



PROGRAM MENTORINGOWY

**A guide for civil service agencies
wishing to implement a mentoring
programme**

good practices gathered during the pilot
scheme

Introduction

We have prepared this guide to help agencies effectively implement a mentoring programme – as a tool for staff development and for building an organisational culture based on cooperation, knowledge sharing and mutual support.

It is based on **experiences from a pilot** scheme involving **11 different local authorities**. This allowed us to test various solutions and models of cooperation, but above all – to gather practical insights from real mentoring relationships, feedback from mentors and mentees, and programme coordinators.

Here you will find:

- **guidance** on how to prepare and run a mentoring programme,
- **best practices**, tried and tested in the local authorities that took part in the pilot scheme,
- **the most common challenges** and ways to address them,
- **key success factors** that ensure mentoring effectively supports the development of competencies and the building of an organisational culture based on trust.

We believe that these experiences from the pilot scheme will help other local authorities to plan their activities more effectively and make the most of mentoring's potential in the civil service. We want this guide to be a practical tool supporting the building of strong, learning organisations where knowledge, collaboration and development form the foundation of everyday work.



Why is it worth implementing mentoring?



Mentoring is a tool that supports the day-to-day work of an organisation. **It strengthens collaboration, builds trust and facilitates knowledge sharing.** When an organisation introduces mentoring on a permanent basis, rather than as a one-off initiative, it creates an environment that fosters staff development and improves communication between teams.



The relationship between a mentor and a mentee is about more than just about tasks. **It helps develop interpersonal skills, leadership qualities and good professional habits.** The mentee gains the support of an experienced individual, whilst the mentor has the opportunity to pass on knowledge and experience that is hard to find in manuals or procedures.



Mentoring **helps retain knowledge within the organisation.** Staff members share their experience and skills with one another. As a result, the organisation does not lose valuable information when someone changes roles or leaves, and it also gains a fresh perspective when a new member joins the team from outside.



Mentoring **strengthens commitment, improves the quality of work and enhances relationships within the organisation.** Better cooperation and greater motivation among staff make day-to-day work easier and increase team effectiveness.



How to prepare the organisation for the programme

A good start determines whether the mentoring programme will run smoothly. That is why it is worth bearing in mind a few principles:

- **defining the programme's objective and expected outcomes**

Before launching the mentoring programme, it is essential to establish **why the programme is being set up and what changes it is intended to bring about**. Defining the objectives, development expectations and the values we wish to promote helps to organise activities and makes it easier to assess the outcomes once the programme has ended. Additionally, it allows us to plan the next steps, namely providing clear and specific information about the programme.



How to do this?

- **Identify the main reasons** for implementing mentoring, e.g.:
 - supporting the development of participants' professional and personal skills
 - exchange of knowledge between generations or organisational units
 - building a culture of trust, cooperation and learning
 - strengthening leadership and accountability within the organisation
 - helping new employees or leaders settle in.
- **Define what** the mentees and mentors **are** expected to **learn**.
- Ensure that the programme has **realistic and measurable outcomes** – e.g. increasing engagement, job satisfaction or the number of people developing their skills.

- **the organisation's readiness to implement a mentoring programme**

Management, supervisors, and staff must understand why the organisation is introducing mentoring and what benefits it brings. **When managers understand the purpose and benefits, they are more likely to support the entire process. When staff are familiar with and understand the process, they are more likely to accept it.**

Furthermore, such readiness creates a cohesive organisational environment in which mentoring becomes a natural part of development activities, rather than an additional duty.



How can this be achieved?

- Meetings with management, line managers, and staff: explain **what the mentoring programme is, what the aim of its implementation is, and what benefits it offers to staff, line managers and the organisation.**
- Prepare information about mentoring and make it available to staff.

- **Management's interest in the programme**

As the main 'project sponsor', the agency's management should actively encourage participation and demonstrate that mentoring is of real significance to the entire organisation. **When managers openly support the programme and take an interest in its progress, staff see the value of such initiatives and are more willing to get involved.** As a result, mentoring becomes a natural part of the organisation's work, helping to build its organisational culture.



How can this be achieved?

