

The training needs analysis regarding the development of generic competences of local government officers - Research Report

The analysis was conducted as part of the project entitled “Effective Officers, Happy Citizens – Good Practices in a Modern EU Member State”, co-financed from the EU “Lifelong Learning” programme.

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
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2. Generic competences and the character of work in local government administration.....	3
3. The goals and the context of the research	5
4. Research methodology	7
5. Research process	9
6. Conclusions and recommendations	25
7. Tables	
Table 1. The objectives of civil service and generic competences	8
Table 2. Research methods.....	9
Table 3. The structure of respondents by position: both offices together.....	11
Table 4. The structure of respondents by position: Municipal Office in Kampinos	11
Table 5. The structure of respondents by position: Municipal Office in Warsaw–Wawer....	11
Table 6. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: both offices together.....	12
Table 7. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: Municipal Office in Kampinos	12
Table 8. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: Municipal Office in Warsaw –Wawer.....	12
Table 9. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: both offices together	14
Table 10. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: Municipal Office in Kampinos	15
Table 11. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: Municipal Office in Warsaw–Wawer....	16
Table 12. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by frequency of indication in both offices.....	17
Table 13. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by position and frequency of indication in both offices	18
Table 14. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by vocational experience and frequency of indication in both offices	19
Table 15. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training by frequency of indication in both offices	20
Table 16. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training by position: both offices together.....	21
Table 17. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training by vocational experience: both offices together	22
Table 18. Participation in earlier training enhancing generic competences: both offices together.....	23
Table 19. Kinds of problems in everyday work: both offices together	25

1. Introduction

The presented report covers the analysis of training needs of local government officers. It summarises the second stage of works on elaborating the work organisation training package

for local government officers conducted as a part of the Leonardo da Vinci project entitled “Effective Officers, Happy Citizens – Good Practices in a Modern EU Member State”, co-financed from the EU “Lifelong Learning” programme. The project is aimed at adaptation and testing the training package for work organisation in administrative sector. The training package will be based on experience of other EU countries (Germany, Greece) in this field as well as the generic competence profiles for EU local government officers worked out in the project. The activities will end up with certification of the training package.

The project activities are carried out in the following stages:

- Stage I: working out the generic competence profiles for local government officers;
- Stage II: the analysis of training needs of local government officers on the basis of the generic competence profiles;
- Stage III: designing and launching an Internet repository of knowledge with up-to-date information on the organisation of work in administration
- Stage IV: preparing a training package for local government officers, adapted for the Polish and Slovakian context;
- Stage V: testing the training package in a pilot project.

In the first stage of the project *the generic competence profiles for local government officers* employed in territorial self-government units was developed. One of the project outcomes will be a *training package for local government administration staff* adapted to the Polish and Slovakian context. Sixty officers will take part in training programmes on the organisation of work in local administration. Additionally, all new developments in the field of work organisation will be gathered in the Internet repository of knowledge.

The report is to present the results of the second stage of the project i.e. the analysis of training needs of local government officers on the basis of the developed generic competence profiles. The structure of the report is as follows:

Chapter 2 presents the meaning of the generic competences in the context of the specificity of work in local government administration. Chapter 3 describes the goals and the context of the research. Chapter 4 includes the description of the research methodology used in order to identify officers’ training needs. This chapter provides the outline of the questionnaire survey method and the method of individual interviews which were applied in the research. Chapter 5 reports the course of the research. Chapter 6 contains the conclusions from the research and recommendations for the content of training enhancing generic competences in local government administration.

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2. Generic competences and the character of work in local government administration

As it was mentioned above, in the first stage of the project *the generic competence profiles for local government officers* was developed. The profile comprises the following catalogue of generic competences, presented in the form of so-called envelope model:

1. Organisation building

- Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions
- Team management
- Dealing with change

2. Professionalism

- Use of laws and regulations
- Use of information and communication technologies
- Problem solving
- Decision making

3. Interpersonal relations

- Communication
- Team work

4. Self-management

- Using principles of ethical behaviour
- Planning and organisation of work
- Stress management
- Orientation towards professional development

For each generic competence a five- level scale of performance appraisal was applied.

In the works on *the generic competence profiles for local government officers* the team took into account the formerly applicable Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 13 March 2007 on the manner and procedure for qualification assessment of local government officers was vacated. The Ordinance defined the way of carrying out the evaluation of local government officers’ performance and indicated the mandatory and optional criteria for such evaluation. The choice of optional criteria resulted from specific duties and tasks of particular position.

