

Panelul II. Schimbul de bune practici dintre teoreticienii și practicienii administrației publice locale și centrale

CZU: 352:005.962.13(498)

INDICATORII DE PERFORMANȚĂ ÎN DEZVOLTAREA RESURSELOR UMANE DIN ADMINISTRAȚIA PUBLICĂ LOCALĂ: O ANALIZĂ A IMPACTULUI ASUPRA BUNEI GUVERNĂRI INSTITUȚIONALE

Răzvan-Ionuț CROITORU²⁹

Ana-Maria BERCU³⁰

<https://doi.org/10.59295/csienu2025.06>

Rezumat: *Prezentul articol investighează legătura dintre indicatorii de performanță, strategiile de dezvoltare a resurselor umane și buna guvernare în administrația publică locală românească, cu accent pe regiunea Nord-Est. Motivat de necesitatea îmbunătățirii eficienței și eficacității administrative, articolul utilizează o metodologie mixtă (calitativă și cantitativă), bazată pe un chestionar administrat secretarilor generali din unități administrativ-teritoriale. Analiza datelor explorează percepțiile respondenților asupra sistemelor de evaluare a performanței și strategiilor de formare, investigând impactul acestora asupra funcționării instituționale și a bunei guvernări.*

Rezultatele preliminare indică corelații semnificative între indicatorii de performanță, eficiența strategiilor de dezvoltare a resurselor umane și nivelul de bună guvernare, evidențiind atât aspecte pozitive, cât și puncte slabe ale sistemului actual, inclusiv impactul recent al modificărilor legislative. Concluziile vor oferi recomandări practice pentru optimizarea managementului resurselor umane în vederea promovării unei guvernări eficiente și responsabile.

Cuvinte cheie: indicatori de performanță, resurse umane, administrație publică locală, guvernare bună.

29 Doctorand, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, România, croitoru.razvan@staff.uaic.ro.

30 Doctor habilitat, profesor universitar, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, România, bercu@uaic.ro.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR IMPACT ON INSTITUTIONAL GOOD GOVERNANCE

Abstract: *This article investigates the interdependence between human resources development (HRD), performance indicators and good governance in local public administration (LPA) in Romania, with a focus on mayoralities in the North-East region. The study, motivated by the need to improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness, uses a qualitative methodology, based on the analysis of data collected through a questionnaire administered to secretaries-general. The analysis explores respondents' perceptions of performance appraisal systems and training programmes, identifying strengths and challenges in the implementation of HRD strategies. The preliminary results highlight a declarative commitment to the HRD, but also a number of limitations related to the adaptation of training programs to the concrete needs of the administration, the objectivity of the evaluation systems and the use of performance indicators to promote good governance. The conclusions highlight the need for reforms in the HRD system, providing concrete recommendations for improving human resources management practices and strengthening administrative capacity at local level.*

Keywords: Performance indicators, Human resources development, Local public administration, Good governance, Administrative efficiency.

1. Introduction

Human resources development (HRD) in local public administration (LPA) is a fundamental factor for efficiency, effectiveness and, implicitly, for good governance. In a context characterized by rapid changes, budgetary constraints and a growing demand for quality public services, the ability of LPAs to effectively manage their human capital becomes fundamental. This research investigates the relationship between the performance indicators used in the DRU and the level of good governance at the level of mayoralities in the North-East region of Romania. Emphasis is placed on the role of performance indicators in optimising HRD strategies and creating an institutional environment that promotes transparency, accountability and efficiency.

The central problem of this research is to assess the impact of performance indicators, used in the human resources management process, on the achievement of good governance standards at local level. Weaknesses in performance evaluation systems and inadequate training programmes can lead to a decrease in administrative efficiency, a decrease in the quality of public services and an erosion of citizens' trust in public institutions. Therefore, the analysis of performance indicators, their correlation with the level of good governance and managers' perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system are essential to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current human resource management system.

The specific objectives of this research are:

- Critical analysis of the performance indicators and criteria used in the evaluation of civil servants in LPAs, identifying their positive aspects and limitations.
- Explore the relationship between performance indicators and the level of good governance, with a particular focus on dimensions such as transparency, accountability, efficiency and participation.
- To assess the perception of LPA managers (general secretaries) on the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system and to identify the factors influencing this perception.

The methodology adopted is mainly qualitative, based on the analysis of data from questionnaires administered to the general secretaries of the mayoralties in the North-East region. Although quantitative analysis is limited by sample size, descriptive data will be used to contextualise qualitative observations. The analysis will focus on interpreting the answers to the open-ended questions, highlighting recurring themes and perspectives. These results will be contextualized in relation to the existing theoretical framework, providing an insight into the relationship between performance indicators in DRU and good governance in LPAs.

This research contributes to the literature by offering an empirical perspective on HRD practices in the Romanian LPA, analyzing the perceptions of general secretaries, key actors in the human resources management process, on the performance evaluation system. The results will provide relevant information for LPA decision-makers, supporting the development of more efficient HRD policies and strategies, aligned with the principles of good governance and adapted to the specifics of the local public administration in Romania.

2. Analysis of the literature and specific legislation

This chapter examines the relevant literature on human resource development (HRD) in local public administration (LPA) and its impact on good governance. The analysis focuses on the interdependence between HRDs, institutional performance and good governance, highlighting the role of performance indicators in assessing the effectiveness of HRD strategies. The approach is structured around three main themes: the theoretical concepts of HRD and good governance, performance indicators in HRD and LPA, and the Romanian context of HRD and good governance.

