

Evaluation
of the 5th International Public Management
Summer Institute:
Observations and Participants' Feedback

*Sigulda, Latvia
August 17 - 21, 2009*

**An Evaluation of the
5th International Public Management Summer Institute
Sigulda, Latvia
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Executive Summary

More than 95% of the participants had a positive experience of their attendance and participation in the 5th International Public Management Summer Institute. All participants strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend this program to a friend or colleague and a preference to attend the 6th International Public Management Summer Institute in Latvia next summer.

These overall positive evaluations appeared to be linked to the Institute's location in Sigulda, the selection and mix of topics, discussion opportunities in the sessions, new information provided at the Institute, increased knowledge of participants and commitment to and motivation to work for public administration.

While almost half of participants indicated that there was a great deal of new information provided (43%), 38% agreed there has been some of new information provided in Summer Institute. Only a part of the respondents (19%) thought that there has been a little information provided. Finally a majority (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Institute increased their knowledge in questions regarding government reforms during crisis, only 14% disagreed and nobody strongly disagreed.

According to the responses it appears that the Institute provided a good opportunity to motivate participants to push or advocate for change in their ministry or organization. 50% agreed or agreed strongly that the Institute should have had more focus on the region, 15% were neutral in this point, and 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The major part of responses concerning the facilities, logistics, handouts and written materials and cultural activities were good or excellent. All respondents expressed their opinion that Sigulda as a location was good (14%) or excellent (86%). Nobody said it was poor or fair. Likewise, all participants were pleased with the cultural/recreational/social activities.

It is important to point out that all participants indicated that they would recommend Summer Institute to a friend and a colleague, which means that it is possible to conclude that this year's Institute has been very successful.

Background:

The 5th International Public Management Summer Institute was held in Sigulda, Latvia from August 17 - 21, 2009. This year's Institute focused on the broad topic of "**Restructuring Government to Overcome Crisis**". It was organized by the State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia, with the support of the UNDP Regional Center for Public Administration Reform (RCPAR). Further support for some of the lecturers was provided by the Embassies of Finland and Great Britain in Latvia.

The target audience was middle and upper level public administration specialists and practitioners from a number of Eastern European and Central Asia countries representing various ministries, governmental institutions and NGO's. More specifically, participants came from Latvia, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Slovenia, Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine, Montenegro, and Hungary. In sum, 42 participants from 15 countries attended the Summer Institute this year.

The Institute involved academics and practitioners from Great Britain, Moldova, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Canada, Romania, Tajikistan, and Greece. The Speakers were the following:

- **Thomas Rogers** (UK) Foreign and Commonwealth Office Head, Emerging Markets Team, Global Economy Group,
- **Annie Demirijan** (CAN) UNDP Democratic Governance Practice Leader,
- **Heikki Joustie** (FIN) Financial Counsellor - Deputy Head of Public management Department at Ministry of Finance of Finland,
- **Baiba Pētersonē** (LAT) Deputy Director of the State Chancellery of Republic of Latvia,
- **Zanda Ozola** (LAT) Consultant in Policy Co-ordination department of the State Chancellery of Republic of Latvia,
- **Bryan Michael** (UK) Macedonian Customs Administration,
- **Agita Kalvina** (LAT) Fontes Latvia, Chair of the board,
- **Tiina Tamm** (EST) Ministry of Finance deputy secretary general,
- **Klavs Sedelnieks** (LAT) Riga Stradins University,
- **Edgars Sins** (LAT) owner of LATIO real estate company,
- **Una Klapkalne** (LAT) LETA news agency executive director,
- **Juris Rozenvalds** (LAT) University of Latvia,
- **Emilian Birjaru** (ROM) Ministry of Administration and Interior,
- **Petru Veverita** (Moldova) Academy of Public Administration,
- **Firdavs Nassredinov** (Tajikistan) Ministry of Economy and Trade,
- **Annika Uudelpp** (Estonia) PRAXIS. Member of the Executive Board; Director of Governance and Civil Society Programme,
- **Panos Liverakos** (GR) UNDP RCPAR.

Evaluation Methodology

Questionnaires (see appendix) were distributed to all the participants of the Institute on the final day. A total of 21 questionnaires were returned. Not all have been filled out completely but they have all been used them to evaluate the trends.

