

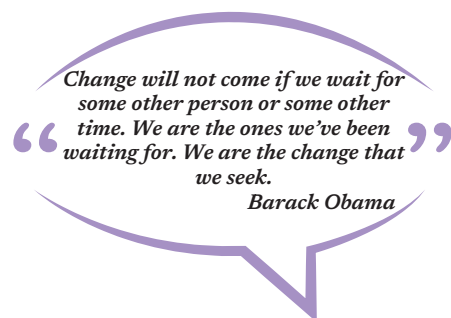
INTERVIURI



*Ina BOGATÎ,
șef al Direcției coordonare asistență externă
și managementul proiectelor a MAI,
comisar-șef*

PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY AND STRATEGIC VISION WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

*TRAIECTORIA PROFESIONALĂ ȘI VIZIUNEA STRATEGICĂ ÎN CADRUL
MINISTERULUI AFACERILOR ÎNERNE DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA*



Mrs. Bogatii, we would like you to share with us your professional journey that led you to this position within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Republic of Moldova. What inspired you to pursue this path, and what were the key milestones of this journey?

I embarked on my professional journey with a passion for making a positive impact in the field of Home Affairs. My inspiration comes from a deep-seated commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Moldovan communities. The opportunity to contribute strategi-

cally to Home Affairs projects aligns with my vision of creating resilient, secure, and responsive systems that benefit society as a whole. My dedication to improving processes related to security, public safety, and government operations inspired me to pursue a career path that

eventually led to the role of Director of coordination of external assistance and project management within the MIA HQ.

I obtained a master's degree in international relations and another one in International Law. My theses were related to national and EU security. During my studies I Gained a solid understanding of policy analysis, national security and EU safety strategies.

After the faculty I joined the public sector, starting in an entry-level position within the International Relations Department of MIA. During my 18 years of career I acquired hands-on experience in various operational aspects, including emergency response coordination for assistance during Covid-19 and refugees crises.

Recognized the importance of effective project management in enhancing Home Affairs capabilities I start to lead the specialized Department of MIA.

Pursued the strategic goals for MIA develop-

ment and in line with project management rules I gained expertise in portfolio management. Successfully managed key projects related to improving Home Affairs system and enhancing information-sharing with all the stakeholders on one single platform. The Together 4Home Affairs Platform demonstrate a knack for strategic planning and aligning project objectives with broader governmental goals. This platform defined a strategic vision for the Home Affairs project portfolio – Development Matrix, emphasizing innovation, efficiency, and adaptability and established a culture of collaboration and excellence, fostering a high-performing team.

The Development Matrix of MIA is recognized for consistently delivering successful outcomes, leading to a promotion to the role of Project Management within Home Affairs system. The document offers a holistic understanding of project portfolios, realizing the need for comprehensive oversight.

In your role as a leader, what are the main strategies you implement to ensure the efficiency and success of your team? How do you approach team selection and training to achieve the set objectives, and what are the main criteria in the selection process?

Efficiency and success in portfolio management require a combination of strategic approaches related to team building and ongoing training. Clearly define roles and responsibilities within the portfolio management team ensures that each team member understands their responsibility for contributing to the overall objectives. Build a team with a diverse skill set covering project management, risk assessment, financial analysis, and strategic planning enables the team to address various aspects of portfolio management and share their knowledge effectively. Ensure that team members have a strong understanding of the organization's strategic goals and how portfolio management contributes to achieving these objectives helps in prioritizing projects that align with the overarching strategy.

Implement ongoing training programs to keep the team updated on the latest portfolio management methodologies, best practices,

and emerging trends helps to develop an up-to-date high level of expertise within the team. Invest in the professional development of team members ensures that the team remains at the forefront of portfolio management practices. Encourage collaboration not only within the portfolio management team but also with other departments: financial, public policies, logistic and acquisition, can provide diverse perspectives and foster innovation and cross-sectorial approach. Equip the team with the right portfolio management tools and technology, software, data analytics tools, and reporting systems will facilitate efficient collaboration and decision-making and is our priority for 2024.

By combining these strategies, all governmental entities can create a high-performing portfolio management team that is not only capable of efficiently managing existing projects but also adaptable to changes and future challenges.

What are your specific approaches to team-building in your department, and how do they reflect Ina Bogatîi's personal style? What activities or techniques do you use to encourage collaboration and cohesion within the team?

