverable 3.2 "Competency Framework for the Romanian public administration", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2020
[14] See the RAS on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management (HRM) System within the Public Administration and the Strategy for Public Administration Training 2016-2020, Theme 2, specific objective 2.
[15] Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement Strengthening INA's capacities to improve the Training Policy Framework in the Romanian Public Administration (P169456), henceforth the INA RAS and Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Supporting the Improvement of the Training System in the General Secretariat of the Government of Romania (P170498), henceforth the GSG RAS.

iv. Assessment of the implementation of the Public Administration Training Strategy 2016-2020 and development of recommendations for the new training strategy 2021-2027 (output 1 and output 2 of GSG RAS).

6. **The institutionalization of the mentoring system will be one of the reform measures for increasing learning opportunities and strengthening staff capacities.** The strategic framework[16] established the operationalization of a network of mentors in the Romanian public administration as a key priority to improve staff capacity through more relevant, accessible and regular learning and development opportunities. The strategy also envisages that a specific competency framework be developed for mentors, together with a specific training program to consolidate these competencies. However, the initiative of introducing mentoring in the public administration warrants an in-depth analysis to ensure that (i) there is internal demand for it across the different stakeholders, (ii) that its established objectives are aligned with staff learning and development needs and organizational priorities and (iii) that the necessary enabling conditions and potential constraints for the successful implementation and delivery of the mentoring program are well-understood and planned for.

1.2   Scope and methodology of the report

7. **The current report is the first of two deliverables representing Output 2[17] of the INA RAS.** This first deliverable proposes the main specifications of the envisaged mentoring program to be introduced by the INA in the Romanian public administration. The specifications are based on a needs assessment of mentoring, informed by a review of international experience on mentoring in public and private sector settings and by consultations with and feedback from institutional and individual stakeholders at the level of the Romanian public administration. These specifications would be validated with the actors who are expected to play an important enabling role for the mentoring program (e.g., senior managers and representatives of HR departments) and, if needed, would be further detailed in the second deliverable of this output. This deliverable will include recommendations on a delivery model for the mentoring program, which would be centered around the INA, which could facilitate its sustainable implementation.

8. **The design options for the mentoring program are limited by the applicable legislative and strategic framework for mentoring in the Romanian public administration.** The proposed specifications of the envisaged mentoring program are built around the existing legal definition of "mentors"[18] and the strategic objective for them,[19] which specify that mentoring should focus on

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[16] The Strategy for Public Administration Training 2016-2020, Theme 2, specific objective 2. https://www.mlpda.ro/uploads/articole/attachments/5daea2af35cf8091546868.pdf and Strategy for Strengthening Public Administration 2014-2020, Specific objective II.2. action II.2.4 Integrated approach to competency development for public administration

[17] Report with recommendations for institutionalizing a mentoring scheme in the Romanian public administration.

[18] As set through Government Decision 1066/2008 on approving the rules for the professional training of civil servants. See section 3.1. of the present report for a more details on this.

[19] Set out in the Strategy for Public Administration Training 2016-2020, Theme 2, specific objective 2. https://www.mlpda.ro/uploads/articole/attachments/5daea2af35cf8091546868.pdf and the Strategy for Strengthening Public Administration 2014-2020, Specific objective II.2. action II.2.4 Integrated approach to competency development for public administration

the provision of on-the-job training of less experienced staff by experienced staff. As such, other possible objectives and formats of mentoring, such as improving diversity in leadership positions or mentoring delivered by external experts to senior leaders in institutions (as described in Section 2 below), were not endorsed in consultations with the main project stakeholders as potential options for the envisaged program under the current project.

9. **The proposed specifications for the mentoring program are based on a two-tier needs assessment, i.e. at the organizational and the individual level.** A needs assessment is necessary to identify the internal demand for a formal mentoring program, as well as the particular needs, at both the organizational and individual level, for which such a program could add the most value (Allen, Finklestein and Poteet 2009). The needs assessment conducted under the current report is comprised of the following components:

I. **An analysis of international practices on mentoring in the public administration –** this analysis provides a list of required components, options and areas of reflection for the design of the envisaged mentoring program in the Romanian public administration. It does so by mapping established international practices related to the uses and limitations of mentoring programs in a public sector setting, as well as by identifying lessons learnt and best practices in the design and implementation of such programs. The analysis is based on a review of the relevant literature on mentoring and of public operational documentation for mentoring programs available in a number of public administrations, as well as by semi-structured interviews with former and current managers of mentoring programs for the public sector run by three organizations in Ireland (Irish Management Institute and Engineers Ireland) and Australia (Institute of Public Administration Australia in Victoria). The interviews were conducted between March and May 2021 and the case studies were selected because all of them relate to mentoring programs that include public servants and involve an external institution that plays an important role in the mentoring program (while the specific role of INA in the mentoring program is yet to be defined, the INA can be expected to play a leading role). The case studies also include some similarities and differences in approach and thus offer some potential insights which can be applied to the Romanian context.

II. **An organizational needs assessment –** this analysis leverages the insights drawn from the review of international experience to identify the ways in which a mentoring program could contribute to the HRM needs and objectives of institutions in the Romanian public administration, as defined in the applicable national strategic documents and through the HRM reform agenda proposed (and endorsed by the Government of Romania) under previous World Bank analyses.[20] Moreover, the analysis highlights the potential constraints, challenges and opportunities to be considered when implementing a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration, based on the existing legal framework and on lessons learnt from previous experiences with such programs. These lessons are drawn from semi-structured interviews, held with former coordinators and beneficiaries of the mentoring component of the Young Professional Scheme (YPS), a fast-track program for civil servants in the Romanian

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[20] See Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration (P165191).

public administration, which was implemented from 2003 to 2009.[21] Given the difficulty faced in identifying and following up with former key stakeholders in the process, the number of interviews was limited to three (two coordinators of the program and one beneficiary).

III. **An individual needs assessment** – the analysis aims to assess staff readiness and the degree of support for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration. Moreover, it seeks to identify specific areas of intervention under the potential meta-objectives of a mentoring program which were validated with the project partners as being relevant in the Romanian context. This analysis was based on an online survey developed jointly by the World Bank and the INA project teams and disseminated among staff in the central, territorial and local public administration in Romania. The survey focused on the perception of managers, given their critical role in identifying, understanding and addressing development needs for their staff, as well as their role in implementing and embedding such a program. Nevertheless, the survey allowed for execution-level staff to submit responses as well.

Finally, based on the information generated through the different components of the needs assessment, a brainstorming session was held with the project partners (i.e. the INA, the NACS and the GSG) to establish a shortlist of specifications for the envisaged mentoring program to be introduced in the Romanian public administration. These specifications were further developed to inform a preliminary terms of reference for the mentoring process.

10. The current report is structured into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2** presents the findings of the analysis on international experience on mentoring in public administration. This chapter is comprised of the literature review (section 2.2 and section 2.3) and three case studies on mentoring programs in Ireland and Australia (section 2.4). The analysis serves to inform the design of the envisaged mentoring program for the Romanian public administration by (i) identifying the main components of a mentoring program, (ii) mapping potential uses and established practices of mentoring in public sector settings and (iii) highlighting operational considerations for the implementation and delivery of such programs.

- **Chapter 3** provides an overview of the YPS mentoring component and draws lessons which can be used to inform the design of the envisaged mentoring program for the public administration.

- **Chapter 4** presents the findings from the organizational and individual needs assessment for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration, informed by the survey on mentoring and by consultations with stakeholders. These findings are distilled into proposals for objectives and target groups for the envisaged mentoring program, which were identified as being closely aligned with current and future organizational and individual needs.

- **Chapter 5** proposes the main design features of the mentoring process (or the terms of reference), based on the findings from the survey on mentoring, on the review of international

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[21] See section 3.1 of the present report for more details on the mentoring component of the YPS.

practices in mentoring and on the lessons learnt from the YPS mentoring program. These features follow the proposed objectives and target groups.

- **Chapter 6** presents a proposal for training arrangements for mentors under the envisaged mentoring program. The proposal is detailed in Annex 8.1 with specifications for a training curriculum for mentors, to be developed into a training program and delivered by the INA.

2   International experience on mentoring in the public administration

2.1   Overview

11. **Mentoring is increasingly being introduced in public sector organizations for a variety of purposes and target groups.** In some cases, mentoring is deployed as a general developmental intervention, aimed at increasing the competency and capacity of the workforce. As reflected in the current review, mentoring programs are aimed at specific groups of staff and have specific objectives. For example, it is now quite common for public service organizations to aim mentoring programs at new entrants as part of an induction process and to utilize mentoring to help embed important values and aspects of organizational culture. It is also increasingly common for organizations in the public sector to use mentoring programs to promote equality and equal opportunity in the workplace. For example, this chapter provides a case study of mentoring to increase the participation of women in leadership positions. Mentoring may also be aimed at professional groups within the public sector as part of their continuous professional development. Mentoring is also sometimes incorporated as a component of a larger development program, for example, a leadership development program. In this context, mentoring is just one of many interventions designed to complement each other to support leadership development.

12. **Based on this review, mentoring is typically delivered through formal programs, with a clear structure and a set of protocols for participation**. Indeed, formal mentoring programs may sometimes be linked to quality marks or standards and introduced as part of the process of reaching a defined quality standard. Mentoring programs may be "in-house", organized within the organization, or cross-organizational and organized by an external agency, or some combination of these. There are many examples of in-house mentoring programs, where the mentoring process is organized and managed internally, usually by the human resources department. There are also examples of cross-organizational mentoring programs, where an outside 'third party' body - for example, a body responsible for training and development- may support or organize the mentoring process on behalf of one or multiple participating organizations.

2.2   What is mentoring: evidence from the literature

13. **Mentoring should be distinguished from coaching since the latter is a well-established developmental intervention that shares some common characteristics with the forme**r. While it can be sometimes difficult to distinguish the coaching relationship from the mentoring relationship, particularly where coaches are developed within an organization to coach other employees, most of the international case study material draws a clear distinction between mentoring and coaching. For example, Clutterbuck (2014) notes that coaching is concerned with a task, where the coach sets the agenda, and the coaching relationship typically addresses a short-term need or problem. In contrast, mentoring is concerned with performance and development beyond immediate tasks, and the agenda is set by the learner or 'mentee' (the person being mentored), typically as part of a longer-term relationship (Clutterbuck 2014, 11). Moreover, the

timescale for mentoring and coaching relationships may also differ. For example, coaching is typically more short-term and specific, whereas a mentoring relationship can be more long-term and general, with the agenda for the mentoring relationship sometimes changing over time.

14. **The notion that mentoring involves the transfer of knowledge and experience from a longer-serving member of staff to a more junior member is also well-established.** Coaching focuses on enhancing knowledge or a specific skill, while mentoring is focused on the transfer of experience from a mature individual to a junior employee, in order to develop and grow (Parsloe and Wray 2000). The use of mentoring as a means of transferring knowledge or expertise from the experienced to the less-experienced employee was also referenced in the work of Kram (1985), who describes mentoring as representing a developmental relationship between older and younger managers that promotes individual development through career stages. On the other hand, coaching is frequently based on a relationship between a professionally qualified external coach and a 'coachee' (the person being coached) and is aimed at addressing a specific performance or competency gap or solving a specific performance or competency gap problem. Coaching may also use a leadership diagnostic instrument, for example, to provide 360 degree feedback, to support the coaching discussion. Beyond formal coaching relationships with a professional coach, there are also references in the literature to the role of the line manager as coach. For example, Wheeler undertook an analysis of a UK private sector leisure company to investigate this concept and concluded that the adoption of coaching behaviors by line managers, in a customer-facing setting, can help contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. A variety of coaching behaviors is particularly useful on the customer service front-line. These include information provision, transferal of ownership over responsibilities and role modeling, as well as the backbone activity of dialoguing (Wheeler 2011, 14). By contrast, the evidence from this review of international practice reflects a consensus that mentoring relationships should take place outside the formal reporting relationship, and indeed that mentoring cannot work well if undertaken on a 'boss-employee' basis. Mentors are typically selected from different departments, or sometimes from different organizations, to ensure that reporting lines and authority-based relationships do not interfere with the process.

2.3   A literature review of mentoring in the public administration

The role of mentoring in the public sector

15. **Until relatively recently, much of the case study material on mentoring focused on experience in the private sector**. For example, Bozeman & Feeney (2011, p.6) note that today, despite the interest among government agencies in mentoring, a scan of seven major journals in public administration and public management found that only five articoles on mentoring focused on the public sector setting were published between 1995 and 2005.[22] They note that "by contrast,

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[22] Bozeman & Feeney (2011) searched for the keywords "mentor" and "mentoring" in the following journals: Public Administration Review (3 articles), Administration and Society (0), American Review of Public Administration (2 articles), Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (0), Public Administration (0), Review of Public Personnel Administration (0), Public Performance & Management Review (0).

more than 150 mentoring articles were published in management and psychology journals during this same period, with very few focusing even in part on public sector employees". From a country perspective, much of the early experience with mentoring in organizations was based in the United States. For example, Ehrich & Hansford (2008, p.4) point out that private sector organizations in the United States were the first type of organizations to introduce mentoring programs due to their potential to develop skills and competencies in workers and their potential to bring about affirmative action for target groups.

16. **Many of the early public sector mentoring programs were implemented for specific professional groups in the public sector**. There are many examples and case studies cited in the literature related to mentoring for teachers (see Fowler & Muckert 2004), public sector accountants (see Siegel et al 2009) and nurses (Riley, M. & Fearing, A. 2009). These were among the first professional groups within the public sector to benefit from the mentoring relationship. For these professional groups, mentoring programs were frequently designed more like apprenticeship programs, with younger or newly recruited professionals developing their professional knowledge and skills through being matched with the more experienced mentor, sometimes 'shadowing' the mentor in the workplace, and usually as part of a formalized and structured continuing professional development (CPD) program.

17. **More recently, the range of professional groups being included in mentoring programs has increased, which also reflects the increasing use of specialists within the public service**. The UK has mentoring programs for specific professions within the civil service. For example, the Government Communications Service (GCS) manages a mentoring scheme for communication professionals. They can match up to 500 mentors and mentees in a single year on a program that also counts for credits for continuing professional development.[23] There are several drivers for this increased interest in the potential of mentoring in the public sector. One such driver is the problem of an aging workforce in the public administration. The civil and public service in many OECD countries is facing a 'retirement cliff', with the demographic profile of the workforce indicating the imminent loss of substantial numbers of experienced employees over a short period of time. Mentoring programs provide an opportunity to pass on experience, knowledge and skills from workers who may soon leave the public sector to newly recruited and less experienced workers. Moreover, the new generations of workforce, such as millennials and Gen Z employees, have expectations of career variety rather than a career for life. There is, therefore, a need for the public sector to attract and retain talent, and to 'fast-track' high potential recruits. Mentoring is being used to help address this recruitment and retention challenge in the public sector. There are examples, such as in the United Kingdom, where mentoring is incorporated within a fast-track program for new graduates.[24] Also, Ehrich & Hansford (2008, p.6) note that in Australia, there is mentoring for new court staff, for graduate recruits and mentoring programs to induct and retain high potential staff.

18. **Another driver of mentoring programs in the public sector is the increased interest in developing management and leadership skills**. In the UK, the Civil Service Senior Leadership Scheme is a

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[23] See https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/academy/mentoring.
[24] See https://www.faststream.gov.uk/finance/index.htmlare.

cross-government development scheme for high-potential mid-level officials who have the potential to progress to the most senior roles in the civil service. It incorporates several elements, including coaching, leadership development, action learning, and also mentoring. Each group is mentored by a senior sponsor who supports and champions participants throughout the scheme.[25]

19. **Mentoring can also help achieve government policies pertaining to improving diversity in the public sector workforce, particularly in leadership positions.** This is partly related to the impact of globalization and migration on the composition of the public sector workforce. The public service in every developed country must cater to an increasingly diverse set of citizens and clients. This means that the public sector workforce itself must not only understand the needs of a diversified society, but also reflect that society: diversity-representative bureaucracy is the theory that bureaucrats will perceive the world through the lens of their demographic origins and will make policy decisions on behalf of those groups (Bozeman & Feeney 2011, p. 21). These minority groups within the workforce must be developed and supported, and mentoring is increasingly being used in the public sector as part of affirmative action programs to support minority groups. For example, in Australia several government offices in different states have prepared guidelines on the establishment of mentoring programs for employees from ethnic minority backgrounds, such as aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people, and employees with disabilities (Ehrich & Hansford 2008, p. 6). Additionally, mentoring is being used to support women in the public sector workplace, and to achieve more equal representation of women in senior leadership positions and in decision-making structures.

Benefits and challenges of mentoring in the public sector

20. **The benefits of mentoring to the mentee depend on the objectives of the program**. Mentoring programs may be established to develop specific skills identified by the mentee. The range of skills or competencies sought by mentees may vary from gaining a better understanding of the political environment, to developing networks, developing greater expertise in a particular professional domain, or help with solving a particular problem or challenge. Ehrich & Hansford (2008) notes that based on their research the main benefit to mentees and mentors was the development of job-related and personal skills, and that it created a greater sense of motivation among mentees. In some cases, also as discussed earlier, the objective of the mentoring program may be to achieve greater representation by certain groups at senior levels in the organization, or to use mentoring to assist with the onboarding of new employees.