Management can support the programme at various stages and in different ways:

- **Presence and commitment:**
 - familiarity with the project's objectives, stages and goals
 - participation in key events, e.g. the programme launch and wrap-up.
- **Interest and promotion**
 - taking on the role of 'programme ambassador'
 - encouraging staff to take part in the programme and recognising their contributions
 - promoting the programme and highlighting its value at meetings with department heads and externally.
- **Day-to-day support** – supporting participants, facilitating staff participation, and taking an interest in how things are going.

- **promoting the programme within the organisation**

A well-planned communication campaign boosts interest in the programme, builds its prestige and facilitates the recruitment of participants. It is not just about providing information on the rules – **it involves activities that demonstrate the value of mentoring and increase**

awareness among all staff of the benefits for participants and the organisation. **The campaign should be consistent, engaging and visible across various channels**, and should provide staff with reliable information about the scheme.



How to do this?

- Plan the campaign schedule – when and what messages will be published (programme launch, recruitment, training, start of working in pairs, summary).
- Give the programme an attractive image – posters, graphics, slogans, short videos, infographics.
- Use various channels – the intranet, emails, in-person and online meetings, posters in the office space, social media.
- Engage management as ambassadors – their involvement in communications (e.g. quotes, short statements in videos) enhances the programme’s standing.
- Involve staff members who are familiar with the programme and are enthusiastic about it – their involvement in communications adds authenticity and credibility.
- Showcase positive examples from other government departments and companies where mentoring has been implemented.
- Monitor the results – check whether the messages are getting through, whether the number of applications is increasing, and how staff members rate the message.

- **Selection of the coordinator**

The coordinator **is the person who keeps the entire mentoring programme “on track” and ensures its consistency, quality and alignment with the organisation’s objectives**. They do not conduct mentoring sessions – they create the conditions for them to run effectively. Whether the programme runs smoothly and delivers the expected results depends largely on their competence and commitment. The coordinator’s main tasks include:

- preparing the mentoring programme defining the programme’s objective, timeframe and rules
- communicating information about the programme – to both management and staff

- preparing information materials for participants – application forms, recruitment rules
- recruiting participants and pairing them into mentoring pairs
- monitoring the progress of the programme
- maintain regular, active contact with participants and boost their motivation
- carry out an evaluation.

Good coordination increases participants' sense of security, improves cooperation and enhances the quality of the entire programme.



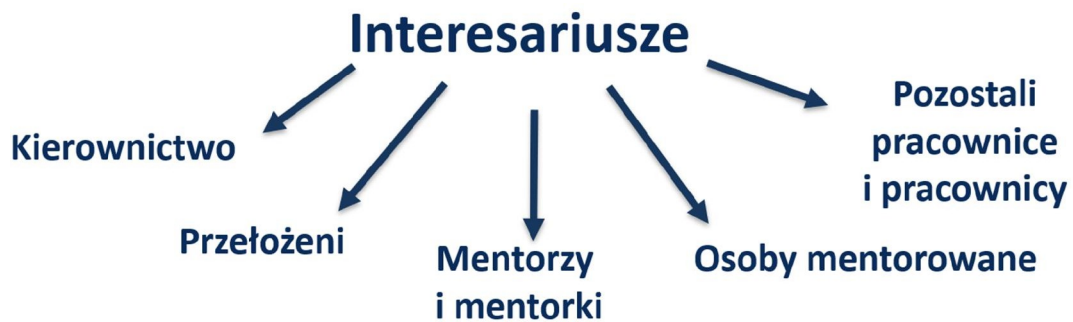
How do you do that?

- A good coordinator doesn't need to be an expert in everything — it is enough (and that's all it takes!) that **they know how to listen, bring people together and create an atmosphere of cooperation.**
- The coordinator should be **available to participants** at every stage of the mentoring programme.
- It is helpful if the coordinator knows the organisation and the people who work there.



Programme communication

Effective communication is one of the key elements of a well-run mentoring programme. It should be **multi-directional**, i.e. aimed at all interested parties:



Good communication means:

- **tailored to the audience** – taking into account their needs, level of knowledge and expectations
- **clear and specific** – it sets out the programme's objectives, rules, stages and the roles of participants
- **regular** – accompanying the programme at every stage: from recruitment, through implementation, to the debriefing
- **two-way** – allowing questions to be asked, concerns raised and feedback shared
- **transparent** – it fosters trust and builds a sense that the programme is being run fairly.