Building a strong and cohesive team in a Project Management department is crucial for achieving project success. Work together on project proposals, team meetings or workshops with icebreaker activities that simulate project scenarios, share knowledge and encourage teamwork. Organization of regular team meetings to discuss project progress, challenges, and successes provide a platform for open communication and help reinforce a sense of unity within the teams. I encourage collaborative decision-making by involving team members in discussions related to project planning, risk management, monitoring and problem resolution. This approach promotes responsibility, a sense of ownership and engagement. Also, at MIA level I organize sessions

where team members can share their unique skills, experiences, and knowledge Together Talks. This not only enhances team members' expertise but also fosters a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. Thought these meetings I promote collaboration with other departments and project teams from Ministry and from different organizations and entities. Cross-functional collaboration allows team members to learn from different perspectives and share best practices. More than that, a novel approach is the mentorship program where experienced expert that work on a daily basis in our team mentor and give recommendations for improvements. This facilitates knowledge transfer and creates a supportive learning environment.

How do you envision the evolution of attracting and absorbing EU funds in the context of Moldova recently obtaining the status of a candidate country and opening negotiations with the EU?

When a country becomes a candidate for EU membership and opens negotiations, it often gains access to various EU funds and financial instruments. This support is designed to help the candidate country like Moldova to prepare for accession and align its policies and institutions with EU standards.

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is a financial instrument that aims to support candidate countries in their preparation for EU membership. It covers various sectors, including governance, rule of law, and infrastructure development.

As negotiations progress, candidate countries may have access to specific funds earmarked for the alignment of their institutions and policies with EU standards. Upon accession, countries gain access to Structural and Cohesion Funds, which are part of the EU's long-term budget.

These funds aim to reduce development disparities among EU regions and support economic and social cohesion.

Successful absorption of EU funds requires effective administrative structures, transparent governance, and the ability to implement projects according to EU regulations. Countries need to build their administrative and institutional capacities to absorb and manage funds efficiently.

The EU closely monitors the progress of candidate countries in utilizing the funds. Regular evaluations assess the impact and effectiveness of the funded projects, promoting accountability and transparency. Also, EU provides technical assistance to help candidate countries strengthen their administrative and institutional capacities. This assistance aims to enhance the effective absorption of funds and improve overall governance.

Do you believe that the Ministry of Internal Affairs has a sufficiently prepared team to effectively attract EU funds? How do you coordinate the various subdivisions within the Ministry to work together, ensuring close and efficient collaboration to achieve this objective?

Qualifying for receiving funds and effectively utilizing EU funds requires a clarity in the end results. This requires a cooperative, well-prepared and capable team. Ensure the team has a solid understanding of the EU structure, policies, and funding programs, is familiar with the specific funds and instruments available for different sectors is crucial. The team should be aware of monitoring needs, compliance standards and reporting obligations, and training in project management, financial management, and EU regulations is valuable. The team should be able to articulate project ideas clearly, aligning them with EU priorities and demonstrating their potential impact. Another important element is to establish and nurture relationships with relevant stakeholders, including EU representatives, government agencies, local authorities, and potential project partners. Networking is crucial for project identification and collaboration. Also, it is important to build expertise in financial management, monitoring schedule and regular reporting structure to meet EU standards. Team members should understand budgeting, financial control, and reporting procedures specific to EU funds. The team should be skilled in identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks associated with EU-funded projects. It is crucial to ensure team members are proficient in English as a working language

for effective communication with EU representatives and partners is vital. The team should be well-versed in the call requirements and EU regulations to adhere to the highest standards of accountability and transparency.

It is important to foster diversity within the team to bring varied perspectives. Inclusive teams are often more innovative and better equipped to address complex challenges, and that all projects have a main lead and a backup. By preparing the team with these considerations in mind, we enhance our ability to attract, manage and develop through EU funds, contributing to the successful implementation of projects aligned with EU priorities and objectives. Likewise, a good internal communication and cooperation within the whole security sector involved in program and project implementation with the Ministry is a must for our credibility, ensuring that we do not lose an opportunity to grow further through building on an experience instead of standing still at the same level, are a constant managerial challenge. With funding follows responsibility, transparency, and accountability towards strengthening bilateral cooperation. We all just want to get most out of our resources and make sure the increased knowledge gives us the best practice and increased knowledge as an end result.

There is a noticeable interest in infrastructure projects. In this context, how is the training component addressed and developed within funded projects? Who is the reliable partner from the EU in this field? What are the strategies to balance infrastructure needs with professional development and training for project beneficiaries?

Balancing infrastructure needs with professional development and training is crucial for the long-term sustainability and success of infrastructure projects. Seek references and case studies from other projects that your potential partner has been involved in could help in the identification processes of specific needs. A reliable partner should have a history of suc-

cessful collaboration, particularly in integrating training components into infrastructure projects. By adopting these strategies, infrastructure projects can address both immediate development needs and the long-term professional growth of project beneficiaries, ensuring a more sustainable and inclusive approach to project implementation.