21. **While it is the benefits to the individual mentee that are mainly highlighted in the literature, it is also important to consider mentoring from the organizational perspective**. This is important, for example, to help promote the benefits of participating in mentoring programs to public service organizations (see Box 1). At an organizational level, public sector organizations benefit from the development of high potential staff as a means of replacing senior leaders and benefit from the retention and development of new staff. Mentoring programs can also help organizations with

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[25] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-talent-management/civil-service-talent-management#senior-leaders-scheme-sls.

the promotion and development of equal opportunities in the workplace, including achieving appropriate representation of minority groups. Another benefit, as presented in the case studies below, is that the development of mentors and mentoring skills supports management development in the organization. Mentoring can also be used as a way of helping to communicate organizational values to a new generation of employees and introducing new employees to the organizational culture. This can be particularly relevant in the public service where the development of a public service ethos is important. As noted by Bhatta & Washington (2003, p. 213), "mentoring appears tied to the transfer of the company culture, including between generations of managers […] mentoring could provide a means to disseminate shared public service values and standards across what might otherwise be relatively autonomous organizations with their own cultures and value sets".

Box 1. Uses of mentoring in the US federal government

In the United States, mentoring has long been established as a mainstream approach to employee development at the federal government level. This may be due, at least in part, to the legislative mandate for establishing and delivering mentoring programs in government agencies. The Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 requires agencies, in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to provide training to managers on mentoring employees. The OPM provides detailed guidelines on mentoring programs and acts as a central source of advice and support for such programs in federal government agencies.

The National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) organises a program called the HQ Modern Mentoring Program. It represents an interesting variation insofar as it lies somewhere between a formal and informal mentoring program. NASA maintains a list of mentors, with expertise in a variety of areas. Mentees can then contact the organizers with a request for mentoring in a particular topic, or related to a specific challenge, and NASA will then connect the mentee with a suitable mentor. NASA emphasises that this approach has advantages over formal structured mentoring programs because the latter require formal applications and are limited to a specific time period with a specific mentor. In the NASA model the mentoring relationship may last for a limited time or be of longer duration, depending on the requirement, and potentially a mentee may be connected to a number of different mentors, either at the same time or over the period of their career. In this way NASA describes their model as 'situational or anytime mentoring' that encourages flexible lifelong learning in their organization.

The US Department of Defense (DoD) also has a range of mentoring programs throughout the department. For example, the Defense Logistics Agency has mentoring programs delivered at three levels: for early career participants, for leader roles, and for advanced leaders. The first two programs are by voluntary application, and the advanced leadership program requires a competitive selection process. The DoD programs emphasize concepts such as 'situational mentoring' -using the mentoring relationship over a short period to help tackle a particular challenge- and 'shadowing', where the mentor attends at the workplace of the mentor and observes the mentor in different work situations e.g., at meetings. Reflecting the range of resources that can be made available to support mentoring, the DoD also lists reading clubs, mentoring interviews with expert mentors, and a mentoring newsletter among the activities organized as part

of these programs. (https://www.dla.mil/LandandMaritime/People-and-Culture/Mentoring-Programs/)

22. **There are also potential challenges and risks associated with mentoring programs**. Bozeman & Feeney note that employees who volunteer for mentoring are already highly motivated and ambitious (see Box 2). In this sense, they may not always be the employees that need mentoring the most. Therefore, there is a risk of 'self-selection', where those most likely to succeed anyway also get the benefits of the mentoring intervention (Bozeman & Feeney 2011, 403). As such, the correct matching of mentors and mentees is important. The mentor must have the skills or knowledge in the areas required by the mentee. It is important that mentors have the skills to undertake the mentoring assignment. In this context the most frequently cited attributes of a good mentor are self-awareness, listening skills, emotional awareness, knowledge, or experience in the relevant field and being motivational, challenging, and respectful. While some of these skills can be further developed or enhanced by a mentoring training program, the foundations and personal attributes must already be in place. This means that mentors must be selected carefully. The problem of cultural replication is also referred to in the literature. This relates to the risk that mentoring can be used to reproduce the norms and values of an organization even where these are dysfunctional and promote compliance rather than creativity and diversity (see for example, Kent et al 2013).

Box 2. Self-selection in mentoring programs in New Zealand's public service

Bhatta & Washington (2003, p. 214) report a survey of the use of mentoring within the New Zealand public service. New Zealand was an early adopter of mentoring and at the time of this survey in 2000, 18% of public servants reported that they had a mentor, with managers more likely to have a mentor than non-managers. Women were also more likely than men to have a mentor. In the New Zealand case, there was some resistance to the concept of formal mentoring, but also a view that in formal mentoring relationships the mentor should come from outside the organization.

The case studies presented later emphasize the value of cross-organizational mentoring relationships. The New Zealand case also found that those participating in mentoring programs as mentees were more likely to be ambitious, were more likely to have a positive view of their organization and their boss and were more likely than the average staff member to avail of training and development opportunities (Bhatta & Washington 2003, p. 221). This may be relevant insofar as it suggests that mentoring programs may be more likely to attract the enthusiastic, ambitious, and committed staff member rather than those employees who may have more significant skills or competency gaps and who may benefit most from participation in mentoring.

23. **Ethical issues can also arise in mentoring relationships**. As pointed out by Dave (2016), women are frequently the target audience for mentoring relationships but there is a scarcity of senior female mentors in many organizations. Therefore cross-gender mentoring relationships are necessary, but issues relating to boundaries, perceptions of the mentoring relationship, and inappropriate behaviors can arise, and the potential for these issues can also create anxiety for both mentor and mentee. Other potential ethical issues can relate to abuse of power, since there is typically a power imbalance in mentoring relationships, breaches of confidentiality, or inappropriate shows of support for a mentee by a mentor, for example, in promotion competitions.

Types of mentoring

24. **The international literature refers to one-to-one 'in person' mentoring as the standard approach adopted in mentoring programs.** For example, Marciniak (2018, p. 251) notes that mentoring is presented as a partner relation between the master and the student, oriented at discovering and developing the student's potential. It is based on inspiration, stimulation, and leadership. However, there are some variations in this approach. For example, mentoring programs can be mediated by technology or not designed on a simple one-to-one person basis.

25. **The topic of technology-mediated mentoring has become more relevant recently in the context of the restriction on 'in person' contacts during the pandemic**. Harris et al (2015) describe a case study of a technology-mediated mentoring program in a provincial government ministry in British Columbia, Canada. The program was intended to foster collaboration and teamwork across different divisions in the ministry. The program deployed collaborative technology that already existed within the organization. A program support team was put in place and supervisors were invited to nominate mentors based on their knowledge and experience and interest in being involved. Mentees were selected from an already established personal and leadership development stream of participants. The program support team organized 23 groups, each group consisting of between 6 and 23 mentees with 2 to 4 lead (full-time) mentors per group. The technologies available were teleconferencing, web conferencing and collaboration software. Although the program support team encouraged mentors to utilize all of these technologies, not all teams did so. Rather, they selected technologies based on their comfort level and the time they had to prepare (Harris et al 2015, p. 196). A key driver for this approach was the fact that the employees involved were scattered across geographically distant locations, and so this technology-mediated approach, using existing technologies, manage costs and facilitate group discussions by connecting employees that were geographically distant from the center. However, it was also noted that one of the main risks associated with this technology-mediated mentoring relationship was that some mentees and mentors did not actively engage in the groups discussions, and this negatively affected the overall learning in the group.

26. **Mentoring programs can also be structured under a group approach.** In the examples provided by Harris et al (2015, p. 196), this involved several mentors and several mentees on the same mentoring session and was considered to have advantages. For example, mentees considered that the group aspect had the advantage that they gained from having access to a wider variety of

mentor experience and expertise, while mentors also benefitted from having the possibility to share the workload, including the hosting of sessions. Less experienced mentors were able to learn from the more experienced. Harris et al also refer to some advantages of group mentoring: many-to-many group mentoring programs can address the challenge of having too few mentors to implement a one-to-one mentoring program. Second, multiple mentors in each group keep the mentoring on track if one mentor leaves and provides a "broader network of collaborative input into the mentees' personal and professional needs". Group mentoring is not as resource intensive as one to one mentoring, and group mentoring allows for more opportunities for a variety of interaction and feedback.

27. **Reverse mentoring has received more attention in the past few years.** This is an approach where the younger, newer employee become the mentor to the more experienced executive. There are several reasons for its increased popularity. Firstly, organizations are seeking to recruit and retain talented millennials, and reverse mentoring is seen as a means to have the new employee more connected to the organization, and to provide learning and transparency about the management of the organization. Secondly, as digital and social media skills become increasingly important to organizations, younger employees can transfer these skills to older employees. Thirdly, organizations use reverse mentoring to challenge culture and promote change by having the ideas of new employees challenge accepted ways of doing things, through the mentoring relationship. Reverse mentoring is a way of promoting collaboration and understanding between different generations of workers (see for example Gadomska-Lila 2020). To date most of the reverse mentoring reported in the literature refers to the private sector but no doubt this approach will also become more popular in the public sector as a new generation of employees are recruited.

Establishing a mentoring program

28. **The current review of literature and international experience points to several stages which are required when implementing a mentoring program.** These stages are necessary, albeit not sufficient conditions for effective mentoring programs. The most common stages include:

i. **Assessing the feasibility of introducing a mentoring program:** it is important to make sure that mentoring is a concept that will be useful, understood and acceptable as a development tool in the target sector or organization. A feasibility study should be carried out to assess the readiness for a mentoring program, which would include interviews with key managers, including HR and senior managers, as well as potential mentors and mentees. The feasibility study will also assess costs and benefits of mentoring, resourcing issues, and the most appropriate approach, whether this be one-to-one mentoring or technology-mediated group mentoring, or some other approach.

ii. **Gaining top management commitment:** most of the programs implemented internationally emphasize the importance of having commitment from the top management. As noted later in the discussion of training, in some cases a special introductory strategic workshop is organized for top management so that they are aware of the program, and its purpose, but also to get their

support. It is necessary that top management in the organization or sector are engaged at an early stage to get their views on mentoring and its potential benefits.

iii. **Put the necessary infrastructure in place:** this will include appointing a manager/coordinator to manage the mentoring program. The role of this person is to manage and oversee the program; undertake the matching process; deal with any issues or problems that arise, including ethical issues; manage the financial aspects; maintain the administrative records, including recording the frequency of mentor meetings; and carry out mid-program and end-program evaluations. In addition, many organizations will use basic technology, such as a database to maintain the mentoring records, and to support the matching process. Depending on the size of the mentoring program, more than one full-time executive may be needed.

iv. **Developing documentation and guidelines:** documentation and other resources must be provided to the mentor and mentee. This should include information on the mentoring process, the role of mentors and mentees, ethical guidelines, and practical tips on how to develop a successful mentoring relationship.

v. **Developing a mentoring agreement:** this is a formal agreement that would be signed by the mentor and mentee and sets out the ethical and other guidelines, the objectives of the mentoring process, the duration of the mentoring relationship, expectations about the number of meetings that should be held, and typically a template for an action plan that would be completed by the mentee.

vi. **Developing a training module:** this is required to introduce the new mentors and mentees to the program and enable them to leverage it to its full potential. This is discussed in more detail below.

vii. **Evaluating the program:** all the case studies described later incorporate an evaluation process. This typically is undertaken both mid-program, which is mainly to assess any ongoing issues that may have arisen, and at the end of the program. It is necessary to have the organizer of the program available throughout the program so that any challenges or difficulties that arise can be addressed in a timely manner. At the end of the program and based on the experience reported in the case studies, a combination of surveys and interviews with both mentors and mentees are used to evaluate the success of the program. It is important to assess the program against the original objectives. This may involve a further evaluation, for example, a year after completion, to assess if new skills are being applied.

Training arrangements for mentors and mentees

29. **The design of a training program for mentors and mentees must be aligned with the objectives of the mentoring program.** As such, before training can be designed, the objectives of the mentoring process must be established and agreed with the various stakeholders. Subsequently, the training would serve to introduce the participants to these objectives. As described in some of the case studies later in this chapter, there are generally three levels at which mentoring training is offered:

i. **Strategy Workshops:** it is generally considered essential that there is support for mentoring at the senior management level. Many organizations offer a strategy workshop for senior managers. For example, the Engineers Ireland case described later in this chapter uses this workshop as a way of introducing the concept and purpose of mentoring to the top team and gaining their support and buy-in for the mentoring program. The Strategy Workshop helps senior managers to understand the strategic advantages of mentoring in the workplace, link mentoring to strategy and strategy implementation, understand how the program will work, and what are the objectives. This can also be an important opportunity to encourage the senior managers to nominate mentors, since getting sufficient mentors of high quality in a program is one of the challenges in establishing a successful program. This workshop will be relatively short, typically of a half-day duration.

ii. **Training for Mentors**: once mentors have been identified, they must receive some training. Typical content for such a program will include the theory of mentoring, mentoring styles, the role of the mentor, the phases of mentoring, the ethical guidelines, listening skills, and dealing with problems and challenges in the mentoring process. Based on a review of different mentoring training programs, common themes for such a program include:
- Introduction to formal mentoring
- Mentoring as a strategic fit
- Differences between mentoring and other interventions, such as coaching and counseling
- Mentoring and Mentoring Styles
- Adult Learning Theory and Adult Learning Styles
- Core skills of an effective Mentor including Building Rapport, Active Listening and Powerful Questions
- How to mentor in a virtual space
- Phases in the mentoring relationship
- Reviewing the mentoring relationship
- Interactive real play scenarios
- Cross-cultural mentoring
- Specifics of the mentoring program in the organization.

Typically, the program for mentors will be of 1 or 2 days duration and be conducted by an expert in mentoring. In the case studies described later, external professional mentoring experts are used to provide this training.

iii. **Mentee Training:** training for mentees recruited into a program is typically incorporated as part of the introduction to the mentoring program. Therefore, it will set out the objectives of the program, the roles and responsibilities of the mentee, the skills needed to be a good mentee (including asking good questions, active listening, emotional intelligence, understanding your objectives, record-keeping, action-planning), how to deal with issues that may arise in the mentoring process, ethical guidelines, resources available, and implementation of actions. This training is typical of 1 or 2 days duration.

30. **Training can be delivered in different formats, but requires experienced trainers and in-person components**. The training should typically be conducted by an expert who has experience as a mentor/coach, and specialist expertise in mentoring. Moreover, all the training may be either online or in-person, but in the case studies researched for this review the organizers emphasized the advantages of having at least some of the training in-person. In addition to formal training events for mentors and mentees, informal events, and methods such as workshops, conferences, seminars, newsletters, and websites can be organized to publicize the benefits of mentoring to a wider audience, to maintain interest in the mentoring program, and to encourage mentors and mentees to share attendance together at learning and development events.

2.4 Case studies of mentoring in public sector settings

31. **Each of the case studies refers to mentoring programs attended by public servants but organized by third-party institutions**. One of the key features of successful mentoring programs is that they are based on voluntary participation, including being voluntary on the part of mentors, mentees, and participating organizations. For this reason, including in the case studies described below, 'soft' policy levers are deployed by central government agencies to encourage participation as opposed to compulsory or mandatory approaches. For example, in the case of Ireland the following policy statement is incorporated in the People Strategy 2017-2020, developed by the central Civil Service HR Division (CSHRD): "We must continue to foster a culture which encourages initiative and innovation enabled by coaching and mentoring within a framework of collaboration and accountability". The People Strategy goes on to note that challenges remain with ensuring gender balance at the most senior levels and the wider diversity agenda.

32. **These are examples of the 'soft' policy levers used by government to encourage mentoring as a means to achieve certain policy objectives, for example in the areas of diversity and equality**. For instance, as noted earlier, the Australian Government has also encouraged the use of mentoring to support the integration of minority groups in the civil service. However, and because voluntary participation is such a critical element of mentoring, in none of the case studies presented are public sector organizations or public servants required to participate. The decision to participate is one made by the local HR Department within the ministry, and where participation is considered to be a useful method of achieving an overall policy objective.

33. **In all of the case studies referred to below the organization managing the mentoring program works on the basis of a membership model**. In other words, they are membership organizations where participating bodies pay an annual membership fee to avail of a wide range of activities including access to library and journals, networks and network events, seminars and conferences. Mentoring is one of the activities included in the overall membership fee. Annual membership fees vary depending on jurisdiction, but in Ireland depending on the level of membership (most such bodies have different levels of membership) fees could vary between Euro 1,000 and Euro 5,000 per annum (this can also depend on the size of the organization taking out membership). The only additional fees that may accrue would relate to supporting training, such as mentoring training for managers, mentors and mentees. These would be charged at the standard daily rate for training.

34. **The three case studies below were selected because all of them relate to mentoring programs that include civil servants and involve an external institution that organizes the mentoring program**. This is also potentially the type of role proposed for INA in relation to a mentoring program for the public administration in Romania. The case studies also include some similarities and differences in approach, and thus offer some potential learning for Romania. The first case study, the "Network Mentoring Program", represents an international mentoring initiative primarily addressed at promoting the role of women in the workplace. The program is aimed at both public and private sector organizations. The research is based on the implementation of the program in Ireland and an interview both with a mentor (a former senior public servant) on the program, and the executives responsible for organizing the program. The second case study refers to a public sector mentoring program in the state of Victoria, Australia organized by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), a public sector training provider, and is based on an interview with the main organizing executive in IPAA. The third case is based on a mentoring program for the engineering profession, both in the public and private sectors, organized by the professional body "Engineers Ireland" and is based on an interview with the senior executive in the professional body for engineers who is responsible for organizing the program.