2.1. HRD and Good Governance: An Integrated Theoretical Framework

The literature highlights an indissoluble link between DRU and good governance in LPAs. The concept of good governance, characterized by principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, efficiency, and fairness, depends directly on a skilled, motivated, and ethical workforce (Hood, 1991). Effective public institutions require employees capable of implementing these principles, managing public resources, providing high-quality public services and interacting effectively with citizens.

HRD, as a systematic and strategic process of human resource management, is not reduced to initial training, but includes a wide range of practices, such as: recruitment and selection, onboarding of new employees, continuous training, skills development, performance management, and career planning (Armstrong, 2009). These processes are interdependent and contribute to creating a high-performance work environment, increasing employee motivation and maximizing their individual potential.

Integrating DRU into the organization's overall strategy (SHRM) is essential for aligning individual and organizational goals (Ulrich, 2005). A strategic approach to DRU allows for better resource planning, more efficient use of budget, and greater adaptability to changes in the external environment. Concepts such as 'human capital' (Becker, 2009) and 'organisational commitment' (Meyer & Allen, 1997) stresses the importance of investing in human resources and creating a positive organisational climate in order to enhance institutional performance and ensure the retention of valuable employees.

The concept of "representative bureaucracy" (Rosenbloom et al., 2022) adds an important dimension, stressing the need to promote diversity and inclusion in the public sector. HRD practices must ensure equal oppor-

tunities in recruitment, selection, promotion and retention, reflecting the diversity of society in the institutional structure and contributing to fairer and more representative decision-making.

In the context of local public administration, human resources management (HRM) is a very important function for ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions. It includes a range of processes and practices, such as recruitment, selection, professional integration, continuous training, performance evaluation, motivation and staff retention (Ciobanu & Androniceanu, 2018). The central objective of the SRM in this context is to ensure that local institutions have qualified and competent staff capable of providing high-quality public services to the communities they serve. In addition, HRM practices contribute to the creation of a positive organizational culture and the adaptability of institutions to economic and social changes.

Human resources development (HRD) is defined as a strategic process aimed at ensuring the optimal human resources necessary to meet institutional objectives (Bercu & Buliga, 2019). The importance of this process is accentuated by the potential negative consequences of errors or omissions in its stages, which can lead to a decrease in the quality and efficiency of the services provided by the local public administration. Thus, the DRU becomes an empirical necessity in the context of good governance.

In terms of its role in strengthening Good Governance, the DRU is a determining factor of the efficiency and sustainability of local public services and, implicitly, of good governance (Dincă et al., 2016). Significant regional differences in administrative efficiency underline the need for qualified staff and robust HRD programmes to develop managerial, communication and interdepartmental collaboration skills. The ability to anticipate challenges, manage resources efficiently and demonstrate resilience to policy changes depends on the expertise and adaptability of the workforce, which are directly influenced by the HRD.

From the perspective of the mobility of civil servants, the DRU contributes to good governance by:

Stability and depoliticization: Developing skills and professionalism reduces the impact of policy changes on the administration, ensuring continuity of services (Andrei et al., 2012).

Improved efficiency and effectiveness: Well-trained staff are better able to provide efficient and effective public services.

Increased transparency and accountability: A highly skilled workforce is essential for transparency and accountability, reducing the risk of corruption and promoting public trust.

Strengthening local governance capacity: The DRU strengthens the capacity to manage resources and implement policies at local level.

Compliance with European Union standards: The DRU plays a vital role in meeting EU standards for public administration (Andrei et al., 2012).

DRU is essential for achieving high performance in organizations (Armstrong, 2009). Performance orientation has become basic, and effective DRU management, which includes continuous evaluation and development, contributes directly to the success of the organization. A systematic and evidence-based approach in HRD, which includes training, professional development and career planning, is fundamental to maximizing the potential of employees and the organization.

Qualified staff with strong marketing and strategic planning skills is essential for service efficiency and good governance (Olteanu et al., 2013). The coordinated approach to planning, which requires effective communication, collaboration and common understanding between employees, emphasizes the importance of the skills acquired through DRU.

Good governance refers to the process by which public institutions manage and administer public resources and services in a transparent, accountable and efficient manner (Drinking, 2025). It involves principles such as transparency, participation, accountability, fairness and respect for the rule of law (Fourie, 2016; Hydén et al., 2004; Keping, 2018; Sari, 2023; Zaitul et al., 2023).

Although some studies suggest that the link between the DRU and good governance is not sufficiently well studied (Boselie et al., 2021), there is evidence that good governance contributes to the growth and development of (Cristea & Dragulin, 2015; Noja & Cristea, 2017). The principles of good governance (participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, efficiency, fairness, consensus-oriented, results-oriented) are influenced by HRM practices (Arulrajah, 2016; Stanus, 2015; UNDP, 1997). Therefore, the DRU is indispensable for achieving good governance standards, ensuring an efficient, transparent, accountable and fair local public administration.

2.2. Performance Indicators: Measuring the Effectiveness of the HRD

Assessing the effectiveness of HRD strategies requires the use of relevant and measurable performance indicators. These indicators can be grouped according to the aspects they cover:

Recruitment and Selection Efficiency: Recruitment time, cost per recruited employee, new employee retention rate, demographic and professional diversity of employees.