Tell us about the most significant achievement of the department you oversee within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. How have you personally contributed to this success, and what were the key factors that enabled the achievement of these objectives?

Ensuring that the MIA project portfolio aligns closely with the Government strategic goals and objectives is crucial. This requires a clear understanding of the Ministry mission and vision. Implementation of a robust prioritization framework helps identify and select projects based on their alignment with strategic objectives, potential impact, and resource availability. Efficient allocation and optimization of resources across projects contribute to maximizing the overall output of the portfolio. This involves careful consideration of budget constraints, skilled personnel, and other critical resources. Implementing effective risk management strategies helps in identifying and mitigating potential risks associated with projects. Proactive risk management ensures the portfolio's resilience to external challenges. Establishing the Development Matrix for regular monitoring and reporting enables the department to track the progress of each project within the portfolio. This real-time visibility allows for timely decision-making and adjustments. Transparent communication with stakeholders, including executives, team members, and external partners, is vital. Engaging stakeholders throughout the portfolio man-

agement process fosters support and alignment. Leveraging advanced project management tools and technologies facilitates effective portfolio management. From this year the MIA team will use a specific tool to assist in data analysis, reporting, and decision support.

Investing in the professional development of portfolio management staff ensures that the team possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of managing a diverse portfolio this is why training and certification in project management is a priority. Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) allows the department to measure the success of portfolio management initiatives. Regularly reviewing these metrics helps in assessing the department's overall performance. Portfolio management should be flexible and adaptable to changing organizational priorities. This agility enables the department to respond proactively to emerging opportunities or challenges.

By focusing on these KPIs, the Department can achieve significant success in optimizing the project portfolio, delivering value to the organization, and contributing to overall strategic objectives.

Where do you see yourself in your career three years from now, and how does this plan align with your personal direction and goals?

In three years, I envision myself as the superhero of the office, with a cape made of successful projects. My personal goal? To conquer

the coffee machine and build a kingdom of productivity. Watch out, world!

How do you adapt to the rapid changes in the field of foreign assistance, and how do you incorporate these changes into your project management strategies?

The field of foreign assistance undergoes continuous evolution, influenced by geopolitical shifts, technological advancements, global challenges, and changing priorities. Several trends and rapid changes have been observed in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has

highlighted the interconnectedness of global health and the need for international cooperation. Responses to health emergencies have become a central focus of foreign assistance efforts.

There is a growing recognition of the impact

of climate change on vulnerable populations. Foreign assistance is increasingly directed toward supporting climate resilience, sustainable development, and environmental conservation.

The integration of digital technologies in foreign assistance has accelerated. This includes the use of data analytics, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms for more effective program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises have led to an increased focus on providing aid and support to displaced populations. Humanitarian assistance includes addressing food se-

curity, shelter, and access to basic services.

Foreign assistance programs increasingly integrate gender considerations. Efforts are made to address gender-based violence, promote women's economic empowerment, and ensure gender equality in development initiatives.

These rapid changes underscore the dynamic nature of foreign assistance, as global actors continually adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities. Flexibility, innovation, and collaboration are key principles guiding efforts to address the evolving landscape of international development.

Considering your significant responsibilities within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, how do you efficiently balance your career with the time spent with your family and personal activities? Do you have any advice for those trying to manage the balance between their professional and personal lives?

Balancing a career with family and personal activities is a common challenge, but with thoughtful planning and prioritization, it's possible to achieve a healthy balance. Understanding what matters most to you will guide your decision-making and help you allocate time accordingly. Focus on the quality of time spent with your family rather than just the quantity. Be present and fully engaged during family activities to make the most of the time you have together. Also it is necessary to Schedule

personal activities and hobbies to ensure you have time for self-care and relaxation. Prioritize activities that bring you joy and help you recharge. Establish regular family rituals or activities that you can look forward to. This could be a weekly family dinner, a weekend outing, or other shared activities.

Striking a balance between work and personal life requires conscious effort and prioritization, but it is essential for overall well-being and happiness.

Thank you for taking the time for this interview. In conclusion, could you share a few thoughts addressed to the readers of the "Legea și Viața" magazine?

Embrace the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of others. Stay committed to continuous learning and be adaptable to change. Embrace new technologies, policies, and approaches to ensure you remain effective in your roles.

Network with your colleagues from other countries, share best practices, and build part-

nerships. A collaborative approach strengthens both local and international initiatives. Embrace new ideas, technologies, and methodologies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Innovation is essential for addressing complex challenges. Be resilient in the face of setbacks, learn from experiences, and use challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement.

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