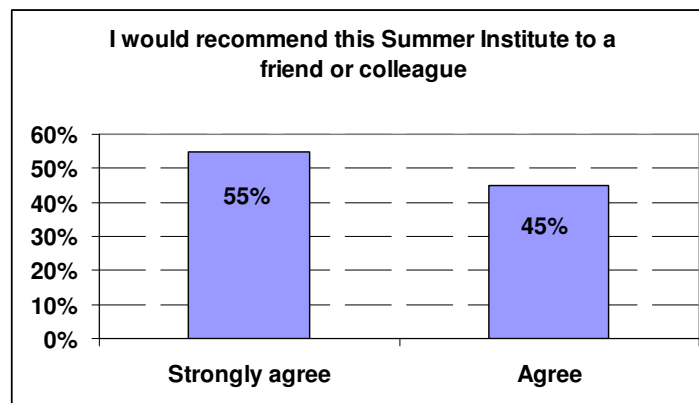
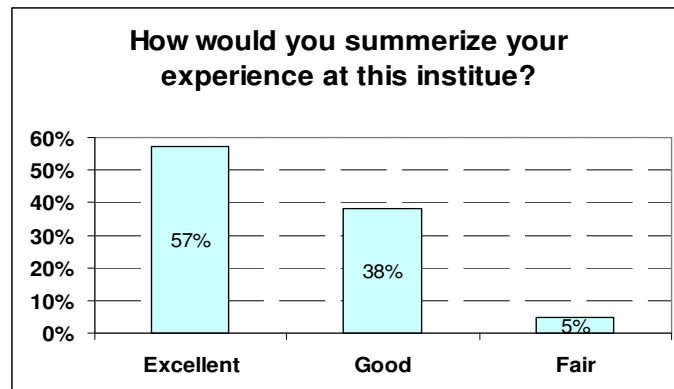
Detailed Findings

Overall Assessment:

Generally this year's Institute was evaluated very positively. Three questions reflect the participants' overall assessment of the Institute. Summarizing the Institute, more than half (57%) rated it as "excellent", 38% rated it as "good" and 5% rated it as fair. 55% strongly agree and 45% agree that they would recommend this Summer Institute to a friend or colleague.

A positive summary of experiences at the Institute was most strongly related to discussion opportunities in the sessions; new information provided at the Institute and overall content. In addition, it was related to increased knowledge of government reform procedures; increased commitment to public administration; amount of time in the Institute; increased motivation to advocate for change in performance measurement practices in own organizations; and increased knowledge of effective, new information provided at the Institute and innovative approaches to government reforms.

(Based on Analysis of Variance)



Most of the participants agree that they would recommend this Summer Institute to a friend or colleague. This result is based on the positive experiences gained during the Institute, increased motivation to push/advocate for changes in use of reform tools, overall Institute content, new information provided at the Institute and discussion opportunities in the sessions. All participants would prefer to attend summer institutes which focus on the use of different tools in public administration, and each year covering a different topic.

(Based on Analysis of Variance)

Instruction/Pedagogy:

Overall presenter effectiveness was evaluated as “excellent” by 27% of the participants; “good” by 64%; and fair by 9%. Participants were very positive about the discussion opportunities in the various sessions: 57% rated them as excellent, 33% as good and the remaining 10% rated them as fair. A majority (75%) of the participants thought the pacing of the Institute was “just right”; while 15% thought it was much too fast or too fast; and the other 10% thought it was too slow or much too slow. Likewise, most participants (79%) thought the overall amount of time for the week-long Institute were “just right,” while another 21% thought it was too long or much too long.

Unlike previous years, each presenter¹ was also evaluated by the participants. The results of the evaluation are presented in the table below.

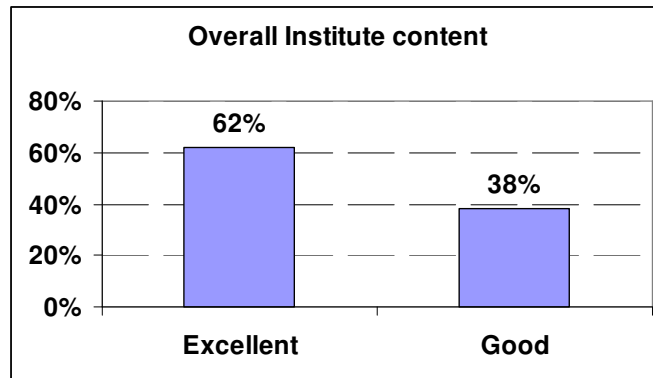
Speaker/Evaluation	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Thomas Rogers	30%	45%	15%	10%
Annie Demirijian	40%	35%	15%	10%
Petru Veverita	10%	40%	50%	0%
Bryane Michael	52%	48%	0%	0%
Zanda Ozola	24%	67%	10%	0%
Tiina Tamm	32%	55%	14%	0%
Heikki Jousti	52%	43%	5%	0%
Agita Kalvina	45%	45%	5%	5%
Emilian Birjaru	70%	20%	0%	10%
Fridavs Nasredinov	0%	35%	40%	25%
Annika Uudelepp	67%	24%	10%	0%
Klavs Sedlenieks	33%	44%	17%	6%
Closing discussion	40%	28%	32%	0%
Baiba Petersone	100%	0%	0%	0%