The Network Mentor Program (30% Club)

Structure and format of the program

35. **The Network Mentor (30% Club)[26] is an international initiative to increase female representation at board and senior management levels**. The slogan "30% Club" derives from the ambition to achieve 30% representation by women on management teams and boards. The initiative is based on a voluntary enrollment of public and private sector organizations which seek to associate with the drive to achieve greater diversity at top levels. This initiative is operating in thirteen different countries/regions and is delivered through local organizations (or "chapters"). There are several different types of activities associated with the initiative, including leadership programs, scholarships to business schools, and a Future Boards scheme. This case study is focused on the Ireland mentoring scheme, which is operated through the Irish Management Institute (IMI) and implemented in the Irish public and private sectors.[27]

36. **The key feature of the program is that it is cross- organizational and directed towards increasing the representation of women at senior organizational levels**. The mentor and mentee come from different organizations. The cross-organizational aspect gives both mentors and mentees a perspective of another industry or sector for their own learning. For example, a private sector mentor may be paired with a public sector mentee, thus developing the public servant's understanding of the private sector. One of the other advantages indicated by interviewees is that it can be challenging to be truly open with a mentor from the same organization, so having a

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[26] See https://30percentclub.org/about/who-we-are
[27] See https://30percentclub.org/about/chapters/ireland

mentor from a different organization helps the learning process. Mentees are women, but mentors may include men as well as women.

37. **The program is structured into three levels of participation.** The first is an early career scheme, in which mentees are staff, are in fast track programs or graduate-level positions, while mentors are male or female staff with at least five years of professional work experience. The second level is a mid-career scheme, in which mentees are high potential, mid-career executives who have a minimum of five years managerial experience, while mentors are male or female and must be senior executives with extensive managerial experience. The third level is a senior scheme, where mentees are senior leaders or managers, while mentors are male or female professionals with extensive leadership experience, e.g., CEOs and board members.

38. **Every participating organization is asked to nominate an equal cohort of mentors and mentees so that there is always a one-to-one balance.** Mentors and mentees are paired appropriately according to key criteria e.g., based on professional experience, managerial experience, geographic location, gender, ethnicity and interests. The system is designed to eliminate concerns over conflicts of interest and confidentiality issues. The scheme is cross-sector and matches will reflect that aspect. Each organization nominates two representatives - a senior leader sponsor who will help to promote the program internally at a senior level, and a key contact to select and recruit mentees and mentors. Previously the focus was on in-person mentoring, which has benefits but also limits wider geographical participation. During the pandemic, all mentoring was virtual, and it is anticipated that this will continue as it facilitates more participation options outside of the main cities.

39. **In the Irish scheme, which is managed by the Irish Management Institute, the typical profile of a mentee is a high-potential employee, aged between 28-38 with at least ten years of experience.** However, this is not rigidly applied, and it is up to organizations themselves to select and nominate mentees. They are expected to be pro-active, and they must "drive" the mentoring relationship, schedule the meetings and nominate the areas in which they wish to be mentored. Mentors are expected to be experienced senior managers, typically at the management team level or similar within the organization.

40. **Mentors and mentees meet once per month over the period of the 12-month program.** According to those interviewed as part of this research, the fact that mentors and mentees may come from quite different types of organizations (for example a public sector employee could be matched with a private sector mentee) is not a problem, but rather is considered as an advantage. The focus of the mentoring relationship is not on "hard" technical knowledge or skills, but rather on soft skills such as management, networking, self-management, and career management. The mentoring discussions must be completely confidential between mentor and mentee, and the mentor is not allowed to have any contact with the mentee's organization. There are approximately 150 mentoring pairs on the annual program. The program starts with a launch event for participating organizations, mentors, and mentees. At the end there is a closing event when certificates are awarded.

41. **Participants in the program underline the difference between a mentoring and coaching relationship.** According to the mentor interviewed, who is also a qualified professional coach and former senior public servant, coaching typically challenges and poses questions designed to help the coachee to solve a particular problem. In the mentoring relationship it is much more of a two-way dialogue where the mentee takes the initiative and directs the discussion.

42. **The attraction of the program for this mentor was the opportunity to give something back by way of sharing her expertise and experience, and to further develop her own leadership skills.** The mentoring relationship was active, and discussions focused on soft skills areas such as management, and managing the political environment in the organization. The mentee organized all the meetings and these typically happened at 6-week intervals. The organizers of the program checked in with both mentor and mentee every few months, to assist with any issues or challenges that arose, but she indicated that there were no such challenges. A one-day workshop with a mentoring expert was organized at the start of the program to explain the mentoring process, set expectations, and help participants understand how to make the most of the program.

43. **Training is delivered separately for mentors and mentees**. Each training is of a one day duration. An external trainer is contracted to deliver this training. Similar messages are delivered to each group, but the emphasis is slightly different. Topics include skills for mentoring, phases of mentoring, ethical issues, dealing with problems, and agreeing on action plans.

Program delivery, implementation and evaluation

44. **There are two full-time executives assigned to manage the program, and these are supplemented by external experts who deliver training for the mentees and the mentors.** The organizers indicated that the program is very resource intensive as they deal with a lot of queries throughout the program. They also organize all the events and do the matching of mentors and mentees. Participating companies are charged a fee, but this fee also allows those companies to access the online library and other resources, and to attend other events.

45. **There is an evaluation just after the launch of the program, to check that everybody understands the process**. There is a mid-program evaluation to check to see if there are any problems. The organizers indicated that early feedback about any problems arising in the mentoring relationship is critical. There is also an end of program evaluation using a survey method. The evaluations are carried out by the two full-time executives assigned to the program. The evaluation process is directed at the mentors and the mentees. The questions in the evaluation relate both to the progress of the mentoring process, and the quality of the engagement. For example, questions are posed relating to the number of mentoring meetings that have been held, or are planned; the agreed objectives of the mentoring process; the actions agreed between the mentor and mentee to achieve the objectives; the planned activity for the next period; and the identification of any problems that have arisen so far.

46. **The interviewed practitioners pointed to a number of lessons learnt which could facilitate an effective mentoring program.** The organizers said that after six year of managing the program, the major lesson for them is that the program requires a lot of intensive work to make it

successful.Moreover, feedback must be encouraged so that problems are identified at an early stage. They also indicated the usefulness of a technology platform that will help with the matching process. Even though it is essential to meet people in person (or online) before mentors are matched with mentees, a technology tool could help with the matching process, for example by matching people with similar interests or skills.

Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) in Victoria

Structure and format of the program

47. **The mentoring program organized by the IPAA Victoria is cross-organizational, for the public sector, and aimed at employees who are recently recruited to the public sector**. The overall objective is to help the employees become familiar with the public sector, including different branches of it, and to develop new skills that will be useful in their careers. There are typically fifty mentees recruited to the program each year. As the challenge of recruiting mentors is greater, and demand is greater than supply, in some cases a mentor has two mentees that are mentored together. For this to work, the mentees must be looking for similar outcomes from the mentoring program. IPAA also tried a 1:3 mentor to mentee relationship, but this was found not to work so well because the burden on the mentor of maintaining three simultaneous mentoring relationships was simply too great.

48. **An invitation to participate is issued by the IPAA to all members and member organizations, both inviting participation by mentors and mentees**. The program is delivered on an annual basis and the recruitment process happens in the first three months of the year. Those who wish to be mentored ("mentees") apply through a formal application process. The application form covers such issues as their personal details, background and experience to date, their areas of interest for mentoring, and some of their interests and hobbies. Mentors must also apply, setting out the reasons for their interest in mentoring, and the skills and experience they have to offer. However, the application for mentors is shorter. The data provided allows the executives in IPAA to undertake the matching process. Some of the relevant factors considered in matching are where there is a match between skills/knowledge required by a mentee and that offered by a mentor, and shared interests can also help. It is a criterion that mentees are matched with mentors from a different public service organization to avoid any conflicts of interest or issues related to internal reporting relationships.

49. **The program is aimed at staff who are relatively new to the public sector, i.e., in their first 5 years**. The issues that the mentees may wish to address through the program can vary greatly, but for example can relate to developing knowledge of the public sector, knowledge of a particular area such as procurement, or developing a 5-year career plan. Mentors are typically mid-level executives from the public sector, as due to the time commitment involved it is difficult to attract senior managers as mentors.

50. **The program is marketed to mentors, and their organizations, as a way of building organizational capacity and collaboration**. Mentors may often have other connections with IPAA,

either through contributing to events or participating in other networks. Fees are not typically paid to mentors as this can conflict with the voluntary nature of participation. However, for many mentors the incentive is the opportunity to pass on knowledge and experience. In general, the mentoring programs, and the mentoring process, is kept completely separate from the promotion process, as it is considered that where any deliberate attempts to link career advancement to mentoring enters into the discussion it can create complications. For example, in a public sector environment it could be considered unfair and inequitable that somebody with the opportunity to attend a mentoring program should advance more quickly than someone who did not have that opportunity.

51. **The program begins with a joint workshop for mentors and mentees led by an external expert in mentoring**. The workshop is organized by the IPAA program coordinator in terms of logistics, venue, communications with participants and documentation. The workshop is designed and delivered by the external expert that is contracted by IPAA. External experts, because they are paid a fee, would be procured through normal public service procurement processes, but for example through such a process the same expert could be contracted to deliver programs for a number of years. Before this workshop, mentees must set out their goals for the program. The purpose of the workshop is to explain the mentoring process, the roles of mentees and mentors, to set expectations, and to motivate participants.

52. **An agreement is drawn up for each mentoring match, setting out the agreement between the mentor and mentee and shared goals**. This is used throughout the process to track progress. The template for such an agreement is provided by IPAA, but it is the responsibility of the mentor and the mentee to make the agreement, and to sign the agreement. This is then provided to IPAA who can subsequently use the agreement as the baseline for assessing progress in the mentoring relationship.

53. **The standard approach is that the mentor and mentee are expected to meet for at least one hour each month between April and December**. They also can connect via email and other means. In the pre-pandemic situation, the early meetings were typically located in a coffee shop or similar, and then further meetings may take place at offices or at IPAA events, as participants are encouraged to attend such events together. In the context of the pandemic, the program was moved fully online. For the future it is expected that a hybrid model will be developed, as IPAA regards the person-to person meetings as being an important aspect of the mentoring process. As noted earlier, mentoring is a voluntary process and this means that exit from the mentoring process is also voluntary. In this, and other case studies examined, early exit from the mentoring program either by a mentor or a mentee is on a "no fault" basis. In other words, there is no compulsion to continue and no blame attached. Indeed, in most mentoring programs there will be some "normal" exits during the year, due to staff turnover.

54. **The program ends with a 'graduation' celebration at year end**. The participants can continue the mentoring relationship afterwards, but this is outside the formal mentoring program. However, it is important to note that it is participation in the formal mentoring program that facilitates any such ongoing mentoring relationship afterwards. It is through the formal mentoring process that mentors and mentees come to understand how mentoring works, and what it is for (and not for).

It is through the formal program that they develop a structured relationship, and get guidance from the central coordinator, get training, and get feedback on how to improve their mentoring skills. Once all of these core elements are in place, once the formal program has ended the mentor and mentee are equipped to continue the relationship in a productive way, if they decide to do so.

Program delivery, implementation and evaluation

55. **There is a mid-point evaluation/review when the IPAA checks in with each group of participants, and checks progress against the initial agreement**. This is also a time when any difficulties or challenges can be addressed, although the IPAA executives are available throughout the process to deal with issues or queries. There is also a formal evaluation at end-year, using a survey and a sample of follow-up interviews. As with the mid-term evaluation, the questions relate to process and quality, including the number of mentoring engagements, the views of the mentor and mentee on whether the initial objectives set out in the mentoring agreement have been achieved, any other un-anticipated benefits or problems, and any views on how the mentoring process could be improved for the future. The IPAA have also used a process called "Photovoice" to assist with review and evaluation. In this process, the mentee is asked to take photos of, and document, their mentoring experience, and this has worked well.

56. **From a resourcing perspective, there are three major areas of cost**. The first relates to the cost of the initial workshop, and the cost of the external mentoring expert and venue costs. Secondly, the external mentoring expert is retained on a contract basis throughout the program to provide advice, and to help with troubleshooting problems. Finally, there is one full-time mid-level executive within IPAA who organizes and manages the program. The key skills required of the internal executive is understanding of mentoring, an interest in learning and development, organization and co-ordination skills, ability to undertake matching, skills in data collection and evaluation, and the ability to manage problems if they arise.

57. **One of the key learnings from the program to date referred to by the organizers is that mentoring must be distinguished from coaching.** Whereas coaching may be more directed at helping to achieve organizational goals, for mentoring the mentee must develop their own goals. One- to- one or one- to- two mentoring works best with at least some in-person meetings. All participants must understand the objectives and expectations from the outset. One of the key challenges is to keep all participants engaged throughout the process, particularly after the mid-point when the initial enthusiasm can decline. The IPAA helps to do this, for example through a regular newsletter and other communications to all participants. A few participants may leave during the year, for example due to turnover.

Engineers Ireland (EI)

Structure and format of the program

58. **Engineers Ireland, as the professional body for engineers in Ireland, has been granting the CPD (continuing professional development) Accredited Employers Standard since 1999.** The

Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer standard, which has been adopted by over 165 organizations to date, improves the competence levels of engineers in the public and private sectors and delivers tangible benefits to organizations.[28] In essence, the Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer standard provides a framework for employers to make better choices regarding learning and development initiatives in their organizations. It is a standard that Engineers Ireland uses to encourage good practice in CPD and to encourage senior leaders to be more strategic about learning and development.

59. **To reach this standard, organizations must make submissions to EI under seven headings**. There are three different levels within the standard from primary to advanced, and companies can progress between levels. One of these criteria is on mentoring. To help organizations prepare to reach the standard on mentoring, EI initiated the mentoring program. EI provides the support and advice on mentoring, while the organization itself initiates and delivers the mentoring program. The support and advice are provided in the form of strategic training workshop for the senior management team, and also for mentors and mentees (see below). Moreover, the EI coordinator is available to help address any problems that may arise and undertakes evaluation of the mentoring process. Because in this case both mentors and mentees come from the same organization, the EI coordinator would work closely with the HR Department in the organization to achieve a good match. The key fundamental criterion is that mentor and mentee cannot be part of the same team, department, or in a reporting or authority relationship.

60. **EI starts by providing a half-day strategy workshop for the leadership team in the organization.** They must support the initiative to ensure that it is sustainable and becomes embedded in the culture. Normally an organization starts with a small group, for example a cohort of new graduate employees, or with a pilot program. EI provides training for mentors. For example, mentors must understand that all the work must be done by the mentees, including organizing meetings and developing action plans. EI provides advice on how to market the program within the organization and how to get mentors and mentees to participate. It is important that participation in the program is a completely voluntary process and that the mentoring and mentee relationship is outside the formal reporting relationship within the organization.

61. **The mentoring process typically can involve the mentor helping a mentee to think through a challenge they are facing, e.g., an upcoming negotiation.** Typically, a mentoring meeting lasts 2.5 hours. Mentoring meetings are held every four to six weeks. A graduate mentoring program would typically last for 12 to 24 months. Regarding the agenda for the session, this is completely decided by the mentees- they decide the area of competence, or the nature of the challenge, that they want to develop or resolve. The mentoring programs are not considered to work well when the organization tries to define the agenda for mentoring. The guidance is provided by Engineers Ireland and indicates to participants that the purpose of mentoring should not be about how to get promoted. The main criteria for matching mentors and mentees are that the mentor is not a line manager, and not part of the same team or unit. In a typical mentoring relationship, the mentor would be two grades higher than the mentee and from a different part of the organization.

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[28] See https://www.engineersireland.ie/Businesses/Training-development/CPD-accredited-employer-standard

62. **Engineers Ireland offer a one-day strategy workshop for the senior management team, as well as one-day training for mentees and one-day training for mentors.** These are delivered by external experts. The strategy workshop is aimed at ensuring "buy-in" from the management team and positioning mentoring within an overall strategic context, including how it can contribute to achieving corporate goals and objectives. The overall mentoring process is also introduced, and the support of senior management for the program is emphasized. The training for mentors and mentees outlines the role of mentor and mentee, distinguished mentoring from other developmental approaches such as coaching and provides information on how to ensure a good outcome from the mentoring process. Mentors and mentees are advised on how to handle challenges, how to structure a mentoring session and how to agree goals and objectives. The key skills of mentoring are introduced, such as active listening, emotional intelligence and providing feedback. Mentors and mentees are given the opportunities to role play a typical mentoring session.

Program delivery, implementation and evaluation

63. **Engineers Ireland offer the participating organizations a comprehensive evaluation service, either in the middle of the program or at the end of program, or both**. In Engineers Ireland there is one fulltime executive managing the process and they contract external experts to provide the training. Engineers Ireland is a membership organization so organizations participating in the program will already have paid membership fees. However additional fees are charged for the mentoring service and the cost will depend on which services the organizations want, such as training, matching, or evaluation.

64. **The organizers indicated that it is important that participation is voluntary for mentors and mentees, and that they are not from the same department or team**. Mentoring requires absolute confidentiality, and the mentor cannot speak to the line manager about any aspect of the mentoring process, or on behalf of the mentee. The HR Department in the organization should play a supporting role, but mentoring should not become part of the performance appraisal discussion. Mentors are usually people who are interested in people development and are attracted to mentoring for this reason and to pass on their experience and knowledge.

3 Experience with mentoring programs in the Romanian public administration

65. **The concept of mentoring in the Romanian public administration is anchored to the legal definition of "mentors", as set through the legal framework governing the training of civil servants.[29]** According to the said legislation, mentors are restricted to being experienced civil servants, which display specific competencies to a high degree. The main role of mentors is defined as providing on-the-job training to civil servants who are undergoing a certified traineeship ("stagiu practic") in their respective institution, in order to improve their competencies and, ultimately, job performance. Nevertheless, beyond these definitions, there are no binding methodological guidelines and/or operational procedures on how to operationalize the envisaged mentoring function at the level of the public administration, while at the level of institutions, this tends to be done on an ad hoc and case by case basis. For contractual staff, there are no equivalent or similar provisions pertaining to mentoring.

66. **Public administration institutions have limited experience with structured mentoring programs.** In the cases where mentoring was used as a development instrument for staff (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs[30] and the Young Professional Scheme for public managers), the intervention was temporary, project-based and initiated and sustained through broader EU-funded capacity building initiatives. However, such programs were dependent on external resources and were discontinued once the overarching project ended. Moreover, these interventions were never evaluated to assess if and to what degree they achieved their envisaged objectives and led to new ways of working or improved performance among the beneficiaries and their teams.