The mandatory criteria encompassed such competences as:

- ability to use relevant regulations,
- planning and organisation of work,
- using principles of ethical behaviour

Among optional criteria dependant on the position the following competences were included.:

- ability to operate technical equipment,
- readiness for personal development and improvement of qualifications,
- oral and written communication,
- good communication skills,
- positive attitude to citizens,
- good teamwork skills,
- good negotiating skills,
- information management,
- resource management,
- personnel management,
- quality management in relation to performed tasks,
- change management,
- being results-oriented,
- decision making,

- ability to cope under stress,
- strategic thinking.

Apart from the above mentioned competences, the assessment covered also personal traits such as: diligence, impartiality, efficiency (obligatory), self-reliance, creativity, initiative(optional).

The assessment was based on the aforementioned criteria (obligatory and optional) and was expressed with the level of duty performance of individual officer : very good, good, satisfying, not satisfying. It must be stressed that the criteria referred to the performance appraisal of duties and tasks particular to a given position and not to the level of the competences an individual employee had.

The introduction of the new act on self-government officers, regulating the authority of the unit manager to choose the way to carry out the staff appraisal as well as the criteria and the grading scale made the earlier ordinance invalid. Unit managers latitude enabled more proper staff appraisal as per the specific function of a given unit.

Efficient performance of professional tasks and duties requires mastering a set of specific competences, including generic ones, which are often called “soft competences”. Possessing, developing and applying competences enables an employee to carry out professional tasks more productively, to adapt better to working conditions and to interact properly with co-workers and clients as well as increases his/her capability to work in changeable conditions. Thus competences not only determine the employee’s potential but influence the effectiveness of his/her work performance.

3. The goals and the context of the research

The goals

The training needs analysis carried out in the project pursued the following goals:

- to identify competence gaps regarding generic competences determined in “*The generic competence profiles for local government officers*”;
- to identify those competences, which will be enhanced in the following stages of the project;
- to identify the problems the officers face in their every day work as an inspiration for designing training sessions improving generic competences.

The context

The main background for the present research was provided by “*The Training Strategy in Civil Service for the years 2008-2010*”¹. This document sets out the significant framework

¹ Piekłus I, Pytel G., Reimus T., *Strategia szkoleniowa w służbie publicznej na lata 2008-2010*, Departament Służby Cywilnej KPRM, Warszawa , November 2008 – the publication was one of the results of the systemic

for designing training for public administration in Poland. The key points and conclusions can be summed up as follows:

- Designing training should include training needs analysis in three dimensions²:
 - organisational level (the specificity of the office and adequate attaining strategic and operational goals);
 - group level (the specificity of the trainees’ group);
 - individual level (according to the results of performance appraisal and professional development pathways).
- Generic competences are coherent with the model of systemic approach in public administration management (network administration model).
- Generic competences are related to the strategic and operational objectives of the training policy in public administration:
 - **Building up and promoting a new priority system in civil service**– refers to the need of developing initiative, reliability, objectivity, identification with the employing institution, combining ethical and legal behaviour with sensitivity to people and their needs (creating an ethos of civil service); includes developing and supporting attitudes such as : client –orientation, citizen-orientation, pride and feeling of affiliation, awareness and sharing the same values and goals, pro-activeness and innovativeness.
 - **Improving contacts with clients** - refers to changing attitudes towards clients and changing the public administration officers’ mentality towards acceptance and supporting the simplification of legal regulations and procedures (on the basis of internal analysis), informing about servicing role of public administration.
 - **Improving education quality in public administration** – comprises working out positive selection mechanisms in administration, making the present model of carrying out and using staff performance appraisal more realistic, designing individual professional development pathways as well as ensuring high quality education and training and increasing the level of specialist knowledge and familiarity with legal regulations in chosen areas.
 - **Introducing modern motivation systems in public administration** – concerns application of non-financial incentives, improvement of HR management quality, motivating employees by values such as: pride and feeling of affiliation, care for awareness of values and goals of civil service and given office, development of managerial skills of supervising staff.
 - **Professionalization of the public administration functioning** – includes introducing innovations, building learning organisation, introducing management by objectives, cost structure rationalization, measurement of activity effectiveness, creating opportunities to adapt the organization to change (human level, organizational level), designing strategic planning processes.

The relationship of the generic competences with training objectives of the civil service is presented in the Table 1. on page 8.

project carried out by the Civil Service Department of The Chancellery of the Prime Minister under the Operational Programme *Human Capital*, available on <http://www.dsc.kprm.gov.pl/strona.php?id=45&id2=23> .

² Boydell T., Leary M, *Identyfikacja potrzeb szkoleniowych*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków , 2001

4. Research methodology

In the research carried out in the project individual interviews and questionnaires were used. The main research was preceded by a pilot survey aimed at verification of the tools regarding the clarity of questions, especially those concerning self-assessment of generic competence level.

