

IMPROVING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Pilot Project Description

(Kirillov Municipal District, Vologda Oblast)

1. INTRODUCTION

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 is running from January 2008 to September 2009 in parallel with local government reforms implemented in both countries. The project is financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is performed by a Consortium which includes an international consultancy company COWI (Denmark) and the Swedish National Institute for Public Service Training and Development (SIPU).

Since January 1, 2006, the administration of Vologda Oblast has embarked on the implementation of the Federal Law of October 6, 2003 No. 131-FZ “On General Principles of Organisation of Local Self-government”. Two urban districts, 26 municipal districts, 22 towns and 322 rural settlements have been identified within the Oblast; their boundaries have been legally fixed. Legitimate authorities have been set up in all newly formed municipal units. Financial resources and facilities have been created for local authorities, and the assets are being allocated. All this clearly shows that the local self-government in the Oblast is firmly set in place and it is high time to proceed to the next stage of development of local authorities.

The experience of Vologda Oblast in the implementation of a local government reform, introduced by the Federal Law of October 6, 2003 No. 131-FZ “On General Principles of Organisation of Local Self-government”, makes it evident that the existing organisation system of local self-government is far from being efficient. No quality assessment criteria have been yet introduced for public services provided by the Oblast, and no parameters have been identified for performance assessment of local authorities. Lack of qualified human resources presents a serious challenge, and the structure of local self-government needs to be improved.

The project will help improve the organization of local self-government in Kirillov District of Vologda Oblast; the project findings will eventually be replicated on the whole territory of the Oblast.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND TARGETS

The project overall objective is to develop and test a performance assessment methodology for local self-government authorities of Vologda Oblast.

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

- to develop a methodology for quality assessment of public services;
- to develop a performance assessment methodology for local authorities of the district level;
- to present proposals for improvement of local self-government structure.

3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A working group composed of Vologda Oblast Government officials, decision-makers of Kirillov District and a Russian expert of the project will analyse the current situation and develop quality assessment criteria for public services and a performance assessment methodology for local authorities of Kirillov Municipal District. Danish experts will provide the necessary support in the implementation of these activities.

The Danish municipality will review the best practice of performance assessment and public service delivery by Danish local government, analyze the relevant legal framework, and provide advice on the development and introduction of such methodologies.

Study tours are planned to be organized for the representatives of the Danish municipality to Vologda Oblast. Through these visits, the Danish colleagues will provide consultations and assistance and will gain an in-depth understanding of the Russian experience relevant to the project. The Danish participants will defray airline tickets, hotel bills and daily expenses incurred. The Russian partners will provide the transport services during the visits.

As the next step in the realization of the project, a working seminar will be organized in Kirillov Municipal District for Russian and Danish decision-makers and project experts (the expenses incurred by the Danish participants and experts are to be covered by the project budget).

The proposed quality assessment criteria for public services and performance assessment methodology will be introduced to improve the structure of local self-government.

Moreover, tours are planned to be organized for the representatives of Vologda Oblast to the Danish municipality in order to enable them to discuss the pilot project performance and to study the Danish experience relevant to the project (transport charges and hotel bills in Denmark will be covered by the project budget, airline tickets and daily expenses of the Russian participants will be paid by the administration of Vologda Oblast).

4. EXPECTED PROJECT RESULTS

The project will result in the improvement in the organization of local self-government in Kirillov Municipal District of Vologda Oblast and in the development of tools and mechanisms for improvement in the organization of local self-government on the whole territory of the Oblast, and in particular:

- quality assessment criteria for public services;
- a performance assessment methodology for local authorities of the district level;
- improvement of local self-government structure.

5. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The administration of Vologda Oblast is committed to continue the co-operation with the Danish colleagues. The Oblast government and public authorities of Kirillov Municipal District will contribute to the successful realization of the Russian-Danish project.

6. PROJECT WORKING PLAN

<i>No.</i>	<i>Tasks/activities</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
1.	To set up a working group composed of Vologda Oblast Government officials and decision-makers of Kirillov District	June 2008	A working group composed of public officials directly engaged in the project implementation	Government of Vologda Oblast
2.	To analyse performance of local self-government of Kirillov Municipal District	June – July 2008	Analytical note	Russian expert
3.	To review and summarize the Danish experience relevant to the project	June – August 2008	Analytical note	Danish expert
4.	To draft proposals: — a methodology for quality assessment of public services; — a performance assessment methodology for local authorities of the district level	August – October 2008	Draft proposals	Russian expert
5.	To organize a seminar and discuss the draft methodologies with the representatives of the Danish	November 2008	Seminar reports	Government of Vologda Oblast

	municipality			
6.	To revise the methodologies	November – December 2008	Revised methodologies	Russian expert
7.	To introduce the quality assessment criteria for public services and the performance assessment methodology for local authorities in Kirillov Municipal District	January – May 2009	The proposed criteria are applied in practice	Working group
8.	To present proposals for improvement of local self-government structure	January – May 2009	Draft proposals	Russian expert
9.	To organize a study tour for the representatives of Vologda Oblast to the Danish project partners	February – March 2009	Discussion of the project performance, exchange of experience	Municipality of Bornholm
10.	To organize a seminar for representatives of municipal units of Vologda Oblast in order to disseminate the project findings	June 2009		Government of Vologda Oblast