67. **The Young Professional Scheme (YPS)[31] established the first (and only) harmonized formal mentoring program at the level of the public administration.** The YPS was established in 2003 with the goal of advancing the reform of the public administration by recruiting and developing high-potential candidates into civil service positions.[32] The program was coordinated jointly by the NACS, the INA and the (then) Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs. Graduates of the program were introduced into the public administration as "public managers", which were classified as a category of execution-level specific civil servants. There were four successive YPS cycles from 2003 until 2009, financed through external sources (the program was subsequently suspended in the absence of funding). The YPS introduced and progressively expanded across the four cycles a mentoring component as part of the training phase of participants. The main role of mentors was to support the YPS participants in the last stage of the training phase, which consisted of a traineeship in the respective mentor's employing public institution. To this end,

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[29] Government Decision 1066/2008 on approving the rules for the professional training of civil servants.
[30] See https://www.mae.ro/node/12118.
[31] See Output 1, Deliverable 1.1 "Baseline diagnostic of the national framework for HRM and its institutionalization", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2019 and Output 5, Deliverable 5.1 "Analysis of the performance management system", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2020.
[32] National Agency for Civil Servants (2015) "Evaluation report on the implementation of YPS and Special Scholarship of the Government of Romania", available at: http://www.anfp.gov.ro/R/Doc/2015/Studii%20si%20prezentari/3_NEW%20final%20analiza%20yps%20si%20bsgr%202015.pdf

mentors facilitated the onboarding of YPS trainees in the institution, acted as focal points for them within the institution throughout the traineeship and designed each trainee's objectives (jointly with the trainee and validated by the INA YPS coordinator), provided continuous guidance to trainees to achieve them and subsequently evaluated them, through a formal procedure.

68. **The YPS put in place an operational, legal and methodological structure for a mentoring program.** The INA was formally designated as the coordinator of the mentoring component under the YPS and was responsible for selecting, managing and training the mentors.[33] A dedicated team, led by a project manager, was set up within the INA for the YPS, which included personnel specifically allocated to manage the mentoring program. Eligibility and selection criteria were formally defined for mentors,[34] complemented by methodological guidance on the required profile of mentors, which included a list of expected competencies and job responsibilities. These regulations stipulated that mentors be civil servants holding managerial positions, with no criminal record and no family ties to their respective trainee. Under the YPS, following the selection process, mentors underwent a specialized training program, which included classroom and distance learning and study visits to other EU member states. Mentors were also provided with tools (including templates for evaluation reports) and best practice guidelines to enable them to effectively discharge their responsibilities. Moreover, mentoring under the YPS was defined as a formal activity, which was to be conducted under a contractual arrangement between the INA and the mentor's employing institution. Mentors under the YPS were also entitled to remuneration for their services, which was paid through the project budget.[35]

69. **The functioning of the mentoring program under the YPS relied heavily on the pro-active involvement of the central coordination structure within the INA (and, implicitly, on the external resources which financed it).** Interviews with former coordinators and key stakeholders of the mentoring program under the YPS[36] highlighted the fact that, despite its established structure, the operationalization of the program required ad hoc interventions and continuous hands-on support on their part. For instance, potential mentors were identified through the coordinators' personal networks across the public administration. Moreover, misalignments were reported between the commitment of mentors to the program and the support they provided, on the one hand, and the expectations of trainees, on the other hand. When such issues escalated, they required interventions from the coordination team to reassign the trainee to another mentor and/or institution. The central role that the coordination team played in the delivery of the mentoring program was made clear once the YPS ended and external financing was no longer available to sustain the program and its support structures. Subsequently, the delivery of mentoring services was *de facto* left at the discretion of individual institutions. This led to a loss of institutional memory within the main institutions responsible for the program (i.e., INA and the NACS) on how to operationalize such a program, as reflected by the fact that little documentary evidence of an operational nature (e.g., procedures, guidelines, handbooks, job descriptions and

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[33] Once the YPS was finalized, the NACS became the coordinator for the mentoring program for public managers.

[34] GEO no. 92 of 24 June 2008 on the statute of the public manager civil servant.

[35] Once the project ended, funding for the mentors was to be done through the NACS budget, but payments were discontinued due to financial constraints.

[36] From the INA and the NACS, as well as a representative of the Public Managers' Union.

presentation materials) and few staff with relevant experience could still be found in either institution, while previously trained mentors can no longer be tracked across the public administration.

70. The INA's experience with the mentoring component under the YPS provides a number of insights on the appropriate scope and strategic direction of the envisaged mentoring program in the Romanian public administration.

I. First, as also highlighted in the analysis on international practices, a precondition for an effective mentoring program is the establishment of a dedicated and well-resourced structure (at the level of the institution responsible for managing and/or overseeing the mentoring program), which can manage the program operationally and can address, in real-time, any issues which could arise in the mentor-mentee relationships.

II. Second, careful consideration must be given to adequately defining the profile of mentors and mentees alike. Previous experience with mentoring under the YPS, as described by former coordinators of the program, suggests that mentors would need to be at an appropriately senior hierarchical level, which can strike a balance between possessing the right set and level of competencies, on the one side, and being able to commit time to fulfill their mentoring responsibilities on the other side. Moreover, interviewees suggested that mentoring would add the most value to less experienced staff (including lower-level managers, such as heads of bureau), while for high-ranking staff (such as directors general), mentoring would be unfeasible, given the organizational culture which does not encourage learning and development at higher hierarchical levels, coupled with the difficulty of obtaining the commitment of these categories of staff.

III. Third, the program must provide adequate clarity on the responsibilities and limits which mentors and mentees should observe. This should include, alongside a clear description of their roles, the type and degree of commitment expected from them in the program, such as the number of hours which they would need to invest and, for mentors, the number of mentees they could and should be responsible for. Such clarity would also help delineate mentoring from other administrative processes, such as onboarding done by human resources departments.

IV. Finally, the program must identify sustainable levers of motivation for mentors, to incentivize their buy-in of and effective engagement with this initiative. The mentoring program under the YPS revealed that using financial incentives as the primary source of motivation for mentors cannot ensure their engagement, nor can it be sustained in the long-term, in the absence of dedicated internal sources of financing. These considerations are also applicable to the training of mentors required to effectively deliver in their role, which would have to go beyond a one-off training course and certification and into regular learning opportunities and requirements.

4 Needs assessment for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration

71. **A critical step for the successful introduction of a mentoring program in the public administration is to establish the scope and objectives of the program, based on staff needs and organizational priorities.** As highlighted through the analysis of international best practices in mentoring, in order to generate interest and, ultimately, sustainable demand for the program among public administration institutions, the INA must provide clarity about the envisaged objectives of mentoring, why it is being introduced, its expected benefits and the target beneficiaries. The need for clarity has also been highlighted through the staff survey and interviews with key stakeholders, which revealed that the concept of mentoring tends to be conflated with the concept of coaching or onboarding. A needs assessment for mentoring would help address these issues by identifying where mentoring could and is expected to add value at the individual and organizational level. Moreover, the needs assessment would provide a solid basis for consultations with stakeholders on whether the proposed mentoring program is fit-for-purpose and takes into account all the relevant factors, thereby creating a sense of shared ownership over the program and more effective engagement with it.

4.1 Objectives of the proposed mentoring program

72. **The mentoring program must respond to the development needs of staff in the Romanian public administration.** All the present and upcoming institutional changes brought about by digitalization and proposed reforms in HRM[37] create a challenging dynamic for the public administration workforce in Romania. These changes impose new staffing requirements for public institutions, establishing new jobs or changing the attributions and responsibilities of existing jobs. In addition, public budget constraints and rigid HRM policies in the Romanian public sector create a limited list of options for institutions to adapt to these strategic challenges. Improving and/or adapting the competencies of staff through instruments such as professional re-specialization, increased mobility between public institutions and on-the-job development can address these issues. As such, institutions must establish how to provide development opportunities to their staff, which allows them to perform their expected work environment and job duties and responsibilities. Moreover, available workforce data shows that in the next fifteen years, a large proportion of civil servants, mostly at senior hierarchical levels, are due to retire.[38] In this context, public institutions must also establish how best to capitalize on the knowledge and the experience of their experienced staff and how to ensure their transfer to new staff. The proposed mentoring program in Romanian public administration should aim to respond to these questions. Indeed, as

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[37] See Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Developing a Unitary Human Resources Management System Within the Public Administration (P165191).
[38] See Output 1, Deliverable 1.1 "Baseline diagnostic of the national framework for HRM and its institutionalization", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2019.

shown in Figure 1 below, the majority of respondents to the survey on mentoring, across hierarchical levels, highlighted a need for a mentor.

Figure 1. Staff perceptions on their individual need for a mentor, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

At this point in your career and work, do you think a mentor would be useful to you?

Yes / Directors	72%
YES / Technical managers	68%
YES / Execution	77%

Yes or No - answer options
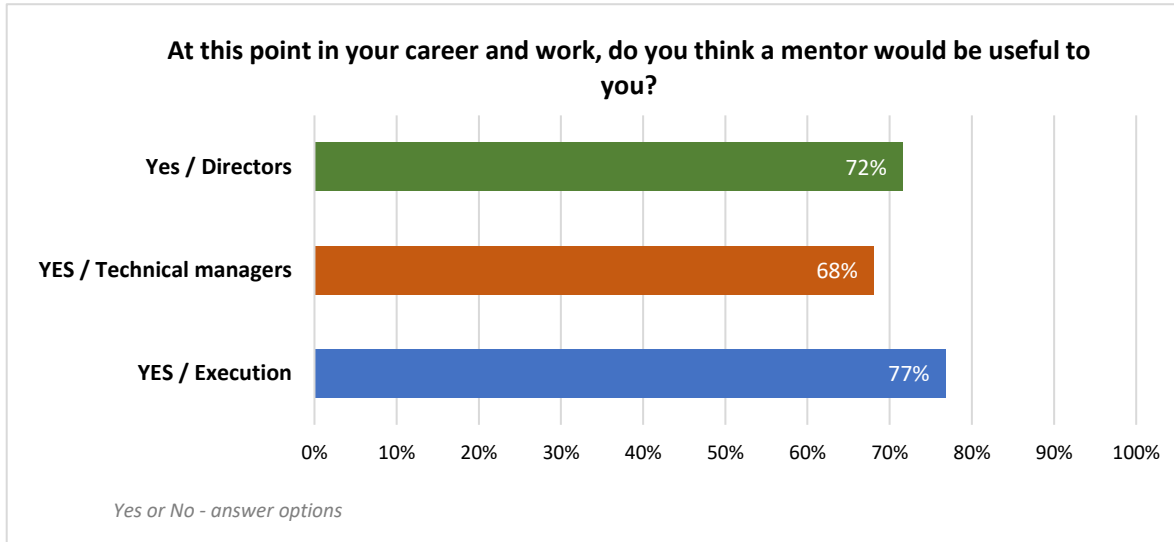
73. **The overarching objective of the mentoring program would be to reliably transfer knowledge and experience from experienced staff to staff who are facing a professional challenge that can be addressed through personal development.**[39] Other potential general objectives for the mentoring program, such as those focused on the induction of new staff (i.e., better understanding the organization and their role) and career counselling, were perceived by staff to be important, but not as important as those focused on developing staff competencies (see Figure 2 below). The focus of the mentoring program on developing staff competencies was also identified by the project partners as one of the most relevant objectives to respond to the needs of the public administration. Moreover, under this general objective, respondents to the survey found it important for mentoring to address both job-specific competencies for all staff, as well as management competencies for managers. Mentoring interventions in these areas would be applicable, albeit adapted on a case-by-case basis, for all levels of seniority in the suggested target groups, defined in section 4.2. Both areas of development respond to an explicit demand expressed by staff and can be expected to ensure the commitment of potential mentees, mentors and other institutional stakeholders with the program.[40] These development interventions were found by managers to be particularly necessary when staff would need to adapt to organizational changes or when staff would need to adapt to new ways of working and/or new roles and responsibilities (see Figure 3 below). In line with these findings, the specific objectives of the proposed mentoring program could be defined as such:

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[39] In this case, the term "personal development" should be interpreted as the development of those specific skills and attitudes that staff need to overcome a professional challenge.
[40] The final objectives of the program would be subject to further discussions with stakeholders and would be further detailed and/or amended in deliverable 2.2 under the current output.

I. Supporting staff (execution-level and managers alike) to adapt to new challenges in the workplace by developing the necessary specific competencies – which can include, *inter alia,* cases in which staff are required to take up new responsibilities, as a result of organizational changes or of moving into a new position or when staff receive assignments in new projects.

II. Supporting managers to adapt to and to lead organizational changes – which includes, *inter alia,* cases in which managers are required to reorganize their respective structures, to improve processes and services and/or to implement major changes, such as those driven by HRM reforms and digitalization.

Figure 2. Staff perceptions on the objectives for a mentoring program, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Which of the following should be the objectives of a mentoring program in the institution where you work?

Objective	Directors	Technical managers	Execution staff
Developing the capacity of the management staff to manage institutional changes/reorganizations	3.58	3.56	3.30
Facilitating professional connections and exchanging best practices between experts from the same or different fields	3.40	3.45	3.48
Faster integration into the organization and in the specifics of the position of the newly recruited staff (both those with experience and those without relevant work experience)	3.41	3.39	3.43
Development of specialized skills necessary for the staff of the institution for performance in that position	3.66	3.68	3.65
Developing management skills for senior staff in leadership roles	3.67	3.63	3.64
Counseling for overcoming professional barriers or constraints such as stress, interpersonal conflicts, work/personal life balance, returning from maternity/paternity leave, changes in the nature of work, etc.	3.34	3.28	3.34
Defining career goals and establishing an action plan to achieve these goals	3.41	3.25	3.48

A scale of 1- 4 was used, where 1 - not important, 2 – less important, 3 – important and 4- very important

■ Directors ■ Technical managers ■ Execution staff

Figure 3. Staff perceptions on situations in which mentoring would be required, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

For which of the following situations would you request the involvement of a mentor for the development of subordinated staff?

Situation	Directors	Technical managers
Adapting the staff to major changes in the way they work (e.g. digitization of some processes)	3.46	3.44
Prevention of professional plateau and career development of staff with substantial experience	3.19	3.33
Prevention and management of stress or difficult situations	3.19	3.25
Accelerated development of some competences or skills	3.24	3.27
In case of significant changes of duties and responsibilities (for example, as a result of the reorganization, entry into force of some normative acts, etc.)	3.28	3.33
For those who aspire to and/or become eligible for a management position	3.15	3.05
In case of new promotions/recruitments to a management position in the compartment	3.00	3.06
In case of new employments/ recruitments in the compartment, regardless of the level of the function	3.16	3.11

A scale of 1- 4 was used, where 1 means not important, 2 – less important, 3 – important and 4 very important

74. **The proposed mentoring program could support the development of a learning culture in the Romanian public administration.** Findings from the survey on mentoring and from interviews with stakeholders highlight that staff associate the need to ask for help or additional information from peers in the workplace with embarrassment. One of the respondents to the survey wrote: "In the public administration, there is the "fear of asking" in order not to be considered weak professionally. Staff are not willing to ask questions, to collaborate on certain topics/cases by asking questions either to peers, to superiors, or to colleagues from other structures". The mentoring program could provide a safe place for staff to discuss their areas for improvement and concerns about the workplace, without being flagged as potential underperformers. However, for this to effectively function in practice, training for mentors and mentees will need to place special emphasis on encouraging such a culture within the menoting relationship.

75. **The mentoring relationship should focus on developing competencies for the mentors and the mentee alike.** Such a focus would help both the mentor and the mentee to define a more specific development objective in relation to an expected long-term performance goal or professional aspirations. At the same time, the mentoring intervention must be aligned with the introduction of competency-based HRM in the public administration, which centers around developing competencies to improve staff performance. In this context, mentoring is indicated among the

recommended development methods for staff.[41] As such, the mentors' development curricula must include the ability to identify expected competencies for a mentee and to help define the mentee's individual development plan.

76. **The proposed mentoring program for the Romanian public administration would provide distinct, yet interconnected benefits to participating mentors, mentees and their organizations.** Through its envisaged objective of facilitating relevant on-the-job development of staff, the proposed mentoring program is expected to contribute to addressing a number of persistent HRM issues identified in the Romanian public administration,[42] both at the individual level (i.e., for mentors and mentees) and at the organizational level (i.e., for participating organizations). These expected benefits are in line with the insights drawn from the review of international experience on mentoring[43] and can be distinguished as follows:

- **Benefits for mentees –** the proposed mentoring program would provide mentees with an opportunity to develop their job-specific competencies, which would enable them to overcome professional challenges and to improve overall performance in the workplace. As such, participating in a mentoring program as a mentee should be closely linked with the mentee's individual development plan and on the basis of discussions with the mentee's line manager. Moreover, development opportunities, when appropriate in quality and relevance, were identified as important drivers of staff engagement in the Romanian public administration, but, at the same time, were found to be limited in availability and usefulness, due to budget constraints and a misalignment between training needs and offer.[44] Indeed, nearly half of the public administration staff surveyed in 2019 argued that their institution offers too little training (47% of staff) and that funding allocated for training is insufficient (47% of staff).[45] These issues can be expected to be exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, given the pressure on available public resources, thereby further emphasizing the added value of mentoring as a development tool.