The questionnaire consisted of 8 questions, including 6 closed ones and 2 open ones. The structure of the questionnaire was as follows:

- indication of work character and the range of performed duties;
- self-assessment of each generic competence level – each respondent was to indicate, relevant to his/her situation, level of each of 13 competences using 5-grade scale: excellent, very good, good, fair and insufficient;
- indication of three competences of key importance for an effective performance of tasks;
- listing training activities on the generic competences that respondents have participated so far;
- suggesting three generic competences that respondents would like to develop;
- indication everyday work problems concerning work time organisation, work and position organisation, conflicts with co-workers, adjustment of tasks to employees' competences, documentation flow, keeping deadlines and customer service.

The scenario for individual interviews was based on the same questionnaire.

Table 1. The objectives of civil service and generic competences

<i>Generic competences</i>	<i>Training objectives in civil service</i>				
	<i>Building up and promoting new priority system in civil service</i>	<i>Improving contacts with clients</i>	<i>Improving education quality in public administration</i>	<i>Introducing modern motivation systems in public administration</i>	<i>Professionalization of the public administration functioning</i>
1. Professionalism					
Use of laws and regulations	x		x		
Use of information and communication technologies					
Problem solving					
Decision making					
2. Self-management					
Using principles of ethical behaviour	x				
Planning and organisation of work					x
Dealing with stress					
Orientation towards professional development			x		
3. Organisation building					
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions		x			
Team management	x			x	
Dealing with change					x
4. Interpersonal relations					
Communication					
Teamwork					

The methods applied in the research are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Research methods

Method	Goal
Individual interview	Acquiring information regarding : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key expectations related to development of generic competences of self-government officers • verification of questionnaire
Method	Goal
Questionnaire (handed out) The questionnaire consisted of thematic blocks grouping questions. The answers were chosen from a list or written down in case of open questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indication of generic competences requiring enhancement for efficient performance of professional tasks • identification of earlier training developing generic competences • identification of problems in everyday work

5. Research process

The research was carried out in June and July 2009 in two municipal offices – in Kampinos and Warsaw-Wawer.

The research with the use of a questionnaire covered 78 respondents:

- 60 respondents from Municipal Office in Warsaw-Wawer (30% of all employees);
- 18 respondents from Municipal Office in Kampinos (30% of all employees).

The individual interviews were held in Municipal Office in Warsaw-Wawer and embraced 5 officers.

The rich material attained in the course of research facilitated thorough analysis of the situation, formulating reliable conclusions and recommendations and specifying thematic areas for future training adjusted optimally to the real needs of self-government officers.

5.1 Individual interviews

As a part of training needs analysis , 5 individual interviews in Municipal Office in Warsaw-Wawer were carried out. The participants of the interviews were: 3 Department Chief Officers, and 2 Chief Specialists. They represented wide range of organisational units responsible for HR management, budgetary issues, culture development in the municipality, citizens’ service and EU financed projects.

The participants were asked to assess the structure and the content of the questionnaire that was to be used in the next stage of the research. Two different versions of the questionnaire underwent the assessment. All respondents unanimously chose the version where the questions regarding competences were presented in the form of a competence grid. The following objective of the interviews was to collect respondents’ opinions on competences which are essential for efficient performance of their professional tasks. Equally important was to learn what in training developing generic competences the respondents already participated and which competences they are still willing to develop. Problems in everyday work of self-government officers were also of researchers’ interest.

The gathered information is summed up below:

- **Efficient performance of tasks** – the group of Chief Specialist indicated two competences: use of laws and regulations and problem solving. The group of Department Chief Officers regarded decision making and team management as the most important. In the whole interviewed group the most often indicated were decision making and team management, however problem solving was also pointed out as significant.
- **Competences to be developed** – the participants would like to train most of all use of laws and regulations and then decision making, team management and orientation towards professional development. In case of Chief Specialists, clear preferences are not notable, but Department Chief Officers chose use of laws and regulations and team management
- **Participation in earlier training developing generic competences** – the most often mentioned were use of laws and regulations and then communication. Moreover, particular respondents took part in training enhancing competences such as: teamwork, orientation towards professional development, use of information and communication technologies.
- **Problems in everyday work** – as key problems Chief Specialists indicated mostly the lack of communication between organisational units of the Office, frequent changes of decisions, improper work organisation. It was also stated that the necessity to do many tasks at the same time makes the time management difficult. Department Chief Officers as the most bothering regarded work force problems resulted from overloading employees with duties and prolonging procedures for recruitment of new employees as well as disturbances in communication inside the Office.