Effectiveness of Training and Professional Development: Number of hours of training per employee, number of employees who participated in training programs, evaluation of employee satisfaction with training programs, impact of training on individual and collective performance, measured by specific performance indicators.

Employee Performance: Absenteeism rate, staff turnover rate, performance evaluation scores, productivity, quality of services offered, citizens' satisfaction with public services.

Organizational Climate: The level of employee satisfaction with the workplace, level of employee involvement, team cohesion, internal communication, organizational culture.

The use of clear and measurable indicators allows for systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of HRD strategies, contributing to informed decision-making and continuous process improvement (OECD, 2023).

2.3. The Romanian Context: DRU and Good Governance in LPAs

In the Romanian context, the legislation on the civil service (Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57 of 3 July 2019 on the Administrative Code, issued by the Government of Romania and published in the Official Gazette no. 555 of 5 July 2019, as subsequently amended and supplemented) stipulates obligations regarding the continuous professional training of civil servants. In this respect, civil servants have both the right and the obligation to continuously improve their professional skills, thus ensuring that they can cope with the dynamic demands in the field of public administration. Public authorities and institutions are responsible for facilitating the participation of each civil servant in at least one professional training programme every two years, organised either by the National Institute of Administration or by other training providers. These programs are essential not only for developing individual skills but also for increasing organizational efficiency.

Each public authority has the obligation to allocate budgetary resources

for the payment of expenses related to vocational training, including for transport, accommodation and meals, when the programs are carried out outside the locality. In addition, the periods during which officials follow these schedules are considered working time and they benefit from the corresponding salary rights. Also, civil servants participating in training programs lasting more than 90 days are obliged to commit, through a written agreement, to work in the public administration for 2 to 5 years, proportional to the training period, thus contributing to the stability of human resources in the sector.

However, there are studies that highlight gaps between the legal provisions and the reality on the ground. (Cazacu, 2021; Iacob & Dermengi (Gerea), 2022; Profiroiu & Negoită, 2022). These studies highlight the need to improve performance evaluation systems, to align training programs with the real needs of LPAs, and to promote an organizational culture focused on performance and accountability.

2.4. Legal Framework and Performance Criteria in the Evaluation of Civil Servants

The evaluation of the performance of civil servants in the local public administration (LPA) is regulated by the Administrative Code (Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57 of 3 July 2019, as subsequently amended and supplemented), which stipulates the obligation of public authorities to periodically evaluate the performance of civil servants. The legislation provides, broadly speaking, general evaluation criteria, but leaves room for maneuver for public authorities in defining specific criteria, adapted to the organizational context and the specifics of each function. This flexibility allows for an adaptation to the specific needs of each municipality, but risks leading to inconsistencies in the application of the evaluation criteria at national level.

To illustrate the complexity of the performance criteria used in LPAs, we present below a set of criteria differentiated by classes, according to a performance evaluation model:

1. Technical skills:

- Implementation capacity: Efficiency in the implementation of solutions and procedures to achieve objectives.
- Effective problem solving: The ability to identify and solve problems, including anticipating potential difficulties.
- Analysis and synthesis: The ability to interpret information, identify

key elements and formulate pertinent conclusions.

- Competence in resource management: Efficient and responsible use of material and financial resources.

2. Managerial skills:

- Ability to take responsibility: Responsibility for actions and decisions, including learning from mistakes.
- Self-improvement: Commitment to continuous professional development and performance improvement.
- Creativity and initiative: The ability to find innovative solutions and propose new ideas.
- Strategic Planning and Action: The ability to anticipate requirements, opportunities, and risks and plan accordingly.
- Ability to delegate: The ability to assign responsibilities effectively to team members.
- Objectivity in appreciation: The ability to make fair and impartial decisions.

3. Interpersonal skills:

- Ability to work independently: The ability to handle individual tasks without excessive supervision.
- Ability to work in a team: The ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues to achieve common goals.
- Mediation and negotiation skills: The ability to resolve conflicts and negotiate solutions acceptable to all parties involved.

An analysis of these criteria reveals a concern for technical skills and individual responsibility. Criteria such as “ability to implement”, “ability to solve problems efficiently”, and “ability to take responsibility” are essential for administrative efficiency and for ensuring quality public services. These criteria align with the principles of good governance, such as accountability and efficiency (UNDP, 1997), emphasizing the importance of technical skills and individual responsibility in achieving organizational goals.

However, there are certain limitations to these criteria. The lack of criteria that directly measure officials’ contribution to transparency, citizen participation or the prevention of corruption can limit the full assessment of their impact on good governance. It is also important to note that the effectiveness of the criteria depends not only on their definition, but also on how they are implemented in practice. An effective evaluation system

requires not only clear and relevant criteria, but also objective evaluation methods, good communication of criteria to officials, and a clear correlation between evaluation and rewards (Armstrong, 2009). These aspects are empirically necessary to ensure the fairness, transparency and efficiency of the evaluation process and to promote an organizational culture focused on performance and accountability. Further research should explore how these criteria are applied in practice and their impact on good governance in the specific context of municipalities in Romania.