- **Benefits for mentors –** the mentoring program would enable experienced staff who join as mentors to consolidate the professional competencies required at their level of seniority and type of job. For mentors who hold an execution-level position, such competencies would be "Communication" and "Teamwork", while mentors who hold a management-level position would consolidate, in addition to the aforementioned competencies, also managerial competencies, such as "Managing performance" and "Team development" – all of these defined as required competencies under the competency framework proposed by the WB and

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[41] Output 3, Deliverable 3.2 "Competency Framework for the Romanian public administration", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, January 2020
[42] Through previous RASs, such as the HRM RAS.
[43] See Chapter 2 of the current report.
[44] See Output 5, Deliverable 5.1 "Analysis of the performance management system", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, August 2020 and "Selecting the right staff and keeping them motivated for a high-performing public administration in Romania: Key findings from a public administration employee survey", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2021.
[45] Ibidem

endorsed by the Government of Romania for the Romanian public administration.[46] For managers, this avenue for developing their management competencies is all the more important given the persistent unavailability of training opportunities at the level of the public administration, as mentioned above, coupled with the fact that public administration staff generally perceive managers as being ineffective in their role.[47] Moreover, for managers who have been identified as being effective, the public administration does not provide any platforms to share best practices with other managers (be they newly appointed or facing challenges in delivering their managerial responsibilities) or to be publicly and formally recognized and rewarded for their performance. The proposed mentoring program could address these issues, particularly if it informs the performance evaluation process and/or if it includes annual public recognition events.

- **Benefits for participating public institutions –** the benefits mentioned above for mentors and mentees are linked to enhanced staff capabilities to achieve the expected performance in their job and to improved staff engagement with their job and with their respective employing institution. These benefits would directly feed into improving organizational performance. Additionally, at the level of organizational HRM policies, the proposed mentoring program would support both workforce planning, as well as succession planning. For the former, mentoring could be an important and timely instrument, given the envisaged upcoming national recruitment drive which would be initially aimed at entry-level staff (at the professional grade of "debutant") and which would have a significant workforce planning component associated to it. The mentoring program could complement institutional onboarding activities (which aim at familiarizing new recruits with the organization and with their role) to ensure that new recruits who face difficulties in their role can develop the right competencies to overcome them. Moreover, the expected influx of entry-level recruits, coupled with the substantial rate of turnover of experienced staff in the coming years (due to the approaching "retirement cliff") will require public institutions to establish a succession planning process for managerial and highly specialized positions. The mentoring program could support such a process, by designating mentors to prepare high-potential staff (identified by their respective line managers) to take up such positions in the organization. Preparing a pool of such candidates would allow institutions to mitigate the risks posed by the expected (or unexpected) loss of internal staff capabilities and institutional memory and to ensure business continuity, when such losses occur.

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[46] See Output 3, Deliverable 3.2 "Competency Framework for the Romanian public administration", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, January 2020.
[47] As identified through qualitative research under Output 5, Deliverable 5.1 "Analysis of the performance management system", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, August 2020.

4.2 Target groups for the mentoring program

77. **The survey on mentoring in the Romanian public administration identified a diverse set of potential beneficiaries for the proposed mentoring program, but emphasized mentoring for existing managers and for staff facing professional challenges.** As shown in Figure 4 below, public administration staff across the different hierarchical layers perceived that mentoring would be beneficial both to execution-level staff, but also to management-level staff, in different circumstances. Nevertheless, staff who face difficulties at work – as identified by or jointly with their respective line manager as stemming from gaps in specific competencies – and staff in management positions, regardless of seniority (except high-level civil servants, given the specialized development support required at this level of seniority), seem to be perceived as the most in need for mentoring interventions. These perceptions are in line with findings from interviews conducted with staff from the public administration,[48] which highlighted a persistent need for better managers in the public administration, as well as for on-the-job specialized support for the different challenges faced by staff in the public administration. As such, staff who meet these criteria could be prioritized for the proposed mentoring program for the Romanian public administration. These criteria would ensure that the limited resources available for mentoring interventions are used in a cost-effective manner. However, depending on the organizational needs and the demands from staff, other categories of staff could be included in the target group for the mentoring program, so long as it addresses the development needs defined in section 4.1.

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[48] Under the current project, as well as in previous ones. See Output 5, Deliverable 5.1 "Analysis of the performance management system", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, August 2020.

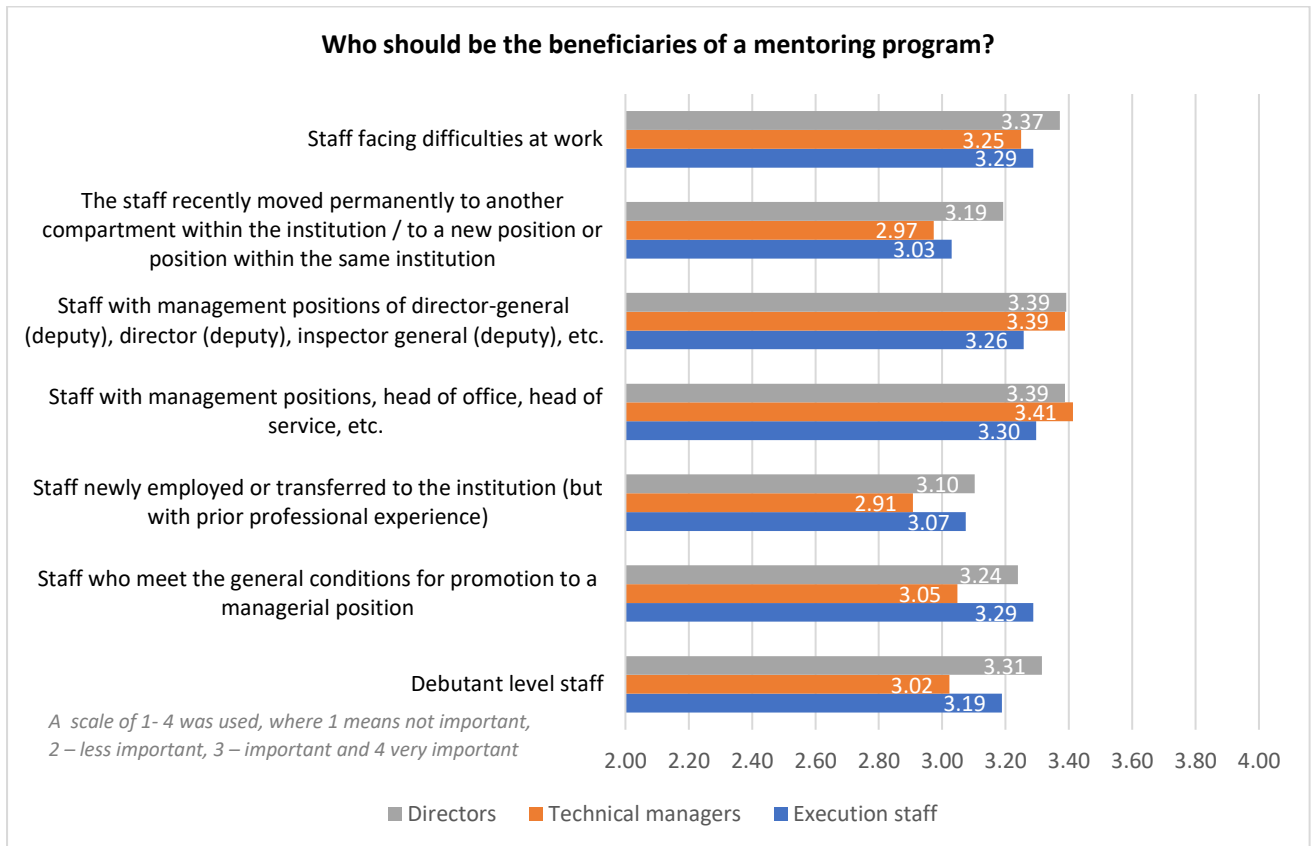Figure 4. Staff perceptions on the beneficiaries of a mentoring program (mentees), as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Who should be the beneficiaries of a mentoring program?

A scale of 1- 4 was used, where 1 means not important, 2 – less important, 3 – important and 4 very important

- Staff facing difficulties at work: Directors 3.37, Technical managers 3.25, Execution staff 3.29
- The staff recently moved permanently to another compartment within the institution / to a new position or position within the same institution: Directors 3.19, Technical managers 2.97, Execution staff 3.03
- Staff with management positions of director-general (deputy), director (deputy), inspector general (deputy), etc.: Directors 3.39, Technical managers 3.39, Execution staff 3.26
- Staff with management positions, head of office, head of service, etc.: Directors 3.39, Technical managers 3.41, Execution staff 3.30
- Staff newly employed or transferred to the institution (but with prior professional experience): Directors 3.10, Technical managers 2.91, Execution staff 3.07
- Staff who meet the general conditions for promotion to a managerial position: Directors 3.24, Technical managers 3.05, Execution staff 3.29
- Debutant level staff: Directors 3.31, Technical managers 3.02, Execution staff 3.19

■ Directors ■ Technical managers ■ Execution staff

78. **Staff who will act as mentors in the proposed program must be perceived by potential mentees as credible partners, who can add value to the learning relationship.** Otherwise, the mentoring program runs the risk of not generating demand among potential mentees and not being sustainable in the medium-to-long term. As shown in Figure 5 below, the results from the survey on mentoring suggest that in order to ensure the credibility of mentors, they should be (i) specialized staff, with recognized performance, (ii) staff with substantial professional experience within the institution, and/or (iii) management-level staff (although this latter category appears to be more credible as mentors among management-level respondents and less so among execution-level respondents). The survey results also suggest that staff across all hierarchical levels find external experts, staff from other institutions and internal HR staff to be the least credible as mentors. These perceptions are overall consistent across the different levels of the public administration (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 5. Staff perceptions on the selection of mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Who do you think would be appropriate to have the role of mentor in the institution where you work?

Category	Directors	Technical managers	Execution staff
External experts (outside public administration)	2.67	2.68	2.58
Specialized and / or professional staff from another public institution	2.43	2.48	2.54
Personnel in the department responsible for human resources	2.72	2.48	2.58
Management staff	3.22	3.22	2.86
Personnel with recognized specialization in a certain field, from a specialized department	3.35	3.38	3.49
Staff with substantial professional experience (over 5 years) within the institution	3.22	3.16	3.24

A scale of 1- 4 was used, where 1- not important, 2 – less important, 3 – important and 4 - very important

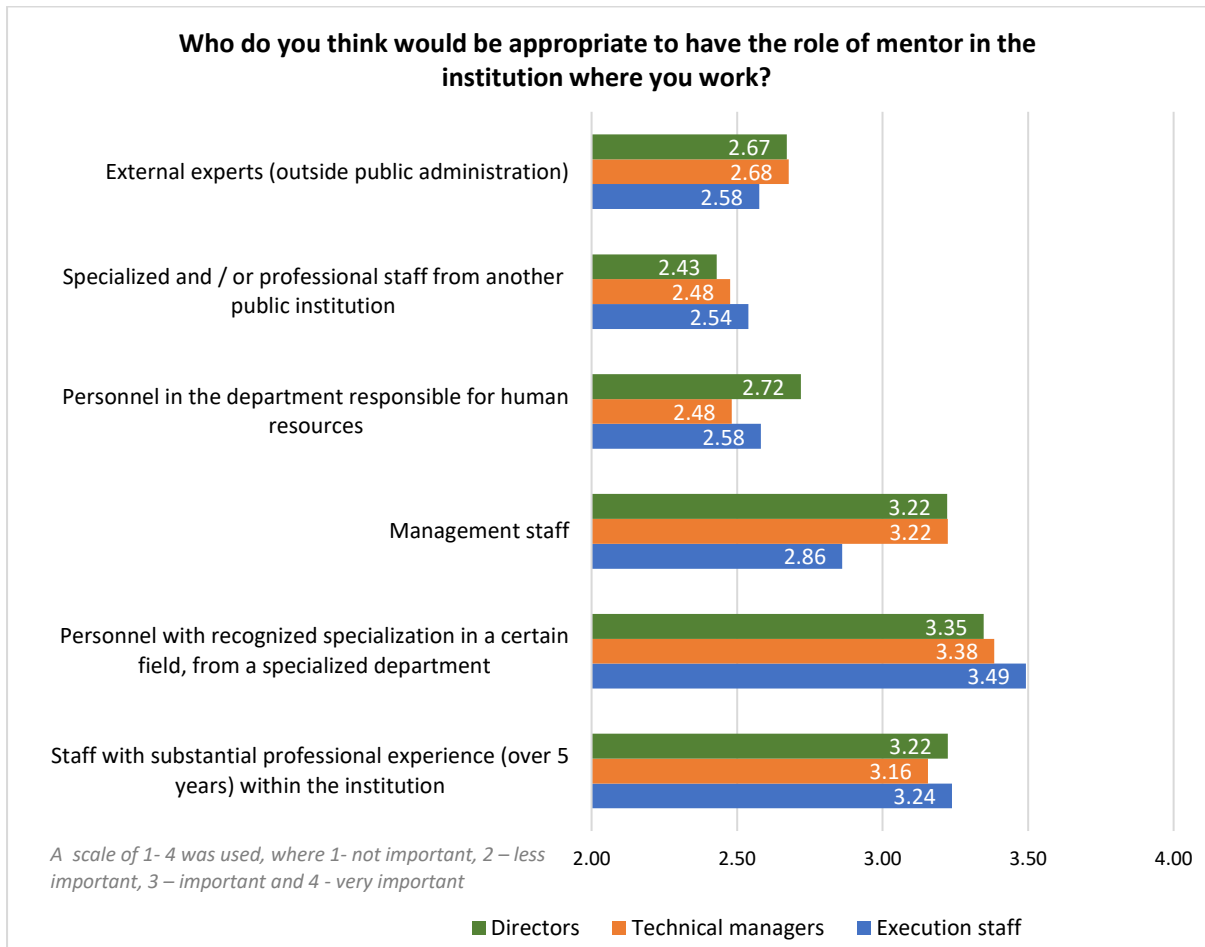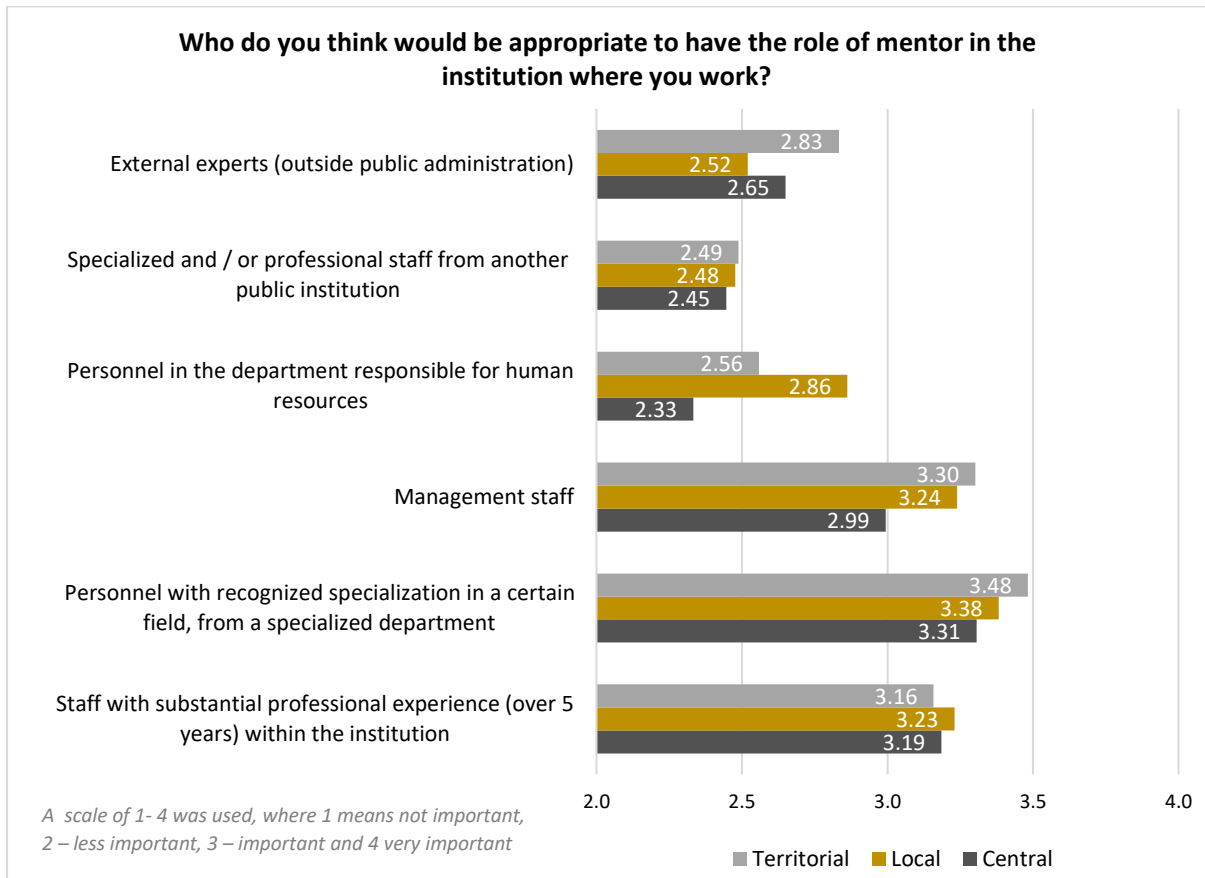Legend: ■ Directors ■ Technical managers ■ Execution staff

Figure 6. Staff perceptions on the selection of mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring, by type of institution

Who do you think would be appropriate to have the role of mentor in the institution where you work?