Well-planned communication delivered through multiple channels increases engagement, strengthens participants' sense of security and improves the quality of the entire mentoring programme.



How to do this?

- **Letters:**
 - why does this format work?
 - ✓ this is one of the standard forms of communication within the office (customary)
 - ✓ the official way of providing information about the programme and its importance
 - What should be avoided?
 - ✓ long letters written in difficult, bureaucratic language
 - ✓ imperative forms
- **Emails:**
 - Why does this format work?
 - ✓ a guarantee that all staff will receive the message
 - ✓ a direct form that conveys a sense of personal importance
 - ✓ certainty that it will reach the recipient directly
 - ✓ rapid delivery of information
 - What should it contain to make it appealing?
 - ✓ Subject line: Invitation to the programme...
 - ✓ form, depending on the person sending the email (CEO, head of an organisational unit, programme coordinator): Dear Sirs and Madams / Dear Colleagues
 - ✓ importance of participation in the programme: for the office, for the CEO, for staff
 - ✓ What actions are we planning? What stage are we at now?
 - ✓ next steps: plans, timetable
 - ✓ the CEO's expectations (e.g. a request to come forward)
 - ✓ contact person
 - ✓ attachment or link to additional information (e.g. poster, detailed rules for participation in the programme, etc.)
- **Information on the Intranet:**
 - Why will this approach work?
 - ✓ accessibility for everyone
 - ✓ direct format, simple language
 - ✓ opportunity to enhance the content with graphics / interactive video / images
 - ✓ the option to 'boost' the post
 - ✓ ease of finding the message
 - what should it contain to make it appealing?

- ✓ a concise, clear and understandable format
- ✓ What is mentoring and what is the aim of the programme?
- ✓ examples of the programme's implementation in other offices
- ✓ the benefits of participating in the programme (for the mentor and the mentee)
- ✓ the roles of individual participants (mentor, mentee)
- ✓ terms and conditions of participation (including how to apply)
- ✓ the programme's timeframe
- ✓ formal requirements, e.g. "Apply if: ..."
- ✓ plus: eye-catching graphics that encourage people to read the information, an inspiring slogan, e.g. "Mentoring programme: Your path to development!"

- **Other forms of communication that support and reinforce the message:**

- posters / infographics
- screen savers
- face-to-face meetings (in-person or online)
- social media (information regarding the programme's launch, individual stages and conclusion)
- a website featuring: presentations / videos / podcasts



Selection of programme participants

Effective mentoring begins with the right selection of participants. Recruitment is not a mere formality, but a crucial stage during which we assess participants' readiness to engage in a developmental relationship, their needs, and their roles within the programme. Clear criteria and good communication enhance engagement and the quality of the entire process.

The selection of mentors is particularly important. **A good mentor is someone who not only has knowledge and experience, but also commands respect, sets a good example of professional conduct and builds relationships based on trust.** Such a mentor inspires and genuinely supports the development of others.

Participation in the programme should be a conscious choice based on established criteria. **The selective nature of the programme enhances its prestige, highlights the value of mentoring, and strengthens the motivation of participants, who view their involvement as an honour and a genuine investment in their own development.**



How to do this?

- Determine how many mentors and mentees can take part in the programme / in a given edition of the programme.
- **Set the criteria**, e.g.:
 - mentors – experience, knowledge, interpersonal skills, willingness to share knowledge and skills,
 - mentees – development needs, motivation, willingness to work on themselves,
- Prepare a simple application form: personal details, motivation, expectations, areas for development.
- Communicate through various channels.
- **Ensure participation is voluntary — it should be a conscious decision, not an obligation.**



Preparatory training

Training is the cornerstone of the programme's quality. It should cover all participants:

- coordinators – how to launch the programme, how to manage it, how to communicate it and how to monitor it,
- mentors – methods for conducting conversations, building relationships, setting goals, and dealing with difficult situations,
- mentees – how to set goals, prepare for meetings, and make use of feedback.

Thanks to the training, participants understand their roles, responsibilities and goals, which increases the programme's effectiveness.



