

Notat



Emne

Final progress report in the Project amalgamation in Municipalities in Leningrad Oblast.

Til

Kopi til

Den

Århus Kommune

Beskæftigelsesforvaltning
gen

Introduction:

This is the final progress report for "Development of Local Self-government in Leningrad Oblast - Russian-Danish Co-operation Programme - Pilot Project. The aim of the project has been to exchange and co-operation between local decision makers in Denmark and Russia. The specific focus has been make the Danish experience with amalgamation of municipalities available to the Russian partners. The responsibility of implanting the guidelines is only the responsibility of the Russian authorities.

Participants:

- Representatives from District of Kingisepp, Leningrad Oblast
- Representatives from Municipality of Aarhus
- Russian expert Mr. Igor Mikolansyuk
- Mr. Flemming Meyer, Danish expert
- Mr. Thomas Hausgaard COWI

The project working plan:

1. Analytical report of the existing Russian legal framework and opportunities for municipal reforms (Russian expert)
2. Analytical report of the Danish experience in amalgamations of municipalities (Danish experts)
3. Report on the basic principles of the amalgamation methodology in Leningrad Oblast (Russian expert)
4. Study tour to Aarhus Municipality
5. Seminar in Kingisepp
6. Implementation of methodology in the pilot area (municipal units, municipal district and the oblast)
7. Analytical report - outcome of amalgamation (Russian expert)

Faglig Service

Jægergården
Værkmestergade 15
8100 Århus C

Sagsnummer:

Sagsbehandler:
Flemming Meyer

Telefon:
8940 2000

Telefon direkte:
8940 2582

Telefax:
8940 2583

Ad.1 Analytical report of the existing Russian legal framework and opportunities for municipal reforms

The Russian expert made an analysis of the Russian legislation concerning local government, especially on the reform of the legislation for local government recently implemented Federal Law of October 6, 2003 No. 131-FZ "On General Principles of organization of Local Self-government".

According to the law on local government of the Russian federation a referendum must be hold before the structures of local government can merge.

Ad.2 Analytical report of the Danish experience in amalgamations of municipalities

The Danish experts made a report of the Danish experience of the last two municipal reforms; one of the most valid experiences is that cooperation in concrete areas was the main condition for success.

As an integrated part of this analysis it contained a proposal for a detailed road map on organizing the amalgamation at the technical as well as the political area.

These report/principles was the foundation for the amalgamation methodology in Leningrad Oblast and for the discussions in the study tour to Aarhus Municipality.

Ad.3 Report on the basic principles of the amalgamation methodology in Leningrad Oblast

The Danish Analytical report was handed over to the Russian expert, Mr. Igor Mikolasyuk and the representatives from the district of Kingiseep and Oblast of Leningrad.

The Russian expert stated that, 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.

Ad.4 Study tour to Aarhus

In the period 20 – 24 October 2008 a delegation with representatives from District of Kingisepp and the Russian expert was visiting Municipality of Aarhus.

During the visit a number of seminars aimed to explain the background for the proposed road map for cooperation between municipalities.

During the study visit Municipality of Aarhus also presented the Danish way of working in local government, based on the idea of local government based on producing service to the local population.

The emphasis of service producing has been the main driver in the development of bigger municipalities in Denmark, so the production of service can be as efficient both in practical and economic terms.

The practical way of service production and democratic approach to the citizens was demonstrated at the citizen centre and the employment centre in municipality of Aarhus.

Ad.5 Seminar in Kingisepp

In November a delegation from municipality of Aarhus headed by Mr. Flemming Meyer and Mr. Thomas Hausgaard from COWI visit district of Kingisepp, for the Danish partner to be familiar with the reality of the Russian municipalities. And the problem facing them on implementing the new local government law.

During the visit good relations and understanding of the problems facing the Russian partner, specially the 3 rural municipalities working to start cooperation on waste disposal and recirculation.

During the visit the rural settlements was visit and 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.

Ad.6 Implementation of methodology in the pilot area

In February 2009 Mr. Flemming Meyer visited district of Kingisepp to meet representatives from the district, the 3 rural municipalities.

Representatives from The Leningrad Oblast and the Russian expert Mr. Igor Mikolansyuk, who unfortunately has been ill during the first visit, participated in the meeting.

Of special value was the participation of the Russian expert and representatives from the Leningrad oblast because it facilitated the transmitting of the Danish experience to the whole oblast, and not only to the pilot area.

During the meeting it was clear that the new local government reform has created smaller municipalities that before, this was made to promote a more direct democratic connection between the citizens and the elected members of local government.

It is a part of the reform that merging of municipalities must be confirmed by a referendum in the concerned municipalities.

It is a part of the reform that a lot of technical areas such as water supply, waste management and maintaining of houses.

It is also clear that the municipalities have to involve private companies to solve these problems.

The new challenges to the municipalities can be described by looking to the example water supply.

Before the reform the price for water was the same over the whole oblast the same, but in some parts of the Russian Confederation it is experienced very big difference in price between different municipalities, even within the same district.

One of the reasons of these differences is the different conditions especially between the city municipalities, with the dense population and the rural municipalities.

The cooperation between especially the town municipalities with a the best conditions for an effective administration of the technical areas and the rural municipalities with a most costly administration.

The Russian expert found the Danish experience very valuable but stated that 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.

Ad.7 Analytical report - outcome of amalgamation

During the visits in Denmark and in Russia there has been an open and constructive dialog between the two partners, so despite of the difference in administrative systems we succeeded in combine the Danish experience with two Local government reforms with the reality in Leningrad Oblast to a road map for amalgamation of municipalities.

It has been agreed that cooperation in practical areas are the best way to start for the process of amalgamation, and the best way of cooperation accords when is a mixture of city municipalities and rural municipalities who take part in the cooperation.

According to Danish experience it is very important that structures above the municipalities that are district or even oblast take an active part in the process.

The Municipality of Aarhus willing to validate the good contact and cooperation evolved during this project in the future, and already a visit from Kingisepp is in the planning process as a TAIEX study visit.

The implantation of the amalgamation process is not a part of the project, it is the sole responsibility of the Russian authorities, but we have been informed by the Russian specialist that 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.

Flemming Meyer