External experts (outside public administration): Territorial 2.83, Local 2.52, Central 2.65

Specialized and / or professional staff from another public institution: Territorial 2.49, Local 2.48, Central 2.45

Personnel in the department responsible for human resources: Territorial 2.56, Local 2.86, Central 2.33

Management staff: Territorial 3.30, Local 3.24, Central 2.99

Personnel with recognized specialization in a certain field, from a specialized department: Territorial 3.48, Local 3.38, Central 3.31

Staff with substantial professional experience (over 5 years) within the institution: Territorial 3.16, Local 3.23, Central 3.19

A scale of 1- 4 was used, where 1 means not important, 2 – less important, 3 – important and 4 very important

■ Territorial ■ Local ■ Central

79. Based on the categories of staff identified as credible to act as mentors, the program must define clear eligibility criteria for potential mentors. A large proportion of the respondents to the survey on mentoring expressed an interest and availability to join the program as mentors (see Figure 7 below). Moreover, the survey found that respondents could reportedly allocate, on average, between two to three hours per week for the mentoring activity. Nevertheless, the expressed time commitment seems unsustainable for a long-term mentoring relationship, based on the interviews with practitioners in mentoring programs in the public sector in Ireland and Australia.[49] This suggests that staff who would become a mentor are unfamiliar with what is expected of them in such a role and might not fully commit to sustaining the mentoring relationship. Therefore, the mentoring program should define a set of minimum eligibility criteria that staff interested in becoming mentors should fulfill, to minimize the risk that staff who do not/cannot commit to the program join mentoring relationships. These criteria could be screened both prior to the start of a mentoring relationship (i.e., at the matching phase), but also during the program (e.g., based on feedback from mentees).[50] To this end, potential mentors should fulfill at least the following criteria:
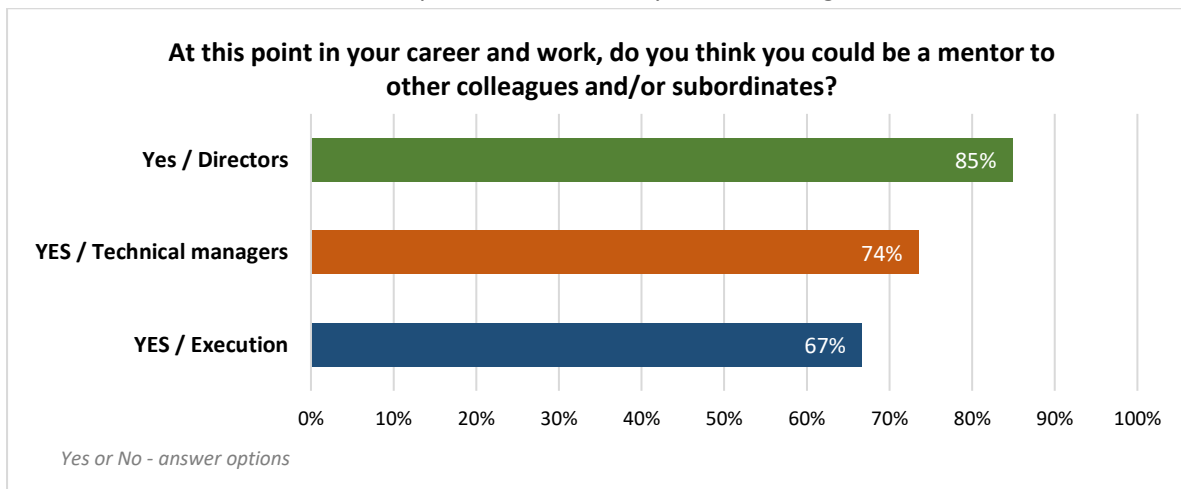
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[49] See Chapter 2 of the current report.
[50] This process would be detailed in Output 2.2 of the current RAS.

- Explicit commitment to allocate the required time for the mentoring activity (taking into consideration the mentee's preferences) and for training;
- Recognized as an experienced professional in their respective field, having at least 5 years of relevant professional experience in the Romanian public administration;
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills in communicating, motivating and building relationships;
- Willingness to work with staff for their professional development at different stages in their career and with different backgrounds.

Figure 7. Staff perceptions on their respective potential to be mentors to others, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

At this point in your career and work, do you think you could be a mentor to other colleagues and/or subordinates?

Yes / Directors: 85%
YES / Technical managers: 74%
YES / Execution: 67%

Yes or No - answer options

80. **A distinct stakeholder in the mentoring program would be the HR department in each participating institution.** The proposed HRM reform for the Romanian public administration underlined the need for HR departments to switch from a purely administrative role to a strategic one, which focuses on developing the workforce in line with organizational priorities.[51] The proposed mentoring program would be an important tool in this regard, given the aforementioned limited opportunities for training the workforce. As such, HR departments would be responsible for ensuring the effective use of mentoring in their institution, ideally in a formal manner, by integrating this role in their specific departmental objectives. They would be responsible for promoting the program within the institution, measuring its implementation and being a focal point for mentors and mentees.

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[51] Deliverable 2.4 "Analysis of the capacity of HR departments to implement proposed reforms", part of Output 2 "HRM guidelines and procedures", under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2020.

5 Terms of reference for the mentoring activity

81. **The mentoring relationship should be based on the voluntary involvement of both mentors and mentees**. This format of the relationships would ensure that both parties would be interested in the benefits deriving from the mentoring relationship, as opposed to joining the program formalistically, to obtain other benefits (e.g., pecuniary and training credits to fulfill eligibility for promotions). Indeed, the experience of the Romanian public administration with the mentoring component under the YPS highlights the risk of adverse selection for mentors and of upkeep issues for the program if based on monetary incentives and of formal contractual arrangement between mentors and mentees. Similarly, insights from the review of international experience on mentoring suggest that binding commitments for mentors and mentees risks undermining the genuine commitment of participants to the program and can lead to adverse selection issues.

82. **Mentors could be either internal and or from different institutions, depending on the specific staff development needs.** Indeed, as reflected in Chapter 2, cross-institutional mentoring programs can expand the pool of mentors available to work with mentees, as well as the areas of expertise and, thus, the specific technical developments needs, which the program can cover. Internal mentors would be experienced staff within the mentee's institution who would respond to a development need which requires in-depth knowledge of the respective institution's processes, way of working and/or organizational culture (e.g., for developing managerial competencies). For staff development needs which internal mentors cannot address (e.g., due to the technical nature of the development need or due to unavailability of mentors with appropriate competencies or experience), mentees could work with mentors from other institutions. This mentoring relationship would also be recommended when the mentee is involved or newly assigned to work in projects linked to more than one institution. An example is the implementation of HRM reforms in public administration. HR staff from different public institutions would be expected to implement new HR processes and ways of working, such as the introduction of a competency framework for civil servants.[52] To achieve these objectives, they need to develop new skills and abilities themselves. An effective and efficient way to accelerate this learning process would be for HR staff to participate in mentoring sessions with peers from other institutions who either have experience in this area or have already implemented these changes in their respective institution. In this case, the mentoring process would facilitate the transfer of knowledge and dissemination of best practices. Results from the survey on mentoring suggest that a large proportion of staff at all hierarchical levels could find a suitable mentor in their own institution (see Figure 8 below), although management-level staff are more likely to select their line managers as mentors (see Figure 9). The latter finding, taken together with the survey results highlighted in Figure 2, could point to a perceived need among managers at all levels to have a more collaborative relationship with their superiors to develop their managerial competencies, given the absence of formal opportunities for training in this regard. However, this also suggests that managers who responded to the survey are not familiar with the risks of

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[52] Output 3, Deliverable 3.2 "Competency Framework for the Romanian public administration", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, January 2020.

conflating the role of mentor with that of line manager, which, as explained in the following paragraphs, may lead to the mentoring relationship not achieving its learning objectives.

Figure 8. Staff perceptions on the availability of mentors in their respective institution, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Is there a person in the institution where you work that you consider appropriate to be your mentor?

Category	Percentage
Yes / Directors	45%
YES / Technical managers	50%
YES / Execution	59%
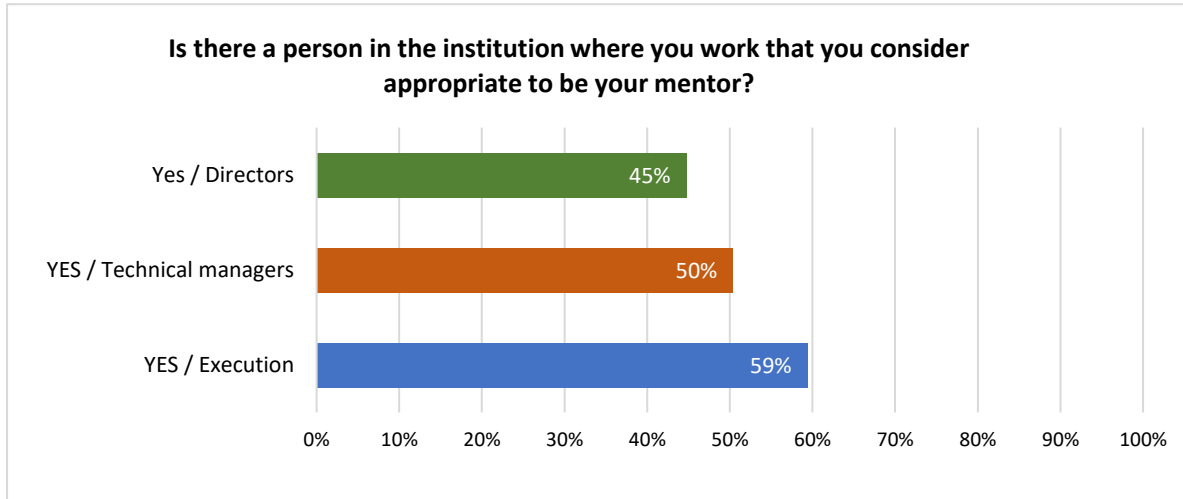
Figure 9. Staff perceptions on the potential of different categories of staff to be mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Who do you think could be your mentor in your institution?

	Directors	Technical managers	Execution staff
Colleague with outstanding results or who enjoys the recognition of his activity within the institution	32%	28%	44%
Representative of the human resources department	6%	3	12%
Colleague with a higher specialization in my field of activity or other field of activity	26%	20%	27%
Colleague with longer experience in my field of activity/institution	35%	23%	39%
The hierarchical superior of my direct hierarchical superior	19%	26%	15%
My direct hierarchical superior	42%	41%	32%

51

83. **Cross-institutional mentoring would be required to balance supply and demand for types of mentoring.** As shown in Figure 10 below, a large part of managers who responded to the survey on mentoring believe that a number of their subordinated staff could act as mentors for other staff within the institutions. Nevertheless, these managers also reported that the aforementioned subordinates would be appropriate to provide mentoring primarily for induction-related purposes (see Figure 11 below), as opposed to what the same managers had highlighted as the primary needs to be covered by mentoring, i.e., related to development of competencies (see Figure 2 in section 4.1). The survey results suggest that this misalignment is consistent across institutional levels in the public administration (see Figure 12 below). As such, to adequately match the demand for a profile of mentors with the supply of such mentors, the proposed mentoring program must establish and facilitate a robust and user-friendly cross-institutional collaboration. A database for the available pool of mentors and mentees, operated by the lead for the mentoring program, would be a prerequisite for the cross-institutional matching process.[53]

Figure 10. Manager perceptions on the potential of their respective subordinates to be mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

Are there subordinates within the department you lead that you would consider suitable to be a mentor for other staff within the institution?

Yes / Directors: 68%
YES / Technical managers: 54%

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[53] Output 2.2 of the current RAS will provide details on the governance structure and matching mechanisms for the proposed mentoring program.

Figure 11. Manager perceptions on potential situations in which their respective subordinates could act as mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring

For which of the following situations would you recommend that person to be a mentor?

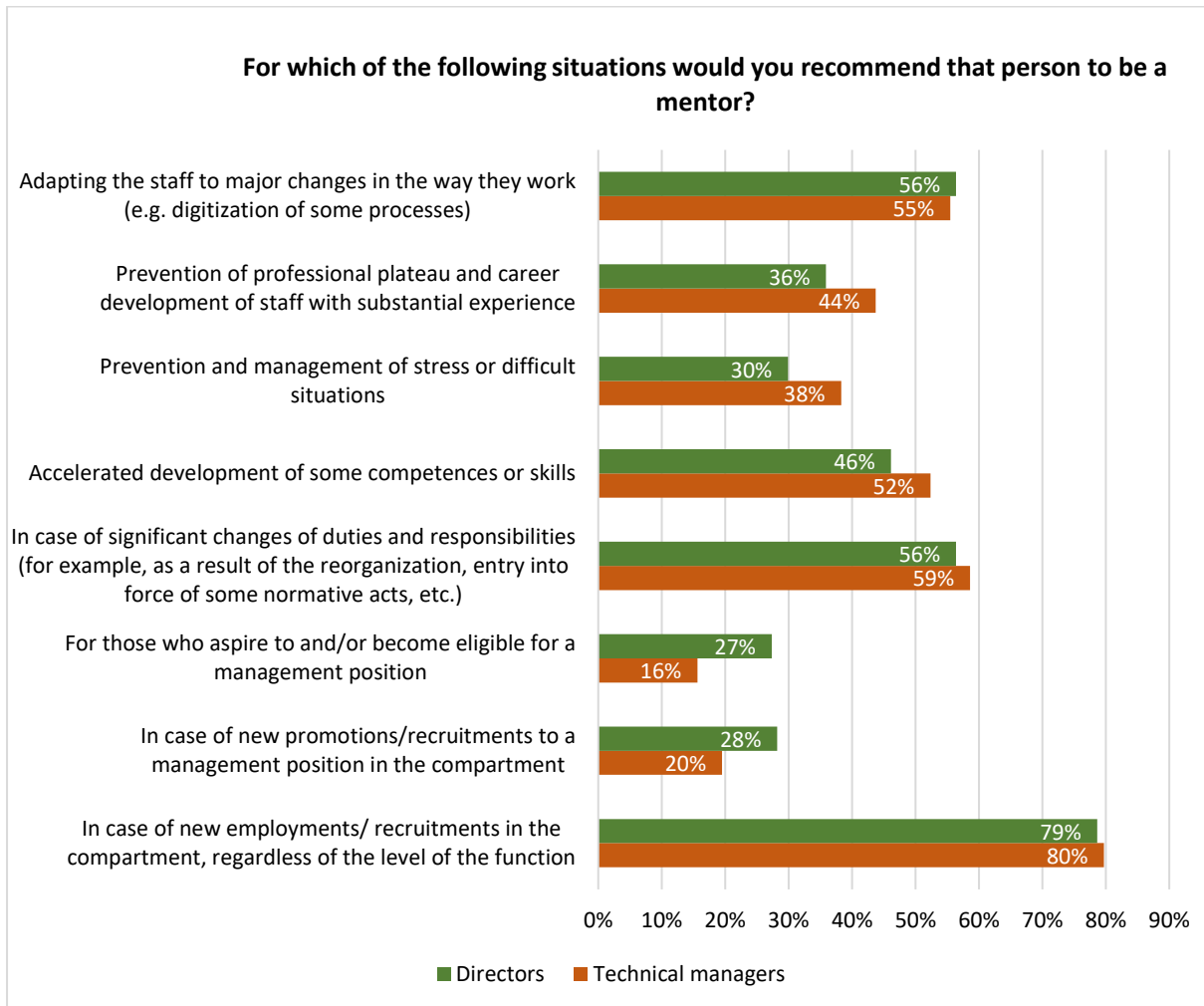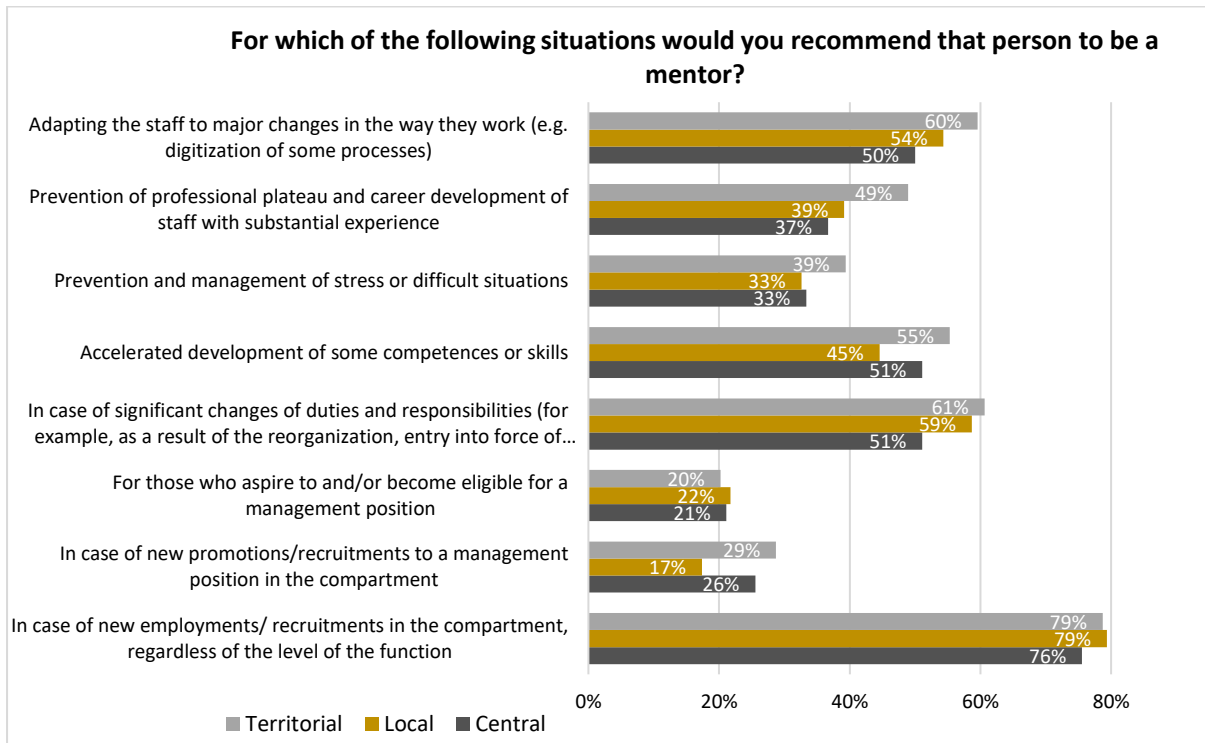| Situation	Directors	Technical managers
Adapting the staff to major changes in the way they work (e.g. digitization of some processes)	56%	55%
Prevention of professional plateau and career development of staff with substantial experience	36%	44%
Prevention and management of stress or difficult situations	30%	38%
Accelerated development of some competences or skills	46%	52%
In case of significant changes of duties and responsibilities (for example, as a result of the reorganization, entry into force of some normative acts, etc.)	56%	59%
For those who aspire to and/or become eligible for a management position	27%	16%
In case of new promotions/recruitments to a management position in the compartment	28%	20%
In case of new employments/ recruitments in the compartment, regardless of the level of the function	79%	80%

■ Directors ■ Technical managers

Figure 12. Manager perceptions on potential situations in which their respective subordinates could act as mentors, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring, by type of institution

For which of the following situations would you recommend that person to be a mentor?