How can this be done?

- The Civil Service Department maintains a database of trainers for mentoring programmes.
- The trainers are qualified to deliver training for:
 - coordinators
 - mentors
 - mentees.
- **From 2026, local authorities will be able to access training delivered by trainers participating in the programme at no cost.**



Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are key elements of an effective programme. They allow us to track its progress and assess the results achieved.

Monitoring, i.e. the ongoing tracking of the programme's progress: whether meetings are taking place, whether participants are carrying out the planned activities, and what needs and challenges arise. It allows for a swift response and ongoing support for mentoring pairs.

Evaluation is the assessment of the programme's outcomes upon its completion. It answers the following questions: what worked, what could be improved, and what benefits the mentoring programme brought to the participants and the organisation. It provides data that helps to better prepare the next edition.



How to do this?

- **Monitoring during the programme**
 - set the frequency of meetings and check that they are taking place (e.g. 8–12 meetings every 2–3 weeks)
 - Collect brief feedback from mentors and mentees (e.g. through conversations or mini-surveys).
- **Evaluation at the end of the programme**
 - Assess the extent to which mentoring objectives have been achieved (a report summarising the work of the mentoring pairs)
 - collect feedback from participants on the relationship and collaboration (survey + short interviews)
 - assess development outcomes: competencies, decisions, behavioural changes (report, survey, interviews with participants, interview with line manager)
 - analyse the benefits for mentors and the impact on the organisation.
- **Final report**
 - summarise the figures (number of sessions, pairs that completed the programme, achievement of objectives)
 - list the key conclusions – what worked, what to reinforce, what to improve
 - add recommendations for the future (examples of actions, process improvements).

- **Follow-up**

- use the conclusions to plan the next edition.

- **Recurrence**

- Ensure the programme runs regularly (e.g. subsequent annual editions divided into several stages:
 - ✓ recruitment of participants and training
 - ✓ work in mentoring pairs
 - ✓ summary and evaluation.



Most common barriers and ways to overcome them

➤ Lack of consent or support from line managers for employees' participation in the mentoring programme

- concern that an employee will devote too much time to the mentoring programme at the expense of their work duties
- Lack of conviction regarding the value of the programme



How to deal with this:

- **Involve management and selected staff** in promoting the programme
- communicate about the programme within the organisation: highlight **the benefits and outcomes**

➤ Employees' concerns and uncertainty about participation

- a lack of understanding of the roles of mentor and mentee
- uncertainty about whether this programme is right for me or whether I'll be suitable for this role



How to deal with this:

- **clear, accessible communication**; a simple description of roles, responsibilities and the process
- show **examples from other offices**
- invite people who have taken part in mentoring and are happy to talk about it

➤ Organisational difficulties (time, planning, paperwork)

- lack of time
- fear of paperwork
- Unclear programme structure



How to deal with this:

- a clear **schedule**, simplified paperwork and **ongoing support from the coordinator** on organisational matters
- plan tasks realistically

➤ **Lack of preparation for the role**

- lack of experience in conducting development discussions
- difficulty in formulating goals and metrics



How to deal with this:

- training for mentors and mentees
- discussions with people who took part in the mentoring programme
- **tools** to facilitate meetings (e.g. document templates)
- **meetings between mentors** during the programme: discussing concerns and difficulties, sharing tips



Summary

Mentoring is an investment in the future of the civil service and an important tool for the development of modern administration. To yield tangible results, it should be an integral part of the organisational culture, based on cooperation, openness and knowledge-sharing. **The commitment of management and the agency's staff** is of key importance here – it strengthens the employer's brand, ensures the authenticity of the process and builds a working environment in which employees feel a sense of purpose, motivation and a desire to develop.

Equally important is **the appropriate selection of mentors**. These should be individuals with authority, knowledge, experience and skills, who are able to inspire others and build relationships based on trust. They ensure that mentoring becomes a valuable and natural learning process.

Another key factor in **the programme's** success is clear, regular and engaging **communication**. This helps to raise awareness among all staff, boosts engagement and demonstrates that mentoring is an important part of the organisation's development.

Well-designed and well-executed mentoring genuinely enhances the potential of the entire organisation.