Curriculum:

The vast majority of participants were pleased about the “overall Institute content,” with 62% evaluating it as excellent and 38% rating it as good. The

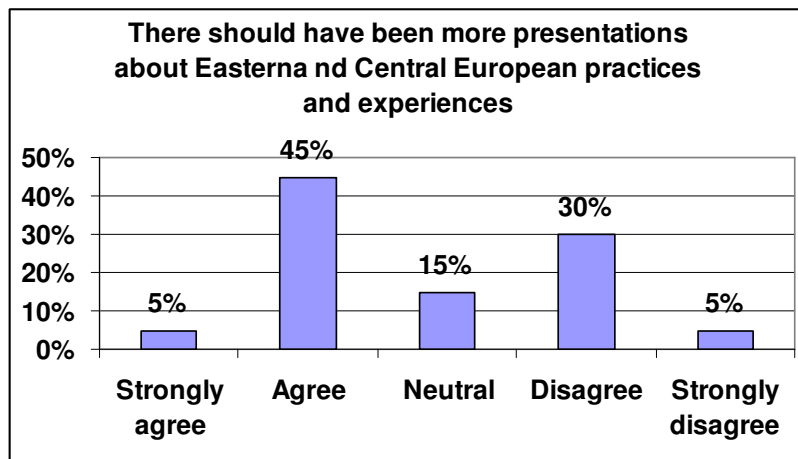
¹ Baiba Petersone was not included in the evaluation form. However, five participants marked her lecture as excellent, and thus we have included it in the evaluation results.

selection and mix of topics received 43% excellent rating, 43% good and 14% fair. 43% indicated that "a great deal" of new information was provided while 38% said "some" new information was provided. A further 19% thought that too little new information was provided. Most of the participants agree that the case study sessions were useful for illustrating concepts of the Institute. In fact, 29% strongly agreed, 33% agreed, while 29% were neutral and 10% disagreed.



Evaluations of previous Institutes showed that there has not been the right balance between Eastern and Central European practices and experiences in comparison to those of America and Western Europe. Thus, a question on this matter was asked this year as well.

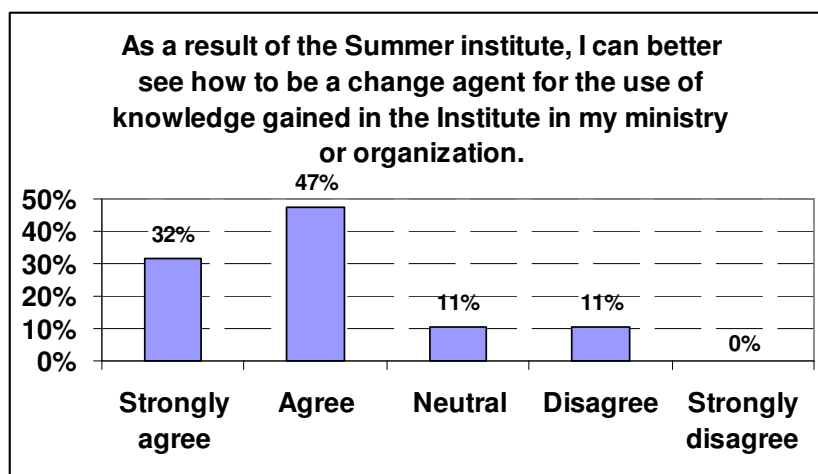
It appears that topics covered in this year's Institute were more satisfactory albeit there is still space for improvement. 50% agreed or strongly agreed that the Institute should have had more focus on the region; 15% were neutral, while 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed.



Institute Outcomes:

The exchange of ideas, concepts and viewpoints results in a higher *motivation for change* and *commitment to work* in the public sector. Almost all participants feel that "as a result of the Summer Institute, I am more motivated to push or advocate for change in performance measurement practices in my ministry or organization" – 45% strongly agreed, 35% agreed,

10% were neutral and only 10% disagreed. Furthermore participants reported that they can see better how to be a *change agent with the use of performance measurement practices in their ministry or organization*. 79% agreed or strongly agreed, 11% were neutral and only 11% disagreed.