Adapting the staff to major changes in the way they work (e.g. digitization of some processes)
- Territorial: 60%
- Local: 54%
- Central: 50%

Prevention of professional plateau and career development of staff with substantial experience
- Territorial: 49%
- Local: 39%
- Central: 37%

Prevention and management of stress or difficult situations
- Territorial: 39%
- Local: 33%
- Central: 33%

Accelerated development of some competences or skills
- Territorial: 55%
- Local: 45%
- Central: 51%

In case of significant changes of duties and responsibilities (for example, as a result of the reorganization, entry into force of…
- Territorial: 61%
- Local: 59%
- Central: 51%

For those who aspire to and/or become eligible for a management position
- Territorial: 20%
- Local: 22%
- Central: 21%

In case of new promotions/recruitments to a management position in the compartment
- Territorial: 29%
- Local: 17%
- Central: 26%

In case of new employments/ recruitments in the compartment, regardless of the level of the function
- Territorial: 79%
- Local: 79%
- Central: 76%

■ Territorial ■ Local ■ Central

84. **As a general principle, mentees should have the possibility to choose their own mentors, based on the criteria most appropriate for their development needs.** This requires that mentors make available for the program a detailed description of their professional work experience, accomplishments, competencies and areas of interest for which they would be willing to act as mentors. Nevertheless, for staff without prior experience in the public administration or in situations where staff members cannot make an informed decision on the appropriate profile for their mentors, their respective line manager would have a key role in assessing if mentoring is the right developmental instrument and, if so, in providing guidance and recommendations in choosing the right mentor.

85. **The role of a mentor should not overlap with the role of a line manager in the framework of staff development.** The latter supervises the civil servant's daily activity, gives feedback on performance and supports the employee in achieving the job-related objectives. The mentor advises or in some situations guides staff to achieve specific development objectives related to the current position or future assignments. In most cases, it is recommended for mentees not to choose their line managers as mentors. As highlighted in Chapter 2, effective mentoring relationships are based on arrangements which ensure a safe and confidential place for discussion and collaboration and, if necessary, for terminating the mentoring relationships without repercussions – this might not be possible between managers and their subordinates. This type of mentoring relationships would be appropriate only for particular programs, such as those aimed at staff induction in a new role and/or department.

86. **Mentoring sessions can take place in a one-to-one format as a standard, although mentoring in small groups (e.g., one-to-two) should be used only on a case-by-case basis.** One-to-one sessions are recommended, as the mentor can focus entirely on the challenges and development needs of the mentee and discussions can be fully customized to the mentee's specific circumstances. However, due to the scarcity of resources, the limited pool of mentors or the time the available mentors can allocate to the program, mentoring relationships in small groups (at most two mentees) could also be an effective and efficient alternative. The format of the mentoring relationship should be adaptable to the mentee needs and available resources. As such, the training of mentors should focus on developing the required competencies to engage in mentoring in a one-to-one format, but should also include the development of competencies to handle group dynamics and building relationships in a group.

87. **The mentoring meetings can take place both in-person and on-line**. Face-to-face sessions can help consolidate the mentoring relationship, but in situations when restrictions must be enforced against meeting in-person (e.g., in the COVID-19 context), on-line sessions for mentoring or a combination of the two could help maintain the mentoring relationship, although, as highlighted in the review of international mentoring practices, this could affect the engagement of both mentors and mentees in the process. In the case of cross-institutional mentoring, on-line sessions could be the most effective option, given that mentors and mentees can work under different schedules and in different locations, which might otherwise be major impediments to initiating and sustaining the mentoring relationship. Nevertheless, on-line mentoring can be expected to become increasingly used and preferred by participants in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, both to mitigate any health risks from having in-person meetings, but also due to an enhanced familiarity and use among participants of remote work arrangements and technologies.

88. **A successful mentoring relationship between a mentor and a mentee must follow a pre-defined process, which can enable the mentor to address, in a structured manner, the needs of the mentee.** Such a process would cover the following phases and would start once mentees are matched to mentors:

- **Establishing the partnership–** during this phase, the mentor and mentee must agree on the objectives of the mentoring relationship, as well as its limitations. Moreover, at this stage, the mentor and mentee should establish their roles and responsibilities. This stage can be covered in the first meeting between the mentor and mentee but, in some situations, this stage could extend over several meetings, to give time to the mentee and mentor to reflect on the next steps, especially when long-term development plans are needed.

- **Working towards the goals and consolidating the relationship –** in this phase, mentees lead the discussion by exploring with the mentor the challenges they face and actively seeking feedback. Mentors must be ready and able for an in-depth discussion to understand the points raised by the mentee's, propose new perspectives for them and provide guidance for the next steps to address these challenges (e.g., a new way of working, learning activities and/or changes in behavior).

- **Keeping the mentee accountable and offering permanent feedback –** during the first months, the success of the mentorship will be based on the involvement of the mentee. Progressing towards achieving the objectives set for the mentoring relationship depends on the mentee's willingness to pro-actively engaging with the mentor to share with him progress updates, successes and new obstacles identified. The mentor needs to encourage the mentee to self-reflect on his/her progress and ask for the mentee's feedback in order to enhance the development process. A learning log should be consistently used throughout the mentoring relationship to track progress and record lessons learnt.

- **Conclude and evaluate the progress achieved –** mentees should lead the evaluation of the mentoring relationship. Mentors should help the mentees to self-reflect about what they learnt and about their progress in achieving the agreed-upon development objectives. In this phase, mentees should also provide feedback or recommendations to their mentors. Mentors and mentees should decide on next steps in the mentoring relationship and how to build on the progress achieved by that point.

Table 2 below provides a summary of the responsibilities expected of mentors and mentees in the mentoring relationship.

Table 2. Summary of responsibilities expected of mentors and mentees

Mentor	Mentee
- Presents to the mentee what can or can't be achieved through mentoring - Works with the mentee in developing an individual development plan and mentoring objective - Proposes and applies the most suitable mentoring technique to help the mentee achieve the development goal - Motivates and encourages the mentee to take responsibility for learning and career development activities - Helps mentee to identify all the learning and networking opportunities that sustain the mentoring objective - Offers feedback to the mentee to improve the mentoring relationship - Provides continuous and constructive feedback and encourages the exchange of ideas	- Takes responsibility for managing his/her own development for achieving the agreed mentoring objective - Sets clear, realistic objectives for self-development and initiates the learning development activities agreed with the mentor - Shows consideration for the mentor's time, follows the scheduled meetings with the mentor and reschedules them if needed - Keeps an open communication with the mentor, remains open to feedback and receptive to new ideas - Offers feedback to the mentor to improve the mentoring relationship - Adheres to the confidentiality of the mentoring partnership and reports possible deviations on ethics to the program managers - Maintains engagement with the mentoring partnership

• Uses interpersonal skills and a facilitative approach to increase mentee's awareness regarding own strengths and weaknesses • Adheres to confidentiality of mentoring partnership and informs the mentee about the key principles of mentoring code of conduct • Maintains commitment to the mentoring partnership • Helps mentee to act autonomous without being directive or judgmental • Prepares for each mentoring meeting to assure the best use of time for both mentor and mentee • Respects the meetings agreed schedules and uses a flexible approach to fit the interest of both mentor and mentee • Keeps the program managers informed about any breakdown in the mentoring relationship and about the reasons behind it	• Keeps the program managers informed about any breakdown in the mentoring relationship and about the reasons behind it.

Sources: adapted after Phillip- Jones, Linda (2003) "Skills For Successful Mentoring: Competencies of Outstanding Mentors and Mentees" and Government Communication Service (2021) "The mentor and mentee guide", UK Cabinet Office.

89. **The duration of a mentoring relationship should be planned for at least six months, with regular monthly sessions.** Effective learning through mentoring requires a long period of interaction between mentor and mentee, during which the mentee can apply the knowledge and skills provided by the mentor, discuss results with the mentor and reinforce the most successful practices. As highlighted in the case studies presented in Chapter 2, such a relationship would need to extend over a period of between six to twelve months, to allow time for the entire process to unfold effectively. On the other hand, the need for faster results and high expectations on the part of mentees to overcome their respective professional challenges could intensify the process. At a minimum, mentors and mentees should meet regularly, in one- or two- hour sessions per month, for at least six months. The duration and calendar of sessions should be established from the outset between mentees and mentors and their respective commitment to it should represent a factor in evaluating the success of the mentoring program.

90. **Mentoring relationships must be governed by a clear code of conduct adapted to the public sector**. As international practice shows, the most successful mentoring relationships are based on trust and a mutual commitment to learning between the mentor and the mentee. However, given

the limited experience and understanding of mentoring in the Romanian public administration, a code of conduct must be defined from the outset, as a basis for the mentoring program, which should cover, at a minimum, the following principles:

I.   Conflict of interests – mentoring must not be used to create protégées or any kind of unethical advantages on any sides, be it for the mentor or for the mentee. As such, mentoring between a supervisor and a subordinate staff is only acceptable in specific situations.

II. "Primum non nocere" principle ("First do not harm") – a mentor must be conscious of the impact of his/her advice and take into consideration the mentee's actions after applying the "mentor's advice". The mentoring sessions and discussions can have an impact on the mentees' professional life, e.g., by making risky decisions in their career.

III. Preventing the destructive mentoring[54] – many times the development process in a relationship with a teacher, mentor, instructor, or adviser could be accompanied by a feeling of guilt on the part of the mentee, apprentice or disciple. If the mentor creates the impression that mentee cannot live up to his/her high standards, this could affect the mentee's self-esteem or can-do attitude even though mentoring relationship could go on.

IV. Confidentiality – the discussions between mentors and mentees should be confidential, except for the cases in which the information provided is linked to illegal activities. As such, mentors and mentees should establish from the outset the limits of confidentiality under their mentoring agreement and should only share the information they are comfortable with. This confidentiality clause should also be applied in interactions by the mentor with the mentee's manager (and vice-versa), unless both the mentor and mentee mutually agree that sharing information with the respective manager is beneficial.

V.   "No Fault" termination – both the mentor and the mentee have the right to unilaterally close the mentoring relationship if it is not achieving its intended objectives or for other personal reasons, without consequences for future mentoring activities (provided the cause does not stem from legal or ethical issues).

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[54] This was proposed as one of the main factors which could impact the success of mentoring. See Małota Wioletta (2017) "Motivational Factors to be a Mentor in Formal Mentoring in Organisations. The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in the Propensity to Mentor," Journal of Management and Business Administration. Central Europe, Sciendo, vol. 25(4), pages 119-143, December.

6   Training arrangements for mentors

91. An effective mentoring program must ensure that staff who are selected to be mentors are equipped with the appropriate type and level of competencies required to achieve the objective of the program. As highlighted in the review of international experience on mentoring, training for mentors (and mentees alike) is an integral part of a successful mentoring program. Moreover, respondents to the survey on mentoring stated that the lack training of mentors is a critical challenge which could undermine the effectiveness of the proposed mentoring program (see Figure 13 below). As such, the current section provides a detailed curriculum for training for mentors, which should be further expanded by the INA into a training program for staff selected to be mentors. This training curriculum is based on the assumption that mentors would need to be prepared not only for the purpose and duration of the envisaged mentoring program, but also to participate in broader organizational initiatives aimed at staff development in the Romanian public administration. Moreover, the INA could impose a high-standard preparation for mentors to make the participation to its trainings aspirational and desirable for the professional and experienced civil servants.

Figure 13. Staff perceptions on challenges in the way of a successful mentoring program in the Romanian public administration, as reflected by responses to the survey on mentoring
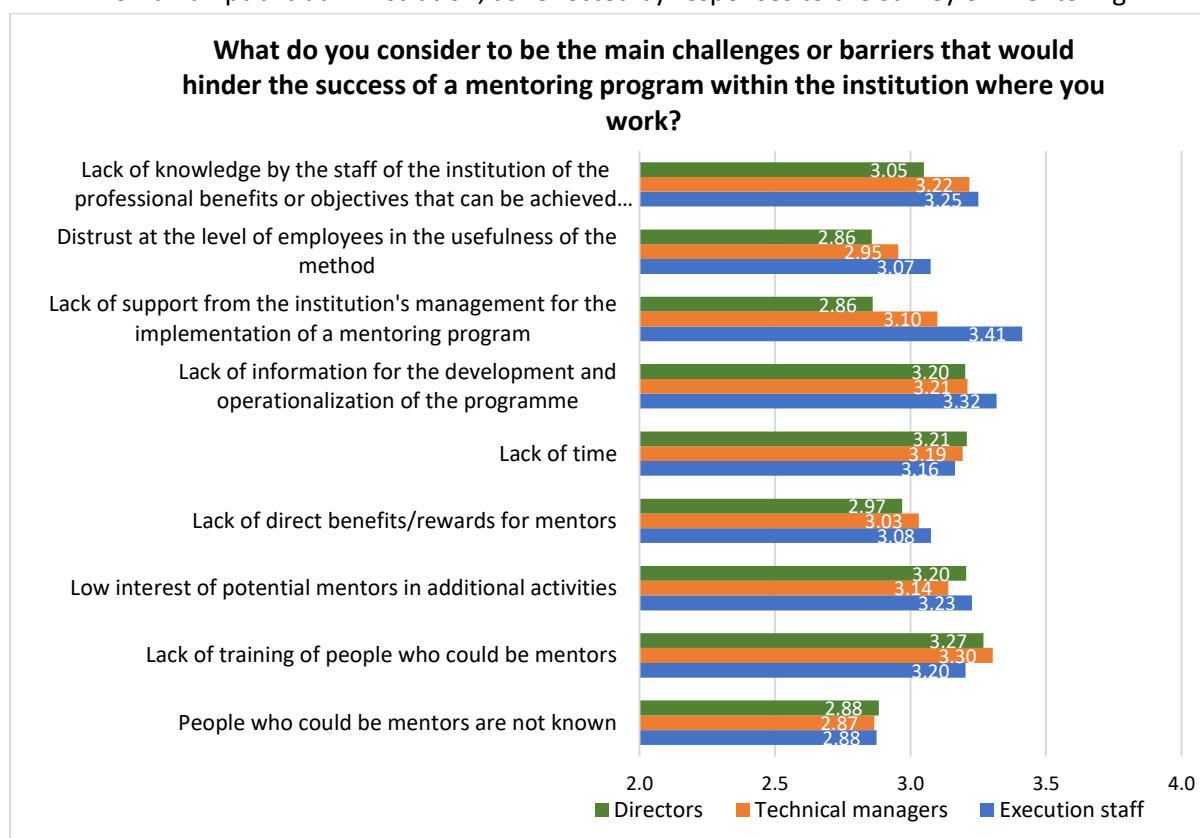
92. **The proposed training aims to develop the main abilities which are expected to be required by mentors under the proposed mentoring program.** These abilities are grouped under a "mentoring" competency that cover four major areas:

I. **Interpersonal skills for mentoring** – includes some of the most used interpersonal skills, such as active and empathic listening, listening without judgement, pedagogical skills, building trust, inspiring and encouraging through feedback. This ability also includes learning principles that aim to consolidate the mentor – mentee commitment and partnership and the mentoring partnership.

II. **Mentoring techniques** –includes knowledge-transfer methods and models recommended in the mentoring process based on how adults learn, the ability to create and apply an individual development plan for each mentoring relationship and setting the agenda. This area should also cover how to ask provoking and challenging questions, breaking down a process, providing explanations, offering reflection time, offering personal example and advice. Moreover, mentoring techniques should also include the ability to use some tools for monitoring the progress.

III. **Mentoring ethics** – includes all the skills needed to keep the mentoring process to a high ethical standard and to avoid any undesired consequences. The ability to apply the mentoring code of conduct for Romanian public administration and to define a responsibility frame in the mentoring relationship should be also be covered in the training. This ability also includes the way to close in a constructive manner a mentoring relationship that doesn't work (by any reasons) and what kind of information regarding mentor-mentee relationship can be shared to other stakeholders.

IV. **Ability to "manage" a specific area of expertise** – the knowledge and experience that could be transferred to mentees could vary between different types of mentoring programs and from mentor to mentor. A mentor should be able to define his/her area of expertise, to structure the knowledge and experience in clusters that could be taught, to group his/her experience in knowledge, skills, and attitudes for mentees. The mentors should be able to define and formulate the specific actions and behaviors to be applied by mentees and how to measure if a successful transfer of knowledge and experience was achieved.

The training for this ability should make the mentors aware of their knowledge and expertise. Based on this ability, a mentor could extend his/her area of expertise and could be a mentor for other mentees' development needs. However, at this fourth ability, the training for mentors which would work with managers to build their managerial competencies should be slightly different from the training for mentors focused on specialized on-the-job development. This difference would consist of an additional day of training, hosted by a trainer with leadership abilities, using exercises customized for the development of leaders.

