

Russian Danish project on local government development

Introduction

The Russian-Danish project on local government development is initiated under the Danish Neighbourhood Programme to provide mechanisms for transferring of local government practices and experience between the two countries. The project is running from January 2008 to September 2009 in parallel with the implementation of local government reforms in both Denmark and Russia. The project is financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is implemented by a Consortium led by COWI (Denmark), which is an international consultancy company and SIPU from Sweden.

Project objectives, project directions, project activities and project participants

The objectives of the project is

- to facilitate cooperation between Russia and Denmark within the field of local government development with the focus on administration and service delivery
- to develop professional linkages between the Russian and the Danish pilot authorities
- to assist in institution-building and capacity-building.

The project is expected to develop within two main directions or areas of content:

- Promoting social development
- Promoting economic development

It is planned that the project will develop as cooperation activities between Russian and Danish local governments. At this stage of the project the following pilot Russian regions have been identified, in each of which a local government/municipality will be selected as concrete pilot area and pilot authority:

- Vologda Oblast
- Leningrad Oblast
- St. Petersburg
- Kaliningrad Oblast
- Pskov Oblast
- Krasnodar Kraj

From the Danish side the following Danish municipalities are expected to participate:

- Aarhus
- Aalborg
- Odense
- Naestved
- Bornholm
- Lyngby.

Between one or more Russian pilot municipality/municipalities and one or more Danish municipality/municipalities one concrete pilot project will be agreed upon and implemented

within the above-mentioned two main areas of content (social development or economic development).

The project will facilitate and carry through project events and activities like:

- Site visits in Russia and in Denmark
- Round table discussions, fora and seminars between Russian and Danish participants in Russia and in Denmark
- Training activities in Russia and Denmark
- Study tours to Denmark

Organizational structure of the project

The organizational structure of the project includes the following elements

- 1) Project Steering Committee
- 2) Project Management Team
- 3) Expert Working Group
- 4) Regional/Local Participants.

It is worth noting that in each of these structures there will be both Russian and Danish participation.

1) The Steering Committee will include representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and representatives of the Russian Embassy in Denmark (Copenhagen). The Steering Committee will be co-opted with representatives of the Consultant. The Steering Committee will meet approximately every 6 months during project lifetime. The main tasks of the Steering Committee will be as follows:

- Monitoring the realization of the project and its compliance with the Objectives
- Providing advice and recommendations during the course of the project to the project participants and the Consortium
- Approving progress reports
- Approving the concrete local government development projects.

2) The Project Management Team comprises the Team Leader (Danish), the Deputy Team Leader (Russian), a senior staff member representing the lead firm of the Consortium (Cowi) (called the Project Director) (Danish) and a Quality Assurance Manager (Danish). The Project Management Team will be assisted by a Project Administrator (Russian).

The key tasks of the Project Management Team are as follows:

- Planning, organizing and conducting project events (seminars, round table discussions, site visits, study tour etc)
- Co-ordination of the expert work including the provision of organizational and information support to the experts (Expert Working Group) and to the regional/local project participants
- Reporting to the Steering Committee
- Dissemination of project development and project results.

3) The Expert Working Group consists of the selected Russian and international experts who will be working on the pilot projects within the two main project directions

The key tasks of the project experts are:

- Developing the principal project materials and documents (analyses, recommendation, information and training materials)
- Providing methodological support and advice to the project participants on implementation of the local government projects
- Facilitating and supporting the work on the local government development projects
- Assisting in working out the content of project events (seminars, fora, round table discussions, training, study tours, site visits etc) and in implementing/carrying through these events
- Summarizing the experience gained in the course of the project in the form of reports and analytical events.

4) The Regional/Local Project Participants

The Project Participants are the regional and local representatives from the involved Russian and Danish pilot authorities.

The participants in each of the individual local government development projects are on one side the receivers of the support and assistance, which the overall project is providing (see above).

However, on the other side the **Danish** participants are responsible for transfer of relevant available knowledge to the Russian participants and during the project to examine possibilities for further twinning arrangements and cooperation activities beyond the framework and duration of the project in question.

The Russian participants on their side are responsible for the concrete results and the sustainability of each of the individual local government development projects. That means that no local government project should be launched without a real and sound commitment from the involved Russian municipality/municipalities and region(s). Likewise the Russian participants must be willing to share their experience with the involved Danish municipalities and to examine further cooperation possibilities beyond the framework and duration of the project in question.