3. Methodology

This research uses a predominantly qualitative methodological approach, with descriptive quantitative elements, to investigate the impact of performance indicators used in human resources development (HRD) on good governance at the level of mayoralities in the North-East region of Romania. The choice of a predominantly qualitative methodology is justified by the limited number of questionnaires collected in the testing phase of the research instrument. This limitation prevents the use of inferential statistical tests for correlation analysis, but allows for in-depth analysis of qualitative data, which can provide valuable insights into respondents' perceptions and experiences.

3.1. Research design

The study adopts an exploratory design, focused on understanding the perceptions of the secretaries general of the mayoralities in the North-East region regarding the performance indicators used in the DRU and their impact on good governance. The exploratory design is appropriate in the testing phase of the questionnaire, allowing the adjustment of the research tool and analysis strategies according to the preliminary data.

3.2. Research Tool: Questionnaire

The main data collection tool is a structured, online questionnaire that addresses multiple issues related to the HRD in LPAs, including information about the TU and the respondent, the general situation of civil servants, training programmes, performance and evaluation criteria, performance indicators, the impact of the HRD and legislative changes, the relationship with the Chief Authorising Officer and the perception of performance indicators. The questionnaire was designed to capture both factual data and respondents' perceptions and opinions, using a combination of closed-ended questions (with pre-set answers, including Likert scales) and

open-ended questions.

The choice of secretaries-general as the target group for the questionnaire is justified by their central role in the human resources management process in LPAs. The Secretaries-General are responsible for coordinating administrative activities, ensuring the legality of administrative acts and managing human resources, with an overview of the functioning of the institution and the development needs of staff. Therefore, their perceptions and experiences are essential to understand how performance indicators influence HRD and good governance at local level.

3.3. Sampling and Data Collection

In the testing phase, the questionnaire was administered to a limited number of 50 secretaries general from the mayoralities in the North-East region of Romania. The selection of respondents was opportunistic, based on their willingness to participate in the study. The questionnaire was administered online.

3.4. Data analysis

The data analysis will focus on a qualitative interpretation of the answers to the open-ended questions, highlighting recurring themes and perspectives. The quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended questions will be presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, providing a description of the sample and the answers. Inferential statistical tests will not be applied due to the small sample size.

3.5. Research Limitations

The limited number of respondents in this testing phase of the questionnaire constitutes an important limitation of the research. The results cannot be generalized to the entire population of secretaries general in Romanian mayoralities. The subjective nature of some answers to open-ended questions must also be taken into account.

4. Data analysis

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the preliminary data obtained through the questionnaire administered to the general secretaries of the mayoralities in the North-East region. The analysis focuses on issues relevant to the link between human resource development (HRD), performance indicators and good governance, without reference to the number of respondents. Percentage and graph data are used to illustrate the trends identified in the responses.

4.1. Training Plans and Budgeting

A percentage of 85% of the mayoralities report the existence of an annual professional training plan for civil servants (Chart 1). Most of these plans (94%) are financed from the local budget (Chart 2).

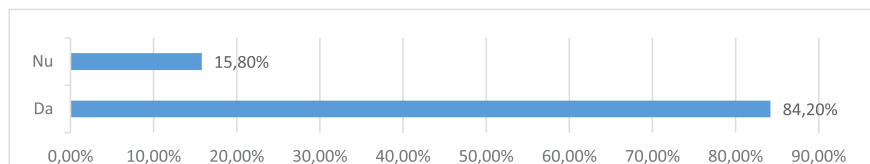


Figure 1: Existence of the annual training plan at the level of the TAUs

Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

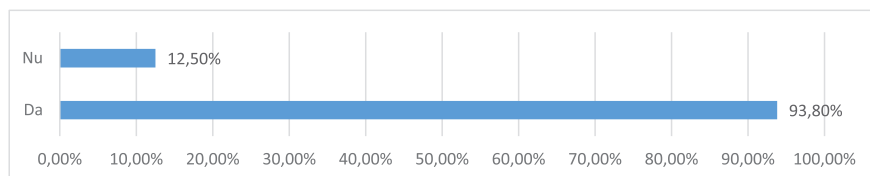


Chart 2: Budgeting of the annual training plan at the level of the TAUs

Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

This finding indicates a declarative commitment of the mayoralities to the professional development of civil servants. The existence of a training plan, budgeted from own resources, suggests a recognition of the importance of the HRD for the efficient functioning of the local public administration. However, it is important to note that the existence of a plan does not automatically guarantee the effectiveness of training programs, requiring further analysis of their content, implementation and impact.

4.2. Types of Training Courses

Courses on specific legislation (public procurement, accounting) are the most frequent (58%), followed by courses on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) (23.2%) and courses on the development of managerial skills (18.8%) (Graph 3).

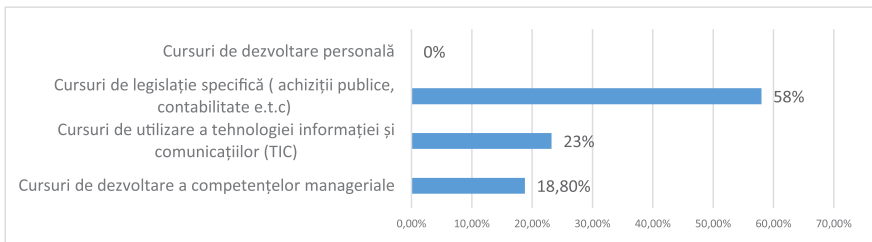


Figure 3: General types of vocational training

Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

This distribution suggests a predominant orientation towards the technical and legal aspects of public administration, to the detriment of the development of transversal competences, such as managerial and digital skills. Although knowledge of legislation is essential, it is important for civil servants to also develop skills in management, communication, leadership and use of modern technologies, in order to face the complex challenges of contemporary public administration.

