

## **PILOT PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2008 — FEBRUARY 2009**

Pursuant to the working plan of the Russian-Danish pilot project of development of local self-government in Leningrad Oblast and the contract concluded between COWI Consult International Ltd. (Denmark) and Mr. Igor Mikolasyuk, a Russian expert, the following activities have been implemented during the period from September 2008 to February 2009:

**I.** Basic methodological principles of amalgamation of municipalities in Leningrad Oblast were developed in September 2008.

This target has been achieved through several stages.

First, a thorough analysis was implemented covering the existing legislation of the Russian Federation, Leningrad Oblast and other subjects of the Russian Federation in the areas of organization of local self-government, civil rights to participate in elections as well as in referendum, and establishing new subjects of the Russian Federation in the framework of the Federation.

Then, relevant laws of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Kursk Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Orenburg Oblast and other subjects of the Russian Federation) which provide a general legal framework for municipal reforms were carefully examined.

Following this, a study was undertaken of several special laws of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Krasnodarsky Krai, Republic of Mordovia and Penza Oblast) which provide a framework for reforms in certain specific municipalities.

Research and analysis was also made in the area of relevant law enforcement practice emerging in the Russian Federation.

Of particular interest to the analysis was the report of the international department of municipality of Aarhus on local self-government development in Denmark. The report provided a valuable insight into the Danish experience of municipal amalgamation and was used as a reference in the development of methodological principles of municipal reforms in Leningrad Oblast.

**II.** Throughout October — December 2008, a complete methodology for amalgamation of municipalities of Leningrad Oblast had been developed. The methodology can be used by all interested parties in addressing issues related to municipal reforms.

However, local self-government is only emerging in the Russian Federation, which accounts for dynamic changes in the legislation relative to this area of community development. For instance, as many as 37 amendments had been until now made to the Federal Law of 06.10.2003 No. 131-FZ “On general principles of organization of local self-government in the Russian Federation” which came into full effect on 01.01.2009.

In order to ensure the reliability and topicality of the proposed methodology through 2009, an on-going monitoring of Russian legal framework of general legal, territorial, organisational and economic principles of local self-government should be performed, so that changes and updates to the methodology are introduced whenever necessary.

**III.** The municipality of Aarhus (Kingdom of Denmark) was visited in the framework of a study tour (October 20 — 24, 2008) focused on local government development issues in Denmark. The following outcomes have been achieved:

- Participation in three seminars:
  - 1) Intermunicipal co-operation in Denmark
  - 2) Intermunicipal relationship strategies
  - 3) Intermunicipal co-operation strategy development
- The Aarhus experience of one-stop-shop approach to public service delivery is explored (through a visit to the Centre for public services of the municipality of Aarhus)
- Best practice of public service delivery by local self-government is explored (through a visit of an intermunicipal employment service)
- Best Danish practice of co-ordination between public authorities and local self-government is examined.

**IV.** Assistance was rendered to public authorities of Leningrad Oblast in the organisation and implementation of study tours for the delegation from the municipality of Aarhus (Kingdom of Denmark) to Kingisepp District of Leningrad Oblast in November 2008 and February 2009.

Study tours for the delegation from the municipality of Aarhus offered an opportunity to familiarize the Danish partners with the structure of local self-government in Leningrad Oblast and with the major challenges affecting local government.

This exchange lead to a comparative analysis of problem-solving approaches in the area of local self-government which served to shape recommendations for local self-government authorities of Leningrad Oblast based on best Danish practice.

In the course of discussions, the parties have agreed to work out an intermunicipal co-operation approach to underpin intermunicipal problem-solving. Eventually, the approach can be put in practice with the assistance of Danish experts.

V. Advice and consultations have been provided to local self-government authorities of the Kingisepp District of Leningrad Oblast in the area of legal regulation of intermunicipal co-operation, including pooling of local financial resources, knowledge and facilities to achieve more effective and sustainable outcomes in addressing the issues of local significance.

As a result, heads of administrations of rural settlements of Kotelsky, Opolye, Falileyevo, and Kingisepp District of Leningrad Oblast have agreed to develop an intermunicipal co-operation action plan for household waste management.

The action plan will be developed in the course of 2009 and shall embrace the best Danish and Russian practice of intermunicipal co-operation in the area of collection, disposal and recycling of solid household waste. The plan may, where necessary, trigger amendments to the existing municipal legal regulation which establishes the framework for intermunicipal partnerships.

VI. Knowledge and practical expertise developed by the Russian-Danish pilot project of development of local self-government underpinned the process of amalgamation of Svetogorsk and Lesogorsky settlements of Vyborg Municipal District of Leningrad Oblast.

In particular, a message sent by the head of Vyborg District administration has forwarded to the Leningrad Oblast administration had set in motion the process of development of a bill “On amalgamation of Svetogorsk and Lesogorsky settlements of Vyborg Municipal District of Leningrad Oblast”. The bill was subsequently approved by the Leningrad Oblast Government and introduced by the governor of Leningrad Oblast to the Legislative Assembly of Leningrad Oblast.

Attachment: Methodology of amalgamation of municipalities in Leningrad Oblast, 24 p.

Igor Mikolasyuk  
Russian expert