

# **Development of Local Self-government in Leningrad Oblast**

## **Russian-Danish Co-operation Programme**

### **Pilot Project**

#### **1. Introduction (overview)**

The Russian-Danish pilot project of development of local self-government is being realized within the Danish Cross-border Co-operation Programme and aims to support networking, exchange and co-operation between local decision-makers of Denmark and Russia. The project was launched in January 2008 and will end in August 2009.

A two-year experience of Leningrad Oblast in the implementation of local government reform, introduced by the Federal Law of October 6, 2003 No. 131-FZ “On General Principles of Organisation of Local Self-government”, has shown that the existing organisation system of local self-government composed of 222 municipalities situated in the Oblast territory is far from being efficient.

It has become evident that some of municipalities which were formed in 2005 face considerable difficulties in addressing the issues of local significance due to low budgets and poor facilities.

The situation can be improved by amalgamating smaller and weaker local government units or their annexating to the bigger ones.

Since September 2007, the administration of Leningrad Oblast has been undertaking studies and working out a practical approach to this problem. Amalgamation is planned to be launched in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008. Fundamental methodological guidelines and legal documents required for the implementation of this mechanism are to be developed by that time.

#### **2. Project objective and targets**

The project overall objective is to develop a methodological approach to amalgamation of local government units on the territory of Leningrad Oblast. The project will be implemented in co-operation with Danish experts and a particular account will be taken of results of the recent municipal reform in Denmark. The proposed methodology will be tailored to the specific Russian context and designed in compliance with the existing Russian legal framework for local government.

This objective will be met through the achievement of the following key targets:

1. To analyze the current situation in Leningrad Oblast and to review the Danish experience of municipal amalgamation.
2. To develop a methodology for amalgamation of municipalities in Leningrad Oblast
3. To test the methodology in a pilot area of Kingisepp Municipal District (hereinafter referred to as pilot area).
4. To summarize the project findings and to ensure their sustainable application in other local government units of Leningrad Oblast.

### **3. Project activities**

1. To analyze the situation in Leningrad Oblast and Kingisepp Municipal District; to identify opportunities and approaches to amalgamation of municipal units in view of the existing Russian legal framework, both federal and regional.
2. To review and summarize the Danish experience in amalgamation of municipalities.
3. To develop a methodology for amalgamation (integration) of municipal units in Leningrad Oblast with a consideration of the Danish experience and the existing legal regulation on local government applied in the Russian Federation and in Leningrad Oblast, as well as of the relevant draft legal and regulatory documents.
4. To organize a study tour to Denmark (municipality of Aarhus) for public officials of Leningrad Oblast. The study tour will aim to provide an insight into the organization of the Danish local government system, basic principles of the municipal reform, as well as factors, procedures and outcomes of amalgamation of municipalities.
5. To organize a joint meeting (seminar) in the pilot area with the participation of heads of municipalities and heads of local administrations of Leningrad Oblast in order to raise awareness of positive experience of Denmark in amalgamation of municipal units and to generate support for municipal reforms in the pilot area.
6. To implement the proposed methodology in the pilot area.
7. To study and analyze the concrete results achieved through amalgamation (integration) of municipal units.
8. To organize a meeting (seminar) with the participation of heads of municipalities and heads of local administrations of Leningrad Oblast in order to raise awareness of positive experience in amalgamation (integration) of municipal units in the pilot area and to promote the amalgamation efforts all over Leningrad Oblast.

### **4. Expected project results**

The following results are expected to be achieved throughout project activities:

- To study the Danish experience in amalgamation of municipal units.
- To identify opportunities and to assess the necessity of municipal reforms in the pilot area.
- To develop the standard procedure methodology for amalgamation of municipal units in Leningrad Oblast.
- To implement activities in the pilot area in accordance with the proposed amalgamation methodology.

### **5. Project sustainability**

Upon the completion of the pilot project in the pilot area, the project findings and the proposed methodology can be disseminated to the whole territory of Leningrad Oblast to ensure the project sustainability.

## 6. Project working plan

<i>№</i>	<i>Tasks / activities</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
1.	To analyze the situation in Leningrad Oblast and Kingisepp Municipal District. To analyze the existing legal framework and identify opportunities for municipal reforms	June – July 2008	Analytical report	Russian expert
2.	To review and summarize the Danish experience in amalgamation of municipalities	June – August 2008	Analytical report	Danish expert
3.	To develop the basic principles of a methodology for amalgamation of municipal units in Leningrad Oblast	August – September 2008	Basic principles of the amalgamation methodology	Russian expert
4.	To organize a study tour to Denmark for public officials of Leningrad Oblast	October 2008	Study tour reports	Municipal administration of Aarhus
5.	To organize a joint meeting (seminar) in Kingisepp Municipal District with the participation of local public officials of Aarhus	November 2008	Seminar reports	Administration of Kingisepp Municipal District
6.	To revise the proposed amalgamation methodology and draft legal acts	October – November 2008	Revised methodology and draft legal acts	Russian expert, Danish expert
7.	To implement the proposed methodology in the pilot area	November 2008 – April 2009	Testing of the methodology	Local authorities of municipal units of Kingisepp Municipal District in co-operation with the administration of Leningrad Oblast
8.	To study and analyse the outcomes of amalgamation	April – June 2009	Analytical report	Russian expert
9.	To organize a meeting (seminar) for heads of municipal units of Leningrad Oblast and to disseminate results of amalgamation of the municipality in the pilot area	June 2009	Meeting reports	Administration of Leningrad Oblast