4.3. Collaborations for Vocational Training

Collaboration with the ANFP is the most frequent (85%), followed by collaboration with private institutions (10%) and with the INA (5%) (Graph 4).

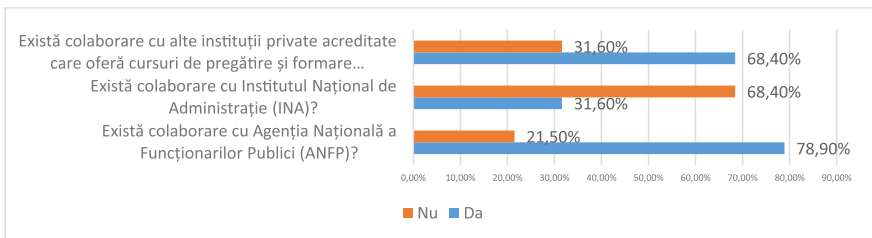


Figure 4: Institutional collaborations for vocational training

Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

This finding highlights the important role of the ANFP in providing training programs for civil servants in LPAs. Dependence on a single institution can limit the diversity and adaptability of training programs to the specific needs of each municipality. Exploring collaborations with other institutions, including academia and non-governmental organizations, could contribute to better aligning training programs with the concrete requ-

irements of local public administration.

4.4. Perception of the Effectiveness of the Performance Appraisal System

The average of the scores on the Likert scale (1-5) for the efficiency of the evaluation system is 3.2, and for fairness it is 3.0 (Graph 5).

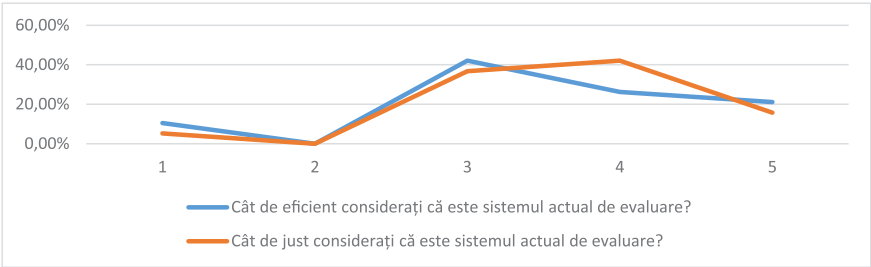


Figure 5: Perception of the Effectiveness of the Performance Appraisal System
Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

These average scores indicate a mixed perception of the effectiveness and fairness of the evaluation system, suggesting the need for improvement. A low perception of the efficiency and fairness of the evaluation system can lead to demotivation, lack of confidence and decreased performance. It is essential that the appraisal system is perceived as objective, transparent and relevant to the work carried out by civil servants.

4.5. Performance Indicators and Good Governance

The most frequently mentioned performance indicators are administrative efficiency (70%), quality of public services (65%), transparency (55%) and accountability (50%) (Figure 6).

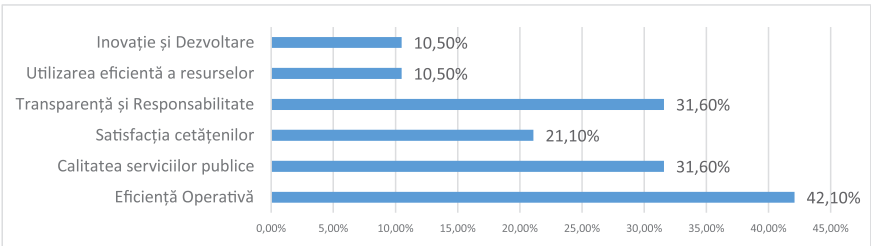


Figure 6: Categories of performance indicators considered essential
Source: Own processing based on the questionnaire applied

This finding confirms the importance of these aspects for good governance. The mentioned indicators reflect the concern for concrete results, the orientation towards citizens and the respect of ethical and legal principles. However, it is important that these indicators are clearly and objectively defined and measured in order to allow for a fair assessment of performance and progress towards good governance.

4.6. Qualitative Analysis of Answers to Open-Ended Questions

The analysis of the answers to the open-ended questions highlighted two main themes:

Need to improve the performance evaluation system: Many respondents mentioned the lack of clarity of the evaluation criteria, subjectivism in the evaluation and the lack of correlation between evaluation and rewards. Some respondents pointed out that the current appraisal system is perceived as formal, bureaucratic and inefficient, with little impact on the actual performance of civil servants.

Example: “The evaluation criteria are too general and do not reflect the specifics of each official’s activity. The evaluation is often made on the basis of subjective impressions, without taking into account the concrete results.”

The need to adapt training programs to the concrete needs of the administration: Respondents pointed out that many training programs are irrelevant, theoretical and do not respond to the concrete needs of the local public administration. Also, the lack of updating of training programs to the legislation in force and technological developments was mentioned.

Example: “Training programs are often too theoretical and do not provide practical tools to deal with concrete problems in administration. There is a need for more applied training programs, which take into account the specifics of each mayor’s office.”

