

in-touch

Public Administration International

Newsletter



Office of the Prime Minister Project Kosovo

*Simon James,
PAI Consultant*

Nine years is a long lifespan for a project. When in October 2012 PAI finally closed its programme of support to the Prime Minister's Office in Kosovo, we had worked in the government buildings for longer than many of the civil servants we had helped.

It started modestly: a three-year project to help Kosovo develop the basics of an office to support the Prime Minister and his Cabinet in their decision-making. In a country devastated, physically and socially, by its long struggle to become independent from Serbia and by the subsequent NATO military operation, we were setting up a system of government almost from scratch. The civil service had been destroyed and the education system disrupted. It was a struggle just to establish and staff the basic structures.

In these circumstances, credibility matters. You need to bring in consultants who have done the job in their own countries and can advise from personal knowledge. PAI was fortunate in being able to call on people like Kenneth MacKenzie, who had held senior positions in the British Cabinet Secretariat, and Anne Evans, who had long managed the Cabinet's involvement in budgetary decisions in the Canadian province of Ontario. Their advice was practical and grounded in personal experience, although we were always careful to tailor it to local needs.

It worked. The structures began to grow and the processes began to work. DFID, impressed, extended our contract, then



Farewell dinner in Pristina, (left to right) Vjoleta Behluli, Filloreta Bytyçi, Simon James, Claire Cameron, Hugh Grant (Team Leader of PAI's parallel project on Civil Service and Salaries Legislation), Lindita Daija, Rosemary Proctor, Kreshnik Kurtishi

awarded us a successor contract. And with success came requests for more assistance. The Prime Minister wants to create a strategic planning office: can PAI help? Yes, we can bring out a colleague who used to work in Tony Blair's Strategy Unit. Can you provide a blueprint for the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Yes, we have former ambassador who can help. Can you develop policy capacities in ministries? Certainly. Could we train Permanent Secretaries? A speciality. And so on, for nine years.

One daunting but infinitely rewarding extra task was supporting implementation of the "Standards for Kosovo". This complex package of democratic, institutional and economic reforms was devised by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and leading international actors as a precondition for Kosovo's independence. The government struggled to comply. At their request, we created a team of eight local advisers with inter-

national support who did an impressive job of helping ministries plan and implement the changes. As regular reports to the United Nations Security Council showed, this work on standards made a big impact. DFID was impressed enough to extend our work to municipalities as well. We did this, taking care also to work with minority Serb municipalities, often succeeding where larger international organisations had not.

There are many lessons from this project. An international mix of consultants, bringing experience from across the world, proved very fertile: many from the UK, naturally, but also from Bosnia, Croatia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia – with an emphasis on experience from Eastern European countries that had recently passed through many of the transformations that Kosovo was experiencing. A close alliance with an Albanian consultancy firm, the admirable EuroPartners, brought in

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advisers who spoke the language and understood the culture – particularly valuable in training.

Two people were crucial to our success. Our local project manager, Filloreta Bytyçi, was shrewd, tireless and hugely respected by the Prime

Minister's Office. And we were extremely lucky in working for many years with Fitim Krasniqi, who first headed the Cabinet Secretariat and then was promoted to become General Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office. Our marvellous working relationship and his support were crucial.

The final measure of success was, simply: we worked ourselves out of a job. As we closed our Pristina office, the institutions we had helped to create were functioning on their own, and staff we had trained had taken charge of their own future development. We can be proud of that.



Mārtiņš Krieviņš

Grand strategies have a mixed reputation among both academics and practitioners of strategic planning and public policy development. Opponents often refer to them as wish-lists and works of fiction that do not add any value or connect to real life but serve only to further Government public relations by feeding public opinion with encouraging promises. Those arguing in favour of such strategies believe in the importance of being well-prepared to address possible future challenges and have ready-made solutions for them.

My opinion – based on more than ten years' professional experience in public administration and Centres of Government – is that the success or failure of grand strategies depends on four key issues: political interest and support, linkages to the budget, quality of analysis and communication. These issues are recognized as pillars of success for Latvia's National Development Plan 2014-2020 (NDP2020).

In 2012, the Latvian Government, Parliament, President's Office and

Grand Strategies – waste of resources or streamlining of development?

*Mārtiņš Krieviņš,
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various non-governmental stakeholders, under the leadership of the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre of the Office of the Prime Minister, met to debate future scenarios of the country's development. This was especially important after emerging from four years of austerity measures and becoming the EU's fastest growing economy in terms of GDP.

The debates on NDP2020 included a series of formal and informal workshops in the Government, active supervision of the whole process from the Parliamentary Commission and oversight from the President. Over the three cycles of public consultation processes more than 4000 comments were received and reviewed, alongside regional visits and debates. Numerous newspaper articles and TV news spots, national and regional, stirred up the debate, even inspiring a theatre play entitled "National Development Plan".

This difficult process ended in December 2012 with an unprecedented vote of the Parliament – 81 out of 100

MPs voted in favour of the NDP2020, 7 abstained and nobody voted against it!

This was a surprise in a Parliament where the current coalition holds a slim majority of 53 votes...

An additional success of the NDP2020 is the close linking of its objectives and measures with realistic budget allocations, coming from both the national budget and the EU structural and investment funds for the next planning period. This is now a great help for all involved in both the programming exercise of EU structural and investment funds and the preparation of the next medium term expenditure framework for Latvia.