5.2 Questionnaires

The research with the use of a questionnaire covered 78 respondents. The structure of the surveyed group by position and work experience is presented in the table below:

Position

Table 3. The structure of respondents by position: both offices

Position	Number of respondents	% respondents
Clerk, junior inspector	11	15,07
Specialist, inspector	25	34,25
Chief Specialist	22	30,13
Head of Section	3	4,10

Department Chief Officer	7	9,60
Others (including: social worker, legal advisor)	5	6,85
TOTAL	73*	100,0%

Table 4. The structure of respondents by position: Municipal Office in Kampinos

Position	Number of respondents	% respondents
Clerk, junior inspector	3	21,43
Specialist, inspector	5	35,71
Chief Specialist	3	21,43
Head of Section	2	14,29
Department Chief Officer	0	0
Others (social worker)	1	7,14
TOTAL	14*	100,0%

* The slight differences in numbers of respondents result from lack of answer for particular question (in this case 5 respondents did not ticked off their positions).

Table 5. The structure of respondents by position: Municipal Office in Warsaw–Wawer

Position	Number of respondents	% respondents
Clerk, junior inspector	8	13,56
Specialist, inspector	20	33,90
Chief Specialist	19	32,20
Head of Section	1	1,70
Department Chief Officer	7	11,86
Others (including legal advisors)	4	6,78
TOTAL	59*	100,0%

* The slight differences in numbers of respondents result from lack of answer for particular question (in this case 1 respondent did not ticked off his/her position).

Work experience

Table 6. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: both offices together

Work experience	Number of respondents	% respondents
Up till 1 year	7	9,46
above 1 year up to 5 years	19	25,68
above 5 years	48	64,86
TOTAL	74*	100,0%

* The slight differences in numbers of respondents result from lack of answer for particular question (in this case 4 respondent did not provide the information about the work experience).

Table 7. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: Municipal Office in Kampinos

Work experience	Number of respondents	% respondents
Up till 1 year	1	5,56
above 1 year up to 5 years	6	33,33
above 5 years	11	61,11
TOTAL	18	100,0%

Tabela 8. The structure of respondents by vocational experience: Municipal Office in Warsaw-Wawer

Work experience	Number of respondents	% respondents
Up till 1 year	6	10,72
above 1 year up to 5 years	13	23,21
above 5 years	37	66,07
TOTAL	56	100,0%

* The slight differences in numbers of respondents result from lack of answer for particular question (in this case 4 respondent did not provide the information about the work experience).

Due to the holiday time the research had rather slow dynamics. In One of the offices (Warsaw-Wawer) it had to be repeated, because the first try ended up with lack of filled in questionnaires. Nevertheless gathering altogether 78 questionnaires can be regarded a relative success. The structure of the respondents can be summed up in the following way:

- Specialists/inspectors and chief specialists made most respondents in both offices (over 66%);
- The dominant group among the respondents were employees with work experience above 5 years (64,86 %);

Self-assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers

Local government officers’ self-assessment of the level of generic competences provided interesting answers. The respondents were asked to assess the level of their competences using five-grade scale: excellent, very good, good, fair and insufficient.

Most respondents assessed the level of their competences as very good and good: the results reach very similar level for summed up categories: excellent, very good, good:

- 97,42 % indications for the competence „Using principles of ethical behaviour”;
- 97,38 % indications for the competence „Teamwork”;
- 96,06 % indications for the competence „Communication”;
- 94,50 % indications for the competence „Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions”;
- 94,81 % indications for the competence „Use of information and communication technologies”;
- 94,87% indications for the competence „Orientation towards professional development ”;
- 94,87 % indications for the competence „Planning and organisation of work ”;
- 92,41 % indications for the competence „Problem solving”;
- 89,34 % indications for the competence „Decision making”;
- 87,01 % indications for the competence „ Use of laws and regulations”;
- 83,11 % indications for the competence „Dealing with change”;
- 78,20 % indications for the competence „Stress management”;
- 73,77 % indications for the competence „Team management”.

The tables presenting the results are situated on the following pages.

The above mentioned results can be interpreted in two ways:

- Firstly, as a symptom of the high level of self-complacency of local government officers as regards their generic competences. Such phenomenon is also confirmed by other surveys e.g. those presented in “*The Training Strategy in Civil Service for the years 2008-2010*”³ :
 - 66 % civil service employees regard their skills and qualifications as adequate to perform their jobs and 37 % - as above the requirements. Therefore, according to the respondents themselves, only 3% should take up training to upgrade the level of competences, what seems far from reality⁴.
- Secondly, as unwillingness to uncover their true feelings and opinions in order to avoid negative consequences.

Summarizing – the answer to this question was not diagnostic as concerns the question „ How the local government officers assess their generic competences?”