These findings suggest that while there is a declarative commitment to the HRD, there are a number of challenges related to the effective implementation of training and performance evaluation programmes. A more strategic approach tailored to the concrete needs of local public administration is needed to ensure that the HRD effectively contributes to improving performance and promoting good governance.

5. Results and discussions

This chapter interprets the results of the qualitative analysis of the data

obtained from the questionnaire administered to the general secretaries of the mayoralties in the North-East region, linking them to the theoretical framework presented above and discussing the implications for HRD practices in LPAs and for the promotion of good governance.

5.1. Training and Budgeting Plans: Declarative Commitment vs. Real Effectiveness

The results indicate that a significant percentage of town halls report the existence of an annual training plan, financed mainly from the local budget. However, it is important to analyse why there is a gap between this declarative commitment and the actual effectiveness of training programmes. Several factors can contribute to this gap:

- **Lack of a rigorous assessment of training needs:** Training programmes can be developed without a proper analysis of the concrete needs of civil servants and local administration.
- **Irrelevant or outdated content:** Training programs can be focused on theoretical aspects, without providing practical tools to face concrete challenges in administration.
- **Poor implementation:** Training plans may only exist on paper, without being effectively implemented due to lack of resources, competing priorities, or lack of interest from management.
- **Lack of impact assessment mechanisms:** There are no clear mechanisms to assess the impact of training programmes on the performance of civil servants and on the quality of public services.

One respondent noted: *“We have a training plan, but we often don’t have time to implement it. We are too busy with our current tasks and we don’t have time for training.”* This statement suggests that the pressure to solve urgent problems may hinder the implementation of long-term training programs. This is linked to the literature that emphasizes the importance of a strategic approach to HRD (SHRM), where aligning training programs with organizational objectives is essential to maximize investment in human capital (Armstrong, 2009; Ulrich, 2005).

5.2. Types of Training Courses: The Need for Diversification

The distribution of the types of courses offered highlights a preponderance of courses on specific legislation, to the detriment of courses on the development of managerial skills and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). This finding suggests a possible misalignment between real training needs and the existing offer.

The lack of ICT courses can limit the administration's ability to effectively use modern technologies and provide quality public services in the digital age. Civil servants must be able to use digital tools to communicate with citizens, manage documents, analyse data and make informed decisions.

Also, the lack of managerial skills development courses can affect the administration's ability to effectively manage human resources, plan strategically and make correct decisions. Managerial skills, such as leadership, communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution, are essential for creating a high-performing work environment and promoting a positive organizational culture. The literature emphasizes the importance of adapting training programs to the specific context of the organization and to the rapid changes in society (Dachner et al., 2021). The lack of ICT courses, for example, can limit the administration's ability to make effective use of modern technologies and provide quality public services in the digital age.

5.3. Training Collaborations: The Role of ANFP

The predominant collaboration with ANFP suggests a dependence of the mayoralities on the programs offered by this institution. While the ANFP plays an important role in providing training, it is important to consider the pros and cons of this dependency.

Advantages:

- **Accessibility:** ANFP programs are often free or subsidized, making them affordable for municipalities with limited resources.
- **Standardization:** ANFP offers standardized training programs, which ensure a minimum level of skills for civil servants.

Disadvantages:

- **Lack of adaptation:** ANFP programs can be too general and may not meet the specific needs of each city hall.
- **Limited flexibility:** Municipalities may have difficulty adapting ANFP programs to their own priorities and calendar.
- **Dependency:** Reliance on a single source of training can limit diversity and innovation in HRD.
- **In order to diversify the sources of training, the municipalities could explore collaborations with:**
- **National Institute of Administration (INA):** INA offers specialized training programs for senior civil servants.

- **Higher education institutions:** Universities and colleges can offer training programs tailored to the needs of local public administration.
- **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs):** NGOs can provide training programmes in specific areas such as transparency, citizen participation and corruption prevention.
- **Private consulting firms:** Private firms can offer customized training programs, tailored to the specific needs of each municipality.

5.4. Perception of the Effectiveness of the Evaluation System: The Need for Objectivity

The average scores in the evaluation of the efficiency and fairness of the performance appraisal system indicate a need for improvement in the evaluation processes. Several factors can influence the perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system:

- **Lack of clarity of assessment criteria:** Assessment criteria can be too general, ambiguous or difficult to measure.
- **Subjectivism in evaluation:** Evaluation can be influenced by the evaluator's personal preferences or interpersonal relationships.
- **Lack of constructive feedback:** Civil servants may receive insufficient or unclear feedback, making it difficult for them to improve their performance.
- **Lack of correlation with rewards:** The results of the evaluation may not be taken into account when awarding rewards or promotions, which demotivates employees.

To improve the perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system, the following measures can be taken:

- **Defining clear, specific, measurable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) evaluation criteria:** The evaluation criteria should be tailored to the specifics of each function and be easy to understand and apply.
- **Use of objective evaluation methods:** Evidence-based evaluation methods such as performance indicators, activity reports and feedback from citizens can be used.
- **Providing constructive and regular feedback:** Evaluators should provide public officials with specific, detailed and performance-oriented feedback.
- **Linking assessment to rewards:** The results of the assessment should be taken into account when awarding rewards, promotions and profes-

sional development opportunities.