The *usefulness of material on government reforms* evaluation indicator displayed an exceptional response outcome. 38% strongly agreed and 38% agreed that “the material on government reforms will be useful to me in my own work within my ministry/organization.” With the statement “the Institute increased my knowledge of how to design/administer government reform tools and processes” 29% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, one-third was neutral and only three people disagreed. Participants also indicated a better understanding of how government reform concepts fit into public administration. 43% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 14% were neutral and only one participant disagreed.

During the Institute practical study sessions were carried out. Most of the participants were positive to the statement “The case study sessions were useful for illustration concepts of the institute”.

Facilities, Logistics and Cultural Activities:

Most of the participants seem to be satisfied with the facilities, logistics and cultural activities. All participants evaluated positively the location (Sigulda). Furthermore, all participants were pleased with the cultural/recreational/social activities with 71% of them rating them as excellent.

Other ratings were:

- Training rooms: 75% excellent; 25% good;
- Audiovisual equipment: 76% excellent; 24% good;
- Transportation to/from airport: 95% excellent; 5% good;
- Meals: 43% excellent; 56% good;
- Hotel rooms: 35% excellent; 45% good, 15% fair; 5% poor.

Suggestions for Future Institutes

In conclusion, based on our observations as well as the input from participants, there are several points, which should guide the development of future institutes. Based on participant feedback, both in this formal evaluation as well as through informal comments, this fifth Institute was very successful. However, it is important to draw some lessons from this experience in order to further improve future Institutes.

First - based on participant input - in relation to the *curriculum*, there seems to be a preference on allowing more time for group work and practical exercises on the topics covered, as well as more extensive discussion on these practical tasks. In comparison with previous institutes there were less practical exercises and group works for participants, though despite that discussion opportunities in SI were highly evaluated. In that way it is possible to conclude, that in next SI there should be more practical exercises and group work and time to discuss results of that, at same time keeping extensive discussion possibilities during experts of public administration or academics.

With regard to the substantive content of the Institute, while responses varied, many participants reported that the most useful part of the Institute was the knowledge gained on how government reform concepts fit into public administration, as well as that the material provided by the Institute to the participants will be useful in their daily work. Furthermore, the fact that the Institute contributed to increasing the participant's knowledge about effective and innovative approaches to government reform procedures was considered rather important. Almost half of the participants noted that there should be more presentations about Eastern and Central European practices and experiences of performance management, and less focus on American or Western European practices and experiences, although at the same time 35% disagreed with that.

Unlike the previous years' Institute, there were no country presentations as such. Instead, this year, presentations focusing on the region were the centerpiece of the Institute. It seems that this format assisted in providing a better understanding of region-specific problems to participants.

Secondly, this year's focus was on government reforms in order to overcome the financial crisis. Based on participant input there seems to be a desire for the Institute to deal with subjects such as: public service delivery; risk assessment; public finances; quality management; decentralization; as well as on topics such as: transparency in decision making; performance evaluation in civil service; anti-corruption; e-governance; external audit;, and strategic planning.

Thirdly, while the selection of instructors for this year's Institute was good, some lecturers performed better than others – thereby before selecting specific lecturers some very accurate selection procedure should be carried out. It would also be valuable to provide the lecturers with information about the participants before hand. This will probably allow them to select the

information being provided in accordance with the audience it is intended for, and new information will be provided rather than refreshing their memory with existing knowledge. It would also be useful, if speakers send their papers and/or presentations well in advance and definitely prior to the starting date of the Institute, so that the participants will have a chance to familiarize themselves before hand.

Evaluations of previous years' Institute indicated that for parallel sessions held during the course of the Institute were problematic for some participants. As a result of these views, this year's Institute had no parallel sessions. Although this model of Institute gave a chance to all participants to attend every session, it is worth considering a return to a model which may include parallel sessions in next Institute, thereby covering more topics and deepening the understanding of a given issue.

On another note, since there is a need for more practical exercises and discussions on the issues dealt at the Institute, there should be a better balance between practitioners and lecturers. Some participants indicated that there could be more specific case studies presented during the course.

Finally, unlike previous Institutes', participants of the 5th one were satisfied with the auxiliary services such as accommodation, meals, and transportation to and from airport. Only one of the participants was not fully satisfied with the accommodation provided.

Regarding cultural and recreational activities one may draw the conclusion that participants were satisfied. The activities were well attended and from the participants point of view it was a good way to communicate with each other participants, and thus assist in creating a closer relationship among the participants, all experts and practitioners in public administration.