93. **The training duration should be a minimum of 96 hours (including time of supervised practice) and at least two follow-up half-day sessions for sharing experience, receiving feedback from trainers and reinforcing the abilities.** Each training day should focus on the development of one of the four abilities and should focus on practical exercises for at least 50% of the training time.

The follow-up sessions should take place after the beginning of the mentoring program. Table 3 below provides a break-down of the learning objectives for each of the four abilities proposed for the "mentoring" competency. Annex 8.1 provides detailed specifications for a potential training curriculum for each ability.

94. **The trainers for mentors should have substantial experience in applying on-the-job learning methods**. An ideal trainer should have a solid experience in training mentors in at least five different mentoring programs. The trainer should fulfill one or more of the following criteria:
   - At least five years of experience in providing training, with at least three training programs delivered for leaders in the public administration; should be certified as a coach or mentor.
   - At least eight years of experience in providing training (private or public sector); should be certified as a coach or mentor
   - At least five years of experience in providing training, with a proven record of leading at least three different programs aimed at training coaches or mentors
   - At least ten years of experience in providing leadership training (in the private or public sector)

Table 3. Breakdown of the proposed "mentoring competency" into observable behaviors

Mentoring competency	A mentor with this competency should be able to:
Interpersonal skills for mentoring	- use active listening techniques, such as paraphrase and verification of understanding - establish a mentor-mentee contract - motivate and encourage mentee to take responsibility for learning and career development activities - provide constructive feedback and act as a sounding board for ideas - create a space of confidence and open communication with the mentee - maintain commitment to the mentoring partnership
Mentoring techniques	- use a set of adults learning methods and adapt it in accordance with the mentees needs and mentorship goals - challenge mentees to take a broad perspective about their development - define an individual development plan for mentee - manage the mentoring process: using tools for planning, for monitoring the progress, establish adequate meeting frequency, - use learning methods adapted to one to one, one to many or online - help mentee to identify learning and networking opportunities - use the techniques aiming to increase mentee's awareness of strengths and weaknesses - prepare in order to get maximum results from each mentoring meeting

Mentoring ethics	• avoid any undesired consequences of a mentoring relationship • promote the best interest of the mentees • adhere to confidentiality of mentoring partnership • show to the mentee the role of integrity in the mentor area of expertise
Ability "to manage" the area of expertise	• present in simple terms what can teach and mentor according with specific area of expertise • translate the owned practical experience in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be acquired by mentees • identify what kind of behaviors changes should be expected from the mentees if the knowledge/experience transfer is successful • present the activities where the outcomes of the mentoring could be measured or observed • help mentees to be autonomous and to measure for themselves the progress in handling the challenges in the mentor's area of expertise

7 Concluding remarks and next steps

95. **Defining the main specifications of the mentoring program is only an initial step towards establishing the program**. From the review of international experience with mentoring, it is clear that mentoring is best introduced as part of a formal program, maintained over several years. Such a program would require a delivery model, which sets out institutional responsibilities, ways of collaborating across stakeholders and financing arrangements, among others. However, at the present time, there is no designated institutional lead for the envisaged mentoring program, with the INA's role being limited to providing training to the eligible mentors. Therefore, to avoid allocating resources to an initiative which cannot be expected to produce results in the absence of a supporting institutional structure and formally defined model of delivery, the INA, in consultations with the relevant stakeholders at the government level, must consider and decide how a sustainable mentoring program could be established, what its own role will be in the implementation of this model and what approach or model is best suited to local conditions. For instance, the formal program can be organized by each participating institution, i.e., in a decentralized manner, with the INA providing a support function, or could be organized centrally, by the INA.[55] One idea to emerge from the case studies is that several of the organizations which implement mentoring programs are membership-based. This means that they have access to a more available supply of mentors and mentees through the member organizations. It also means that the membership fees can partly fund the mentoring programs. Depending on the selected model, the role of the INA could involve processing applications, matching mentors and mentees, maintaining the matching platform and the database of mentors and mentees, developing methodological documentation and guidance, providing training for mentors and mentees, and evaluating the program.

96. **The final specifications of the mentoring program should be validated through broader consultations with public administration staff and subsequently endorsed at the political level.** The specifications outlined in the current report for the proposed mentoring are based on insights drawn from a quantitative survey on mentoring among public administration staff and consultations with key institutional stakeholders, namely the INA, the GSG and the NACS. Deliverable 2.2 under the current output will stress test these preliminary specifications through more focused workshops with relevant stakeholders (e.g., senior managers and representatives of HR departments). However, the credibility of the final design of the program and, thus, its alignment with staff needs, should be further strengthened through broader consultations with staff, in the shape of townhall meetings in which questions could be addressed and feedback could be collected. The specifications of the program (or their amended version, if needed), would be subsequently validated politically through the CNCISCAP, which has the mandate to endorse them as a strategic direction at the governmental level. This would ensure a formal commitment of the relevant institutional stakeholders to the proposed mentoring program and would maximize its chances of effective implementation.

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[55] Deliverable 2.2 of the current RAS would provide recommendations in this regard.

97. **Activities under the following Deliverable 2.2 of the current output will focus on validating the preliminary findings and providing recommendations for a delivery model for the mentoring program.** As mentioned above, the preliminary specifications for the mentoring program proposed in the current report must be subject to targeted discussions with stakeholders, to be validated and further developed or amended, if needed. This would be done under Deliverable 2.2 through a series of workshops or consultations with the end-beneficiaries of the mentoring program and with strategic categories of staff who would be instrumental in the take-up of mentoring interventions in public administration institutions (e.g., heads of institutions, senior managers and representatives of HR departments). Additionally, Deliverable 2.2 will propose a set of options for a delivery model for the mentoring program, which could support its effective, efficient and sustainable implementation. These options would cover the governance structure of the program and the role of the INA in it, as well as issues pertaining to the implementation process (e.g., sequencing of activities, costing considerations, mentor-mentee matching arrangements and monitoring and evaluation of the program, among others). The options would present the advantages and disadvantages of delivering the mentoring program under different scenarios (e.g., with no changes to the regulatory framework, with changes to the regulations pertaining to mentoring and with changes to the institutional mandates). These recommendations would be informed, to the extent possible, by consultations with the key stakeholders and a subset of the potential participating institutions (primarily line ministries).

8 Annexes

8.1 Specifications for the training curriculum for mentors

Training Module 1 – Mentee's needs

Objective	Developing the skills that allow the mentor to explore and define mentee's needs.
What participants learn	• To use the techniques aiming to increase mentee's awareness of strengths and weaknesses • To use powerful questions to deeper understanding • To understand how to address and cover the psychological needs • To explore the mentee's professional needs • To use tools to monitor the evolution of the mentee's needs • To challenge the mentee to take a broad perspective about his/her development
Concepts used	Psychological needs, professional needs, provoking questions, strengths and weaknesses assessment, mentee's interests & concerns
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) • 60% - practice – applying learning methods in mentoring, switching the role between participants and with debrief in group; applying mentoring instruments with debrief in group • 40% - presentation of concepts, structuring the ideas and take-away notes Option 2 - Blended learning • 40% practice with debrief in group and feedback (in presence or online) • 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads[56]) - (in presence or online) • 40% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes (online) Option 3 – Online • 40% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes • 40% - group practice with plenary debrief and personalized feedback • 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads)
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency)
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

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[56] In triads, participants take turns to practice the role of the mentor, the mentee and the observer who provides feedback to the mentor. The insights from feedback are centralized and discussed in a plenary session (in synchronous sessions).

Training Module 2 – Mentoring framework

Objective	Developing the skills needed to establish a mentor-mentee contract, to set well-defined objectives and to keep active engagement.
What participants learn	• To establish a mentor-mentee contract • To identify the psychological needs reflected in the contract • To define an individual development plan for mentee • To establish and define the objectives of the mentoring relationship • To maintain commitment to the mentoring partnership, keeping the communication centred on the relevant topic: mentee needs and mentoring objective
Concepts used	Contracting, individual development plan, mentoring objectives, commitment and engagement
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) • 70% practice with debrief in group and personalized feedback, presentations of concepts, examples (with audio-video support recommended) • 30% - structuring the ideas and take-away notes Option 2 – Blended learning • 40% practice with debrief in group and personalized feedback, (in presence or online) • 30% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes (online) • 30% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads) - (in presence or online) Option 3 – Online • 50% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes • 30% - group practice with plenary debrief and personalized feedback • 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads)
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency) – in focus
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

Training Module 3 – Interpersonal skills for mentoring

Objective	Developing the interpersonal skills needed to establish a space of confidence based on open and honest communication.
What participants learn	- To use active listening techniques like: paraphrase and checking of understanding, clarification questions - To motivate and encourage mentee to take responsibility for learning and career development activities - To provide constructive feedback underlining the progress - To act as a sounding board for ideas: encouraging the exchange of ideas, fostering curiosity, questioning and testing different perspectives - To increase the confidence of mentee in his own judgment
Concepts used	Active listening, feedback for development, assertiveness, space of confidence
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) 70% practice with debrief in group and personalized feedback, presentations of concepts, examples (with audio-video support recommended) 30% - structuring the ideas and take-away notes Option 2 – Blended learning 40% practice with debrief in group and personalized feedback, (in presence or online) 30% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes (online) 30% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads) - (in presence or online) Option 3 – Online 40% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes 40% - group practice with plenary debrief and personalized feedback 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads)
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency) – in focus Communication and Teamwork (general competencies) - secondary
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

Training Module 4 – Mentoring techniques

Objective	Developing the skills that allow the mentor to use the adequate learning methods related to mentoring objective and mentee's needs.
What participants learn	• To use a set of adults learning methods and to adapt it in accordance with the mentees needs and mentorship goals: breaking down a problem • To use learning methods adapted to one to one, one to many or online • To use tools to administrate the mentoring process: for planning, monitoring the progress, process guides, and templates • To help mentee identify alternative and supplementary learning methods that will enhance the mentoring objective • To efficiently prepare him/herself to get maximum results from each mentoring meeting
Concepts used	Mentoring agenda, how adults learn, learning methods, mentoring tools, preparation forms
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) • 60% - practice – applying learning methods in mentoring, switching the role between participants and with debrief in group; applying mentoring instruments with debrief in group • 40% - presentation of concepts, structuring the ideas and take-away notes Option 2 - Blended learning • 40% practice with debrief in group and feedback (in presence or online) • 40% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes (online) • 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads – applying a learning method) - (in presence or online) Option 3 – Online • 40% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes • 40% - group practice with plenary debrief and personalized feedback • 20% - mentoring practice – (1 on 1 – trainer/participant, or triads – applying a learning method)
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency) – in focus Team development (managerial competency) – secondary
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

Training Module 5 – Mentoring ethics

Objective	Developing the skills that allow the mentor to act with integrity during the mentoring relationship
What participants learn	- To avoid any undesired consequences of a mentoring relationship like: reducing trust in the mentee's capabilities to succeed, fear of being judged, fear of the free-speech consequences, conflict of interests, creating dependency - To promote the best interest of the mentees - To adhere to confidentiality of mentoring partnership - To show to the mentee the role of ethics and integrity in the mentor area of expertise - To promote attitudes of non-discrimination and equal opportunities
Concepts used	Mentoring code of conduct, mentee' interest, confidentiality, psychological consequences, ethics and integrity
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) 50% - presentation of concepts, examples, structuring the ideas and take-away notes 50% - practice – exercises about how to prevent and handle the ethical risks in mentoring relationship Option 2 - Blended learning 50% - presentations of concepts, examples, structuring the ideas and take-away notes (in presence or online) 50% - practice – exercises about how to prevent and handle the ethical risks in mentoring relationship (in presence or online) Option 3 – Online 50% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes 50% - group exercises about how to prevent and handle the ethical risks in mentoring relationship
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency) – in focus Integrity (general competency)
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

Training Module 6[57] – Knowledge-transfer management

Objective	Developing the skills that allow the mentor to structure a specific knowledge / experience and to measure its transfer to the mentee
What participants learn	• To structure in simple terms on what subjects they can teach and mentor according with specific area of expertise • To translate the owned practical experience in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be acquired by mentees • To identify what kind of behaviour changes should be expected from the mentees if the knowledge/experience transfer is successful • To present the activities where the outcomes of the mentoring could be measured or observed • To help mentees to apply autonomous the received knowledge • To help mentees to measure their success in handling the challenges in their area of expertise
Concepts used	Managing own experience, behavioural changes, knowledge, skills and attitudes, the impact in activity, measuring success
Recommended methods	Option 1 - Classroom (in presence) • 20% - presentation of concepts, examples, structuring the ideas and take-away notes • 80% - practice – exercises about how to manage the knowledge transfer and how – working in group with individual presentation Option 2 - Blended learning • 50% - presentation of concepts, working on examples from participants' aria of expertise (in presence or online) • 50% - practice – in group or 1 to 1 (trainer-mentee or triades); (in presence or online) Option 3 – Online • 50% - presentations of concepts, examples audio-video, structuring the ideas and take-away notes • 50% - practice - in group or 1 to 1 (trainer/participant or triads)
Aimed competencies to be developed	Mentoring competency (specific competency) – in focus *Other managerial or specific competencies[58] – depending on the participants expertise*
Duration	Minimum 2 days (8 sessions x 2 hrs each)
Number of participants/sessions	6 to 12 people per group session

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[57] It is not mandatory for this training module to be the last one, it could be also the second or the third, being independent from other modules
[58] In case of a mentoring training focused on a specific theme (like: legal, HR, audit, finance, policy, strategies, leadership, etc) – the training content and exercises could be adapted accordingly

Follow-up sessions

98. **The first follow-up session should take place after at least a couple of weeks into the mentoring relationship with a mentee, to allow participants adequate time to apply the abilities gained through training in real-life mentoring sessions**. The main learning objective for this first session is to help the newly trained mentors to adjust their practice and to increase their confidence in engaging and building a relationship with a mentee. Another objective would be to validate during the follow-up session the learning approach chosen by the mentor with their respective mentees and to find ways to improve it through peer discussions and feedback from the trainers. The assigned time for follow-up session could vary between 2 to 4 hours, depending on the number of participants (e.g., two hours if attended by six participants) and could be held in-person or online.

99. **The second follow-up session should take place after at a period of several months into the mentoring relationships with a mentee, to let participants progress at an advanced stage in the learning process.** The main objective for this follow-up session is to enhance the abilities of participants to monitor the progress achieved with their respective mentees and to keep the latter engaged in the process. The training methods to be used for this second session, as well as format and duration of the session, should be the same as for the first follow-up session. If certificates of training completion are to be awarded to mentors, they should be conditional on mentors participating in this second session.

8.2 Methodology for the survey on mentoring in the Romanian public administration

The objective of the survey on mentoring was to collect perceptions from staff in the Romanian public administration on the demand and support for a mentoring program and on the individual development needs which it should address. These insights were used to inform the needs assessment at the individual level for a mentoring program in the Romanian public administration, as well as the most relevant options for its design features. Participation of managers in the survey was expressely requested, given the expected critical role they would play in introducing mentoring as a developmental intervention in the public administration. No differentiation was made between civil servants and contractual level staff.

The survey comprised of nineteen close-ended questions and two open-ended questions, validated with the project partners. The close-ended questions contained predefined responses on the possible objectives and design elements of a mentoring program, informed by insights from the review of the practitioner literature on mentoring and of international practices in mentoring. The open-ended questions required respondents to provide information on mentoring programs they had previously attended in the Romanian public administration, if applicable. These questions were tested and validated with the project partners prior to the launch of the survey.

The survey was disseminated electronically, via a Surveymonkey platform, by the INA. A link to the the survey was published on the INA institutional website and disseminated by the INA via formal and informal channels of communication to a subset of public administration institutions from all levels of the public administration (i.e. central, territorial and local). The survey was conducted between September 7th and September 27th, 2021 and collected 512 responses, split among approximately 13% execution level staff (69) and approximately 78% managers (400)[59], at different levels of seniority.[60]

A main limitation of the survey was that it could not directly target public administration staff. At the level of the Romanian public administration, there is no platform or centralized database which could be used to communicate directly with public administration staff or even institutions. As such, to reach the intended audience, the survey was mainly promoted via public channels, as previously mentioned. However, the survey assumes that all respondents are part of the public administration personnel, although the design and functionalities of the survey platform could not prevent or distinguish external respondents.

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[59] The population of managers in the central, territorial and local public administration, in both civil service and contractual positions, can only be estimated using the total number of managerial positions mapped to the occupational family "Administration" (as set through the Framework Pay Law 153/2017) as a proxy. The latest (and only) figures available for the total number of managerial-level positions date from 2019 and place them at 21.951 (see "Output 3 Competency framework Report on competencies and jobs in the Romanian public administration", developed under the HRM RAS, World Bank, 2020). As such, for a maximum potential target population of 21.951 managers, a sample size of 400 allows for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error for the survey results.

[60] The rest of the respondents did not identify themselves by position type.

8.3 List of interviews conducted for the present report

Institution	Function	Main topics covered
NACS	Expert on policy development and former coordinator of mentoring activities under the YPS	- Experience with previous mentoring programs in the Romanian public administration - Lessons learnt which could inform a mentoring program for the Romanian public administration
INA	Director, Directorate for Short-term Training	
Union of Public Managers in the Romanian Public Administration	Fomer president	
Engineers Ireland	Director	- Objectives of mentoring programs in a public sector context - Design features of an effective mentoring program - Best practices and challenges in establishing, delivering and sustaining a mentoring program in a public sector context
Irish Management Institute	Manager	
Irish Management Institute	Manager	
IPAA	Program coordinator	

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