

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS CERTIFICATION TRAINING

Government reforms place new demands on the staff responsible for public financial management, often testing their level of professionalism and competence.

To address these needs in South East Europe, the CEF is working with governments and other partners to set up a program that provides modern knowledge and understanding of contemporary practices of accounting. It helps individuals apply international accounting standards and improve accountability within reformed public finance systems.

- *"I consider this program to be of exceptional use for me in sense it improves my knowledge and my capabilities in the area accountancy and finance, especially since I am working in this sphere already 10 years and in the course of the training I have learned things for which I can freely say I didn't know that well, and therefore I am truly thankful for this opportunity."* PACT student 2012-2013

## About the Program

The program introduces a professional qualification training program for public sector accountants in line with the best international standards and practice.

It was developed by the British Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and it is offered to countries across the region in cooperation with the CEF.

# International Certificate and Diploma

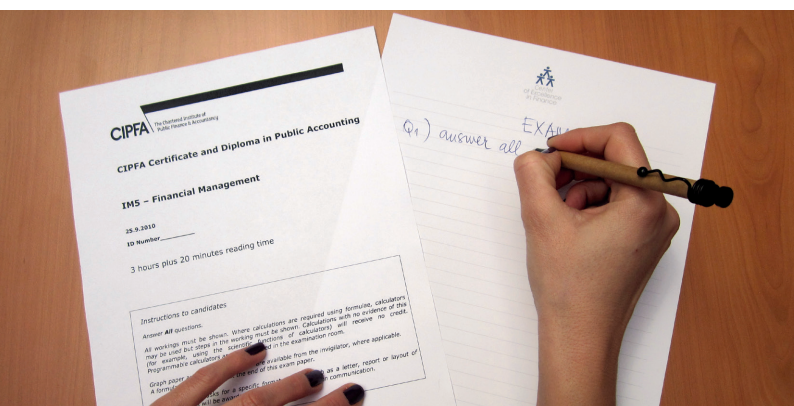
For public sector accountants the program offers:

- An internationally recognized, professional qualification provided in cooperation between the CEF and CIPFA.
- High-quality training material designed specifically for public sector accountants.
- Coverage of national public finance, and accountancy legislation and taxation.
- Flexible training methods: classroom training, tutorials, and a blend of theoretical and hands-on training in the local language from local tutors.

The program is designed for public sector employees who hold a Bachelor's degree and have relevant practical experience in areas as Budget preparation or execution, Accounting and bookkeeping, Preparation of financial management information and Financial oversight and control.

How certificate and diploma holders will benefit:

- Advanced career path, with the opportunity to attain senior posts within the employer's structure.
- Participation in continued professional development organized by the CIPFA and CEF.



## What Participants Learn

Holders of the certificate and diploma will be able to:

- Prepare financial statements and notes on financial statements according to the International Financial Reporting standards (IFRS), International Accounting Standards (IAS), and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), which improve the understanding of organizations and lead to better decision-making.
- Prepare important accounting and financial management information
- Give assurance to management and donors relating to the proper use of funds provided by them
- Manage, maintain and develop effective working relationships with client departments
- Contribute to the operation, management and development of the accounting function within the wider corporate governance context
- Prepare long-term business plans and support management while ensuring high quality public services and responding to changing circumstances and demands

# Program Modules

## CERTIFICATE LEVEL

### Management Accounting

Scope of management accounting in public sector organizations, including ensuring sustainability of resources; the role of budgets, budget execution, and budgetary control in short and medium-term financial plans; recording cost data and using costing techniques; applying management information in decision-making.

### Financial Accounting

Work environment and ethical standards expected of professional accountants; accounting fundamentals and principles of double-entry accounting; preparation of accounting records that meet the standard financial statement assertions and requirements of selected IPSASs; preparation of simple financial statements for sole traders; the maintenance of accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

### NML - National Public Finance and Accountancy Legislation and Taxation

Overview of legislative plans in public finance; structure of the country's public sector; principles and practice of government accounting; the budgeting and accounting system; sources of revenues, including taxation, fees, rents, and charges; key elements of income and expenditure; administration and accounting of salaries, wages, and pensions for public employees; legislative and organizational framework of Office of the Accountant General; legislative setting of public contracts and the formation and operation of companies.

***Students who pass all exams on these modules receive the CIPFA Certificate.***

## DIPLOMA LEVEL

### Audit and Assurance

Scope and legal, regulatory, and ethical environment in which audits are performed; risk assessment and planning procedures required by internal and external standards; preparation of working papers on the testing performed to obtain sufficient, appropriate audit evidence; use of audit evidence to form an audit opinion; preparation of working papers on audit finalization procedures; role of internal audit and related tasks.

### Managing Finance

Role of financial and treasury management in the public sector; application of investment appraisal techniques to evaluate capital projects; appropriateness of treasury management techniques to minimize financial risk; working capital management techniques; calculation of internal and external prices for services, taking into account political and organizational factors.