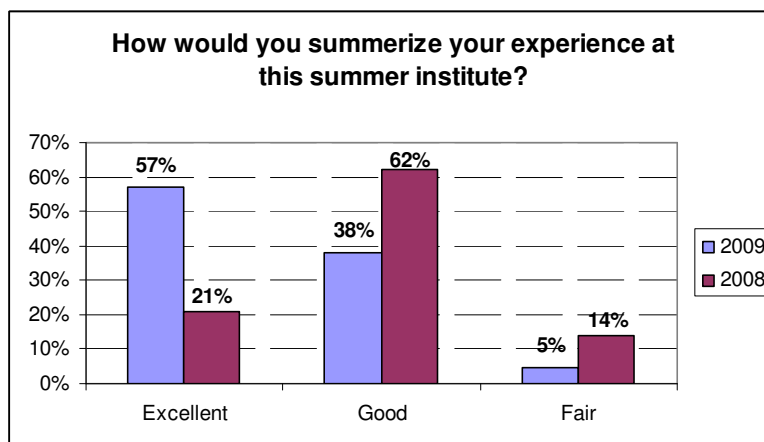
Comparison of key questions of the 4th and the 5th International Public Management Summer Institute

In sum. this year's Institute was again evaluated on a positive level. The overall assessment including the selection and combination of topics; the pacing of the Institute; the effectiveness of the presenters; the Institute content; as well and almost all other factors – seem to have scored at a higher level when compared with last year's Institute in Tukums focusing on the topic of "Performance Management in Public Administration".

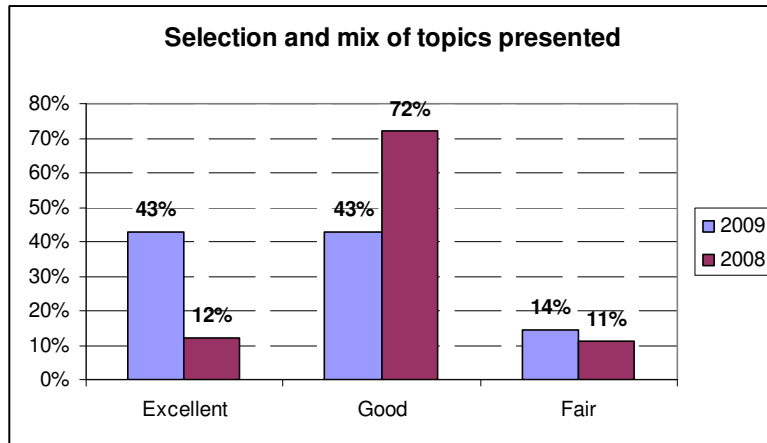
The Institute was held in Latvia for the 5th consecutive time. This has provided the possibility to compare the latest two events and analyze the participants' needs, where improvements were achieved already, and where further improvements need to be done.

It appears that the small number of returned questionnaires influences the overall results of the evaluation. People with fair experiences tend to have a bigger desire to express their findings.

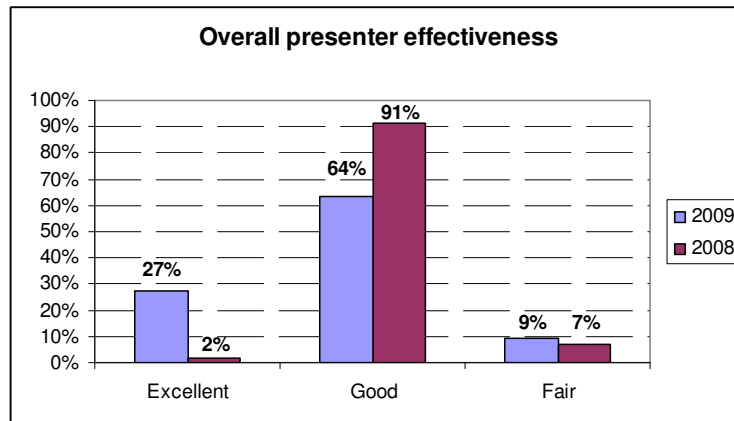
The main factors influencing the overall assessment of the Institute are much better than last year's evaluation, and they are mostly connected with the higher assessment of the substantive content of the Institute, and the effectiveness of the presenters, as well as with the facilities and meals provided by the Institute.



It appears that the combination and the selection of the topics was done well, and that most of them have been evaluated good or excellent. The evaluation results indicate that some participants evaluated selection of topics as fair, thereby indicating that in organizing future Institutes, the topics should be chosen more carefully, and that every topic should be considered well before it is selected for inclusion at the Institute.



An improvement can still be seen in the overall presenter effectiveness. While last year this has been rated excellent only by 2% of the participants, and fair by 7%, this year's respondents evaluated the presenters as excellent by 27% and fair by 9%.



Accommodation and food facilities, received a much higher approval rating than last year's. This is one of the reasons why this year's Institute scored higher in the overall evaluation compared to previous ones.