³ Op.cit

⁴ ibidem

Table 9. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: both offices together

Name of competence	The level of generic competences			
	Excellent & Very good	Good	Fair	Insufficient
	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)
1. Organisation building				
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	55,26	39,48	2,63	2,63
Team management	31,15	42,62	18,03	8,20
Dealing with change	48,05	35,06	15,60	1,29
2. Professionalism				
Use of laws and regulations	41,56	45,45	11,70	1,29
Use of information and communication technologies	55,84	38,97	3,90	1,29
Problem solving	40,51	51,90	6,33	1,26
Decision making	40,04	49,30	9,33	1,33
3. Interpersonal relations				
Communication	63,17	32,89	2,63	1,31
Teamwork	68,43	28,95	1,31	1,31
4. Self-management				
Using principles of ethical behaviour	80,77	16,67	1,28	1,28
Planning and organisation of work	66,67	28,20	3,85	1,28
Stress management	28,20	50,00	17,95	3,85
Orientation towards professional development	57,69	37,18	3,85	1,28

Table 10. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: Municipal Office in Kampinos

Name of competence	The level of generic competences			
	Excellent & Very good	Good	Fair	Insufficient
	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)
1. Organisation building				
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	50,00	50,00	0	0
Team management	15,40	69,20	15,40	0
Dealing with change	35,30	52,94	11,76	0
2. Professionalism				
Use of laws and regulations	35,30	47,06	11,76	5,88
Use of information and communication technologies	47,06	52,94	0	0
Problem solving	26,32	63,16	10,52	0
Decision making	29,41	58,83	11,76	0
3. Interpersonal relations				
Communication	47,06	41,18	11,76	0
Teamwork	41,18	52,94	5,88	0
4. Self-management				
Using principles of ethical behaviour	72,22	27,78	0	0
Planning and organisation of work	66,67	27,78	5,55	0
Stress management	16,67	12/66,66	16,67	0
Orientation towards professional development	55,55	7/38,90	5,55	0

Table 11. The assessment of the level of generic competences indicated by local government officers: Municipal Office in Warszawa-Wawer

Name of competence	The level of generic competences			
	Excellent & Very good	Good	Fair	Insufficient
	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)
1. Organisation building				
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	56,90	36,20	3,45	3,45
Team management	35,42	35,42	18,75	10,41
Dealing with change	51,67	30,00	16,67	1,66
2. Professionalism				
Use of laws and regulations	43,33	45,00	11,67	0
Use of information and communication technologies	58,33	35,00	5,00	1,67
Problem solving	45,00	29/48,33	3/5	1/1,67
Decision making	43,10	46,55	8,62	1,73
3. Interpersonal relations				
Communication	67,80	30,50	0	1,70
Teamwork	76,27	22,03	0	1,70
4. Self-management				
Using principles of ethical behaviour	83,33	13,33	1,67	1,67
Planning and organisation of work	66,67	17/28,33	3,33	1,67
Stress management	31,67	27/45,00	18,33	5
Orientation towards professional development	58,33	22/36,67	3,33	1,67

Although the self-assessment of the level of generic competences did not bring significant information, the questions about the competences enabling effective execution of tasks the most and those regarding the competences the local government officers would like to develop provided information essential for training needs analysis.

Generic competences and the effectiveness of tasks performed by local government officers

In this case each respondent was to indicate three competences essential for effective execution of their tasks. The results are presented below.

Table 12. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by frequency of indication in both offices

Generic competences	both offices together	both offices together
	Frequency of indications	Frequency of indications (%)
1. Use of laws and regulations	38	18,63
2. Communication	23	11,28
3. Planning and organisation of work	23	11,28
4. Decision making	18	8,83
5. Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	17	8,33
6. Problem solving	14	6,86
7. Teamwork	14	6,86
8. Use of information and communication technologies	13	6,37
9. Dealing with change	12	5,88
10. Team management	9	4,41
11. Orientation towards professional development	9	4,41
12. Using principles of ethical behaviour	8	3,92
13. Stress management	6	2,94

The above table shows that 18,63 % of indications relates to the necessity to know, interpret and apply the legal regulations in particular work situations. Further 11,28 % of indications connects the effective execution of tasks with planning and organisation of work and communication skills. Among the least important competences were indicated: orientation towards professional development (4,41 % of indications), team management (4,41 % of indications), using principles of ethical behaviour (3,92 % of indications) as well as stress management (2,94 % of indications).

Summarizing, according to the local government officers, the key competences having the most impact for the effectiveness of the performed tasks are: use of laws and regulations, planning and organisation of work and communication. On the other hand, as the least meaningful competences the officers regard: orientation towards professional development, team management, using principles of ethical behaviour and stress management.