Finally, I would like to invite any questions, comments or requests from the readers of PAI's newsletter, as well as to thank Claire Cameron and all of the PAI team for our past and hopefully future co-operation!

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Public Administration Assessments

Claire Cameron, Managing Director

There is an acute need for better public administration in many countries, and for better donors' approaches to support it. A well-designed reform strategy and an assistance programme that takes careful account of the beneficiary country's specific circumstances, politics, needs, aspirations and culture are crucially important prerequisites for success. Donor organisations that provide assistance to public administration reform (PAR) need factual and analytical bases for designing their support strategies, plans, and specific projects.

Various approaches have been adopted to identify suitable assistance programmes. Since 1999, the SIGMA programme, which is jointly funded by the OECD and the EU, has developed a sophisticated system of assessing various aspects of public administration for the European Commission. The system uses agreed "Baselines" which cover the most important horizontal systems of central government administration. A number of other organisations (e.g. the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank) have also used some of these Baselines for their own assessments.

PAI is offering to bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors a full package of public administration assessments, based primarily on the tried and tested Baselines, and using experts with a proven record of conducting assessments in many countries. The package provides comprehensive and reliable information and analysis that is "ready to use" as the basis for comprehensive donors' PAR strategies, and for planning and programming of PAR assistance projects. The package will include three assessments – of policy, human resource management and public financial management. It will

also include an overview report on the structures and systems for managing PAR in the country being assessed.

The assessments will assist donors to:

- Gain a comprehensive picture of the administrative and political situation in countries as a basis for designing their overall PAR strategies
- Assess the state of development in specific fields of administration, including current and planned activities of other donors in these fields
- Set priorities for assistance to PAR
- Design Terms of Reference for assistance projects
- Identify potential political and administrative counterparts for future projects, including assessment of their level of commitment and influence

- Raise awareness of the importance of PAR and of the reform of specific areas.

We have brought together a group of experts, led by Michal Ben Gera, who has a great deal of experience of using the Baselines from her time at SIGMA and more recently as an international consultant. Michal and her team have unrivalled experience of undertaking assessments as well as designing, implementing, and supervising reform programmes in many countries.

If you would like more information about the Public Administration Assessments please contact me at claire.cameron@public-admin.co.uk or call on + 44 (0)20 7580 3590. We look forward to the possibility of working with you.

Successful cities:

Promoting economic growth and sustainable development

**NEW DATES:
14 to 18 October 2013**

We have decided to postpone our one-week study programme on Successful Cities.

The programme will give participants an opportunity to look at issues and problems arising from city growth and development and will increase understanding of the importance of investment to stimulate economic growth. It will include sessions from key experts and practitioners working on urban growth and tackling urban poverty. Also included are visits to Government Ministries, local authorities and the business community.

For more information about the programme, or to book a place, please contact Clare Walters at: clare.walters@public-admin.co.uk



New projects and programmes

Slava Gromlyuk, Business Development Director

2013 has begun well, with some interesting new consultancy projects starting up. We were delighted to win a programme of Core Skills Training (Phase II) for public servants from Juba and from five states in South Sudan. Funded by the Capacity Building Trust Fund, we and our partner organisations, (British Council, ROI – Dutch Institute for Public Administration – and Skills for Southern Sudan), will be providing training in English language and business communication, human resources management and gender awareness. The project Team Leader, Breffni Kelly, and I travelled to Juba in early March to start the inception phase. For Breffni it was a familiar place, having previously worked in South Sudan with PAI on another CBTF-funded project, but for me, it was the first time in this newly-independent country. We received a warm welcome and invaluable briefing from the CBTF staff who outlined the challenges that lie ahead of us (one of which is travelling during the rainy season when most of the country is flooded). We also had an excellent meeting with the Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and her colleagues from other Ministries who will be involved in the implementation of the project. It was

a good opportunity to meet our colleagues from the consortium to discuss the way ahead and enjoy a drink together on the banks of the White Nile.

For the Swedish International Development Agency, (SIDA), our consultants were involved in a study of potential areas of support to public administration in Albania and Kosovo that SIDA may fund during the period 2014 to 2020.



Breffni and Slava on the banks of the Nile in Juba

Turning to study programmes, in February and March we designed and ran three tailor-made programmes.

These were:

- Training and developing training capacity for the Institute of Public Administration, Bulgaria
- Improving service delivery by using e-government and offering services on-line for the Council of Ministers and other key Government of Bulgaria Ministries

- Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Last, but not least, we are pleased to be running a series of short training courses on EU Negotiating Skills for civil servants from Turkey.

If you would like any more information about our latest work, please get in touch with me at slava.gromlyuk@public-admin.co.uk

About PAI

PAI offers consultancy, development and training services for public sector organisations in developing and transitional economy countries going through political, constitutional, economic or structural change.

Our main areas of competence are public administration reform, good governance, policy and strategy, human resource management and capacity development,

public finance and economic development, legal and judicial reform, information and communications, culture, heritage and tourism.

We have a network of over 1,300 Associate Consultants with extensive professional experience in Africa, Asia, the Balkans, the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. Please get in touch with us if you want to join our network of Associate Consultants.

We also have substantial experience of designing and managing study programmes in the UK and in other countries. We provide tailor-made programmes, seminars and workshops at the request of governments, funding agencies and other public and private sector bodies.

For further information about our scheduled UK training programmes please visit our website at www.public-admin.co.uk or call us on +44 (0)20 7580 3590.