5.5. Performance Indicators and Good Governance: Alignment with Principles

The performance indicators mentioned by respondents reflect a concern for key aspects of good governance, such as administrative efficiency, quality of public services, transparency and accountability. However, it is important to consider how these indicators are measured and used in practice to ensure a fair assessment of performance and contribution to good governance.

Performance indicators can be used to promote good governance by:

- **Measuring progress:** Indicators can be used to monitor progress towards achieving good governance objectives, such as increasing transparency, improving the quality of public services and reducing corruption.
- **Identifying problems:** Indicators can help identify problems and areas that need improvement.
- **Holding civil servants accountable:** Indicators can be used to hold civil servants accountable for their performance and motivate them to achieve set goals.
- **Improving communication:** Indicators can be used to communicate with citizens about the performance of public administration and to increase public trust.

5.6. Qualitative Analysis: Emerging Themes and Implications

The analysis of the answers to the open-ended questions highlighted two main themes:

- **Need to improve the performance evaluation system:** Many respondents mentioned the lack of clarity of the evaluation criteria, subjectivism in the evaluation and the lack of correlation between evaluation and rewards. Some respondents pointed out that the current appraisal system is perceived as formal, bureaucratic and inefficient, with little impact on the actual performance of civil servants.
- **The need to adapt training programs to the concrete needs of the administration:** Respondents pointed out that many training programs are irrelevant, theoretical and do not respond to the concrete needs of the local public administration. Also, the lack of updating of training programs to the legislation in force and technological developments

was mentioned.

These findings suggest that while there is a declarative commitment to the HRD, there are a number of challenges related to the effective implementation of training and performance evaluation programmes. A more strategic approach tailored to the concrete needs of local public administration is needed to ensure that the HRD effectively contributes to improving performance and promoting good governance.

In conclusion, the data analysis highlighted a number of important issues related to the DRU and good governance in LPAs. While there is a commitment to the HRD, there is a need to improve performance appraisal systems and adapt training programmes to the concrete needs of the administration. By implementing more effective HRD policies and strategies, local public administration can help improve performance, increase transparency and accountability, and build public trust.

6. Conclusions

This preliminary research, based on a qualitative analysis of the data collected through a questionnaire administered to the general secretaries of the municipalities in the North-East region, investigated the interdependence between human resources development (HRD), performance indicators and good governance at local level. The results obtained provide valuable insight into current HRD practices in LPAs and highlight both strengths and main challenges.

The main findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

- **Declarative commitment to the HRD does not always translate into real effectiveness:** Although most municipalities report the existence of training plans, the actual implementation and relevance of these programs remain in question. Factors such as the lack of a rigorous assessment of training needs, irrelevant or outdated content of the programmes and the lack of impact assessment mechanisms may limit the effectiveness of the HRD.
- **The training offer is insufficiently diversified:** Specific legislation courses prevail, to the detriment of the development of transversal skills, such as digital and managerial skills. This limited orientation may affect the ability of local public administration to meet the complex challenges of the twenty-first century.
- **Dependence on ANFP limits flexibility and adaptability:** The pre-

dominant collaboration with ANFP, while ensuring the accessibility of training programs, can limit their diversity and adaptability to the specific needs of each municipality.

- **The performance appraisal system is perceived as inefficient and unfair:** Average scores on the appraisal system's effectiveness and fairness indicate a need to improve its objectivity, transparency and relevance. The negative perception of the evaluation system can lead to demotivation and decreased performance.
- **Performance indicators reflect a concern for good governance, but need a clearer definition:** The most frequently mentioned indicators (administrative efficiency, quality of public services, transparency and accountability) reflect a concern for key aspects of good governance. However, a more precise definition and measurement of these indicators is needed to ensure a fair assessment of performance and progress towards good governance.

Based on these findings, the following measures are recommended to improve HRD practices in LPAs and to promote good governance:

- **Develop strategic HRD plans, based on a rigorous assessment of training needs:** Training plans should be aligned with the strategic objectives of municipalities and the concrete needs of civil servants, with a focus on the development of digital, managerial and interpersonal skills.
- **Diversification of training sources:** Municipalities should explore collaborations with INA, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and private consultancy firms to offer a wider range of training programmes.
- **Modernisation of the performance appraisal system:** The appraisal system should be based on clear, specific, measurable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) criteria, use objective appraisal methods and provide constructive and regular feedback to civil servants.
- **Promoting an organisational culture focused on learning and development:** Municipalities should create a working environment that encourages civil servants to participate in training programmes, develop their skills and contribute to improving organisational performance.
- **Precise definition and monitoring of performance indicators:** Better definition and measurement of performance indicators is needed to en-

sure a correct assessment of the performance of public administration and to better hold civil servants accountable.

It is important to note that this research is based on preliminary data, collected in a test phase of the questionnaire. The limited number of respondents prevents the generalization of the results to the entire population of the secretaries general of the mayoralities in Romania. Therefore, these conclusions should be interpreted with caution and considered as hypotheses that require validation by further research.

Future research should use a larger sample and apply quantitative analysis methods to test specific hypotheses and confirm preliminary findings. It is also recommended to explore complementary research methods, such as individual interviews or case studies, to gain a deeper insight into HRD practices in LPAs and the factors influencing their effectiveness.