Table 13. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by position and frequency of indication in both offices

Competence	Clerk, junior inspector	Specialist, inspector	Chief Specialist	Head of Section	Department Chief Officer	Other
	Frequency of indications (%)					
Use of laws and regulations	13,15	17,29	20,59	15,00	11,11	26,70
Communication	7,90	13,60	16,18	10,00	0	6,66
Planning and organisation of work	15,77	11,11	11,76	0	11,11	20,00
Problem solving	10,53	4,93	13,24	15,00	0	6,66
Decision making	10,53	6,17	7,35	20,00	22,22	0
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	7,90	13,58	4,41	5,00	0	6,66
Use of information and communication technologies	10,53	4,94	4,41	0	0	20,00
Dealing with change	7,90	7,40	1,47	0	22,22	6,66
Teamwork	7,90	8,64	2,94	5,00	0	0
Orientation towards professional development	5,26	4,94	5,88	0	0	6,66
Using principles of ethical behaviour		1,23	7,35	10,00		0
Team management		0	2,94	20,00	33,34	0
Stress management	2,63	6,17	1,47	0	0	0
Total:	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The results presented in the above table can be summed up as follows:

- the group of clerks and junior inspectors as the most important regarded competences concerning planning and organisation of work, use of laws and regulations and further: decision making, problem solving and Use of information and communication technologies;
- specialists and inspectors’ preferences looked similarly as regard the most important competence i.e. use of laws and regulations, but the next in the range were services to external clients and communication;
- the choices of chief specialists were the same as the whole group of respondents, apart from the choice of third option – here the percentage of indications regarding problem solving surpassed slightly the indications regarding planning and organisation of work ;

- the analysis of managerial staff preferences provides interesting results – a clear shift to competences connected with supervising functions such as team management or decision making can be noted here. The use of laws and regulations takes much further place.

Table 14. The assessment of generic competences regarding effectiveness of tasks execution by vocational experience and frequency of indication in both offices

Competence	Up till 1 year	above 1 year up to 5 years	above 5 years
	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)
Use of laws and regulations	14,29	14,00	25,00
Planning and organisation of work	28,57	10,00	11,67
Communication	4,76	14,00	12,50
Decision making	4,76	12,00	11,67
Problem solving	9,52	10,00	11,67
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	0	14,00	7,50
Use of information and communication technologies	9,52	14,00	2,50
Dealing with change	4,76	8,00	5,83
Teamwork	14,29	4,00	5,00
Orientation towards professional development	9,53	0	6,66
Team management	14,29	14,00	25,00
Stress management	0	10,00	11,67
Using principles of ethical behaviour	0	14,00	12,50
Razem:	100 %	100 %	100 %

The structure of responses by work experience allows to draw the following conclusions:

- especially clear preferences can be noted in two groups: up till 1 year of experience and above 5 years of experience. For the first group the most important for effective performance of the tasks is the competence ”planning and organisation of work” , and next, equally important are : :”use of laws and regulations”, ”teamwork” and ”team management”. The other group chose two competences as equally important: :”use of laws and regulations” and ”team management”.
- The third group –with work experience between 1 and 5 years does not show any clear preferences as regard competences conditioning effective task performance.

The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training.

In the light of responses to the previous question , the choices of respondents related to the generic competences which they would like to enhance/develop through training seem

particularly interesting. The respondents could indicate three competences. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 15. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training – by frequency of indication in both offices

Generic competences	both offices together	both offices together
	Frequency of indications	Frequency of indications (%)
1. Use of laws and regulations	40	19,90
2. Stress management	33	16,42
3. Orientation towards professional development	23	11,44
4. Decision making	21	10,45
5. Use of information and communication technologies	16	7,96
6. Problem solving	16	7,96
7. Planning and organisation of work	15	7,46
8. Dealing with change	10	4,98
9. Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	9	4,48
10. Communication	9	4,48
11. Teamwork	5	2,48
12. Using principles of ethical behaviour	3	1,50
13. Team management	1	0,49

The results show that the main competence needed development the respondents regard “use of laws and regulations” in particular work situations.(19,9 % of indications). This is not surprising compared to the answers to the previous question, however, there is a big divergence in case of next choices: 16,42 % of indications for “stress management” and 11,44% of indications for “orientation towards professional development, whereas those competences were considered the least important for effectiveness of task performance (relevantly 2,94 % & 4,41 % of indications). Such lack of coherence may be originated by two factors:

- no interest in effectiveness of performed tasks – what may mean that the local government officers do not really care if their tasks are performed effectively as long as they are done in accordance with laws and regulations.
- overexposure to training in that field – this hypothesis will be verified in the further part of the report concerning the analysis of answers to the question about participation in previous training in generic competences.