### Managing Organizations

Approaches to improve efficiency and sustainability of an organization and manage performance; scope of procurement, commissioning, and contract management to sustain excellence in service delivery; evaluation techniques to achieve quality and implement quality control procedures; applying project management techniques efficiently and effectively; acquisition and management of information systems; human resource and staff issues relating to performance, procurement, and project management.

### Public Sector Financial Reporting

The external financial reporting framework for the public sector; preparation of key external financial statements applying relevant accounting standards; the regulatory framework for measuring performance in public sector organizations.

***Students who pass all exams on these modules receive the CIPFA Diploma.***

# How the Program Works

## STRUCTURE

The program has **two levels: Certificate and Diploma.**

## MATERIALS

- Six modules with an **international** focus, developed by CIPFA.
- One **national** module, developed by local authors.

## METHODOLOGY

The program combines **classroom training and tutorials.** Students can learn from local professionals on both the theoretical and practical aspects of each topic.

## PROCESS

Completion of **each level normally takes a year**, with about **two months for each module.**

## EXAMINATION

Two examinations are envisaged for each module. The first one takes place at the end of each module lectures. The emphasis in the training process is put on developing skills and helping students pass the assessments at the first attempt. At the end of academic year, the examination re-sit is available for all modules.



## The Program So Far...

The program is comprised of donor-supported projects implemented at the individual country level.

### 2003-2007: Albania, Croatia and Slovenia – pilot

The first group of students completed the PACT program in English, and subsequent groups did so in their national languages. Through the pilot program, more than 200 students received certificates and more than 180 students received diplomas.

### 2007-2011: Macedonia and Moldova

Both countries began PACT program in 2007 and have completed it in October 2010 (Moldova) and May 2011 (Macedonia). More than 40 certificates and diplomas were awarded to successful students.

2012 - Certificate level second group began in Macedonia and completed in 2013

2014 - Certificate level third group began in Macedonia

2015 - Certificate level first group starts in Montenegro

# How CEF Countries Participate

Building on successful experiences in several countries, the CEF offers the program to other members, who are invited to inquire how they can implement it.

Each recipient country is expected to contribute to financing and to actively cooperate with the CEF in the following main activities:

- Selecting, nominating, and financing a country coordinator for the project, who will act as interface between the CEF, the recipient Ministry of Finance, local contractors, and students
- Creating a national module on local law and taxation according to the syllabus provided by the CIPFA
- Assisting the CEF in finding and selecting contractors (including tutors and translators)
- Nominating and assisting in the selection of students
- Conducting all necessary actions to officially recognize the profession of accounting and the related diploma
- Supporting the establishment of institutional capacity at the national level and encouraging its sustainable adoption by the local country authorities.





# Project Donors

Several major donors have joined the CEF and CIPFA in implementing the permanent training programs for accountants and internal auditors in countries of the region. They share our belief that effective training is critical to the success of reforms that aim to introduce internationally comparable standards, ethics, and practices in the areas of accounting and internal audit.

Governments and organizations contributing to this effort include:



Central European Initiative



Slovenia



World Bank



UNDP

**We are seeking additional donor partners to help fund country-level projects.** This support is essential as we work to expand the program's reach throughout the region.



# Implementing Partners

## Center of Excellence in Finance

The CEF is a leading regional institution promoting capacity building in public finance across South East Europe. Established in 2001 by the Slovenian Government, it has 12 members (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey). Members play a principal role in defining the CEF's objectives and strategies.

The CEF develops tailor-made training programs for government employees in key areas of public financial management. It also provides technical assistance and conducts policy events and research.

The CEF closely cooperates with the IMF, the World Bank, and other international organizations and is an active member of several regional initiatives, including the World Bank's Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) and the Public Expenditure Management - Peer Assisted Learning network (PEM-PAL). With its regional approach, the CEF promotes the sharing of experience and knowledge among its member countries.

The CEF is financed by the Slovenian Government and other donors, mainly international organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, and bilateral donors.

For more information, visit <http://www.cef-see.org>



## Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

CIPFA is one of the leading professional accountancy institutions in the United Kingdom and the only one specializing in the public sector. It is responsible for the education and training of professional accountants, auditors, and financial managers and for the regulation of these through the setting and monitoring of professional standards. Uniquely among the UK's professional accountancy institutions, the CIPFA is responsible for setting accounting standards for local government, a significant part of the country's economy. The CIPFA invests heavily in research and regularly advises the government on policy issues.

The CIPFA's members are predominantly employed in public service bodies, national audit agencies, and major accountancy firms, often at the most senior levels. They are respected for their high technical and ethical standards as well as their professional integrity. The CIPFA also provides a range of high-quality advisory information and training and consultancy services to public service organizations. Its weekly magazine, Public Finance, is widely read by elected representatives and officials throughout the government. The CIPFA can justifiably lay claim to be the leading independent commentator on managing and accounting for public money.

For more information, visit <http://www.cipfa.org.uk>



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