In conclusion, this research provided valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities related to HRD and good governance in local public administration in Romania. By implementing the recommendations made, LPA decision-makers can contribute to the creation of a more efficient, transparent, accountable and citizen-oriented administration, thus strengthening public trust in local institutions and promoting the sustainable development of communities.

Bibliography:

1. Andrei, T., Profiroiu, M., & Oancea, B. (2012). ANALYSIS OF MOBILITY ISSUES AND POLITICIZATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 35, 5–21.
2. Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's Handbook of Performance Management: An Evidence-based Guide to Delivering High Performance*. Kogan Page. <https://books.google.ro/books?id=W6tNuAAACAAJ>
3. Arulrajah, A. A. (2016). Literature Review on Good Governance in the Organizations through Human Resource Management: A Corporate Level Analysis. *International Business Research*, 9(8), 14. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v9n8p14>
4. Becker, G. S. (2009). *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. University of Chicago Press.
5. Bercu, A.-M., & Buliga, A. M. (2019). STRATEGIC PLANNING OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. INSIGHTS FROM NORTH EAST ROMANIAN REGION. In M. Tofan, I. Bilan, & E. Cigu (Ed.), *EUROPEAN UNION FINANCIAL REGULATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREA (EUFIRE 2019)* (pp. 361–375). European Union, Erasmus+ Program.
6. Bevir, M. (2025). *The SAGE Handbook of Governance*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://www.sagepub.com>

ps://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200964

7. Boselie, P., Van Harten, J., & Veld, M. (2021). A human resource management review on public management and public administration research: Stop right there... before we go any further.... *Public Management Review*, 23(4), 483–500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1695880>
8. Cazacu, F. (2021). Ways of Approaching Performance in Local Public Administration in Romania. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 1(48), 20–35.
9. Ciobanu, A., & Androniceanu, A. (2018). INTEGRATED HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITIES - THE SOLUTION FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT IN ROMANIAN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS. *MANAGEMENT RESEARCH AND PRACTICE*, 10(3), 60–79.
10. Cristea, M., & Dragulin, I. (2015). THE NEW ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE IN THE EU MEMBER STATES. MACROECONOMIC RESULTS AND STATISTICAL CORRELATIONS FOR ROMANIA. *Annals of University of Craiova - Economic Sciences Series*, 2(43), 375–388.
11. Dachner, A. M., Ellingson, J. E., Noe, R. A., & Saxton, B. M. (2021). The future of employee development. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(2), 100732. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100732>
12. Dincă, M., Dincă, G., & Andronic, M. (2016). Efficiency and Sustainability of Local Public Goods and Services. Case Study for Romania. *Sustainability*, 8(8), 760. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8080760>
13. Fourie, D. (2016). *Good Governance in Relation to Public Administration*. 24(1).
- Hood, C. (1991). A PUBLIC MANAGEMENT FOR ALL SEASONS? *Public Administration*, 69(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x>
14. Hydén, G., Court, J., & Mease, K. (2004). *Making Sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from Sixteen Developing Countries*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. <https://books.google.ro/books?id=vZ3h2gOBIfQC>
15. Iacob, S. E., & Dermengi (Gerea), A.-G. (2022). *Motivation and Management of Human Resources in Public Administration*. 83–90. <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc/gidtp2022/09>
16. Keping, Y. (2018). Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-017-0197-4>
17. Meyer, J., & Allen, N. (1997). *Commitment in the Workplace: Theory, Research, and Application*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452231556>
18. Noja, G. G., & Cristea, M. (2017). Working conditions as key drivers of economic growth: Empirical evidence for Europe. *Economic and Social Development: Book of Proceedings*, 59–71.
19. OECD. (2023). *Public Employment and Management 2023: Towards a More Flexible Public Service*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/5b378e11-en>
20. Olteanu, V., Ionescu, F. T., & Barbu, A. M. (2013). CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SERVICE PORTFOLIO STRATEGIC PLANNING WITHIN ROMANIAN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS. In *TRANSFORMATIONS IN BUSINESS & ECONOMICS* (Vol. 12, Number 1A, pp. 301–317). VILNIUS UNIV.
21. Profiroiu, C. M., & Negoită, I. C. (2022). Public Administration Reform in Romania: Assessing the Past and Looking Into the Future. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, SI, 150–168. <https://doi.org/10.24193/tras.SI2022.9>

22. Rosenbloom, D. H., Kravchuk, R. S., & Clerkin, R. M. (2022). *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. <https://books.google.ro/books?id=O19IzgEACAAJ>
23. Sari, A. R. (2023). The Impact of Good Governance on the Quality of Public Management Decision Making. *Journal of Contemporary Administration and Management (ADMAN)*, 1(2), 39–46. <https://doi.org/10.61100/adman.v1i2.21>
24. Stanus, C. (2015). Government engagement in co-operative service delivery in Romania: Knowledge and acknowledgement. In *ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE* (Vol. 15, Number 1, pp. 76–102). ROMANIAN ACAD SOC.
25. Ulrich, D. (with Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration). (2005). *Human resource champions: The next agenda for adding value and delivering results* (19. [print.]). Harvard Business School Press.
26. UNDP, U. (1997). Governance for Sustainable Human Development, A Policy Document, United Nations Development Programme. *Diambil daripada* <http://magnet.undp.org/policy/default.htm>.
27. Zaitul, Z., Ilona, D., & Novianti, N. (2023). Good Governance in Rural Local Administration. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13010019>