The respondents showed the least readiness to develop such competences as : services to external clients, communication, teamwork, use of principles of ethical behaviour and team management. Placing services to external clients and ethical behaviour so far in the ranking of preferences may mean that the vision of modern citizen-oriented office that operates according to high ethical standards is still far from the reality and proves the relatively low awareness of local government officers in this regard.

Summarizing, the most essential for the respondents is developing competences related to use of laws and regulations, stress management, upgrading own knowledge and skills and enriching experience as well as decision making. Less often the interest in enhancing skills in ICT, problem solving and work organisation was expressed. It will be interesting to compare the above presented results with the results regarding the participation in previous training developing generic competences which will be outlined later.

Table 16. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training by position: both offices together

Competence	Clerk, junior inspector	Specialist, inspector	Chief Specialist	Head of Section	Department Chief Officer	Other
	Frequency of indications (%)					
Use of laws and regulations	25,00	25,72	14,04	14,29	0	11,77
Decision making	13,89	7,14	10,53	4,76	25,00	5,88
Problem solving	8,33	7,14	8,77	9,52	0	0
Planning and organisation of work	8,33	5,71	5,26	9,52	12,50	17,65
Communication	0	2,86	7,02	14,29	12,50	11,76
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	8,33	10,00	1,75	4,76	0	5,88
Team management	0	7,14	5,26	0	12,50	23,53
Use of information and communication technologies	8,33	7,14	14,04	4,76	12,50	5,88
Dealing with change	5,57	5,72	3,51	4,76	25,00	0
Teamwork	0	1,43	5,26	4,76	0	0
Using principles of ethical behaviour	2,78	0	1,75	0	0	0
Stress management	11,11	11,43	17,55	14,29	0	5,88
Orientation towards professional development	8,33	8,57	5,26	14,29	0	11,77
Total:	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Respondents’ preferences regarding developing generic competences differ depending on the position:

- people on the lowest positions (clerk, junior clerk, junior inspector) are decided to enhance use of laws and regulations (25 % of indications), and then decision making (13,89 % of indications) and stress management (11,11 % of indications);

- inspectors and specialists chose the same 2 first competences as the previous group, but as the third one they chose services to external clients (10 % of indications);
- what’s interesting, as a key competence worth further development chief specialists regarded stress management (17,55 % of indications), and then use of laws and regulations (14,04 % of indications) and use of information and communication technologies (14,04 % of indications);
- in the case of heads of section 4 equivalent preferences can be noted : use of laws and regulations, communication, stress management and orientation towards professional development (each 14,29 % of indications);
- in the group of department chief officers two clear preferences can be observed : decision making and dealing with change (each 25 % of indications).

Table 17. The assessment of generic competences preferred to be enhanced by training by vocational experience: both offices together

Competence	Up till 1 year	above 1 year up to 5 years	above 5 years
	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)	Frequency of indications (%)
Use of laws and regulations	20,00	23,32	16,8
Decision making	15,00	11,67	7,63
Problem solving	5,00	8,33	7,63
Planning and organisation of work	5,00	11,67	6,11
Communication	0	1,67	5,34
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	5,00	6,67	5,34
Team management	10,00	3,33	4,58
Use of information and communication technologies	5,00	6,67	9,16
Dealing with change	5,00	3,33	5,34
Teamwork	0	1,67	3,05
Using principles of ethical behaviour	0	1,67	1,53
Stress management	10,00	11,67	17,57
Orientation towards professional development	20,00	8,33	9,92
Total:	100 %	100 %	100 %

Respondents’ preferences regarding developing generic competences differ depending on the work experience as follows:

- the choice of competence “use of laws and regulations” appears to be a key choice regardless the work experience.
- in case of people with work experience up till one year as the second choice orientation towards professional development was indicated (20 % of indications), what seems natural and adequate to the career phase of this group of repondents;
- in the group of people with work experience between 1 and 5 years three equivalent preferences can be noted (after use of laws and regulations as the first choice): decision making, planning and organisation of work and stress management (each 11,67 % of indications);
- in the group of people with the longest work experience (above 5 years) a strong preference for training in stress management can be observed (17,57 % of indications).

Participation in earlier training enhancing generic competences

Analysis of participation of employees in earlier training enhancing generic competences contributed significantly to the conclusions from previous questions. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 18. Participation in earlier training enhancing generic competences: both offices together

Generic competences	both offices together	both offices together
	Frequency of indications	Frequency of indications (%)
Use of laws and regulations	34	22,97
Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions	20	13,51
Use of information and communication technologies	18	12,16
Communication	12	8,10
Team management	10	6,76
Stress management	10	6,76
Dealing with change	8	5,41
Teamwork	8	5,41
Orientation towards professional development	8	5,41
Problem solving	7	4,73
Using principles of ethical behaviour	7	4,73
Decision making	4	2,70
Planning and organisation of work	2	1,35
Total:	148	100 %

The results related to participation in earlier training in generic competences can be summed up as follows:

- high rate of indications for training in use of laws and regulations (22,57 %), what also corresponds with high ranks of this competence in other surveys of training preferences;
- high rank of training in services to external clients (13,51 % of indications), what proves that the mission of the office oriented towards efficient citizen service have been implemented and expresses modern tendencies in office management. ;
- the third position is taken by training in ICT skills (12,16 % of indications);
- relatively low rate of indications for the competence regarding planning and organisation of work (1,35 %) draws attention, especially compared to the high position of this competence in relation to effectiveness of tasks performance (11,28 % of indications and the third position in the preference ranking);
- similarly low rate of indications for the competence concerning decision making (only 2,7% of indications) should be stressed.

Problems in everyday work of local government officers

Hereto analysis was significantly enriched with the information on the problems the local government officers face in their everyday work. The problems were divided into categories and presented in the form of closed questions. Moreover, the respondents were given opportunity to provide their own information about problems bothering them in the open questions. The latter possibility supplied rich and important research material. The results of closed questions are presented below.

Table 19. Kinds of problems in everyday work: both offices together

Problem area	Answer YES Frequency of indications (%)	Answer NO Frequency of indications (%)	Lack of answer (%)
1.Documentation circulation	56,41	34,62	8,98
3. Adjusting tasks to the competences of staff	37,18	51,28	11,54
2. Meeting deadlines	35,90	52,56	11,54
4. Organisation of work	30,68	57,95	11,36
5. Organisation of work positions	25,64	64,10	10,26
6. External client service	21,79	67,86	10,26
7. Conflicts with co-workers	19,23	71,79	8,98

The respondents claimed that the biggest problem is documentation circulation (56,41 % YES answers). Adjusting tasks to the competence of staff and meeting deadlines were indicated as the next biggest problems (37,18 % and 35,90 % YES answers respectively).

The problems mentioned by respondents in the answers to open questions can be divided into following categories::

- **Communication and cooperation** – this category was the most often mentioned by respondents, who stressed the key elements such as:

- bad communication between the employees of different departments;
 - lack of cooperation;
 - improper communication with the management board;
 - lack of good communication and information circulation what causes work under time pressure, stress and lower effectiveness of work;
 - lack of teamwork;
 - insufficient flow of information;
 - insufficient cooperation in passing down decisions(?);
 - avoiding taking up responsibility for tasks.
- **Planning and organisation of work** – this category also gained many indications, the key elements pointed out by respondents are:
 - too many responsibilities for one employee;
 - uneven spread of tasks and work in particular months;
 - too many tasks compared to time for their execution;
 - lack of efficient division of work in relation to the grade of task difficulty;
 - irregular work overload and distribution of tasks in the following months;
 - too wide range of duties and time pressure;
 - **Decision making and management** – this category gained several indications and includes such issues as:
 - changeability of taken decisions;
 - lack of competence and decisive marasmus (torpor);
 - uneven work overload and distribution of tasks in the following months.

Furthermore, the respondents mentioned problems connected with inconsistency and imprecision of legal regulations and over formalizing administration procedures.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the individual interviews and questionnaire survey carried out in two offices : Municipal office in Warsaw-Wawer and Municipal Office in Kampinos made the sound basis for analyzing the training needs of local government officers. Hereto analysis of training needs allows for the following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions

- The training system functioning in public administration offices is focused mostly on development of competences concerning application of laws and regulations. Thus the role of an officer is defined mainly through the function of taking administrative decisions. The fact that training in customer service appeared in the office training scheme is a positive sign, however not in sufficient scale to meet the needs of the office mission – as a citizen service- oriented office.
- Definitely weak point of the presently functioning system of training is lack of training offer in the field of planning and organisation of work. Especially that this was one of the three competences indicated as the most influencing the effectiveness of performed tasks and at the same time pointed out as one of the two key problems in everyday work of local government officers.
- Other drawback of the present system of staff training is not sufficient number of training in communication - only 8,10% respondents already participated in such

training while communication was indicated as one of the key problem areas in office work.

- The results of the analysis show the strong need for training in stress management, what is also proved by specification of problems in everyday functioning of the both offices.

Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions from the analysis organisation of training in the following generic competences is recommended:

- Use of laws and regulations
- Planning and organisation of work;
- Stress management;
- Communication;
- Decision making,
- Orientation towards professional development;
- Services to external clients and cooperation with external institutions.