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STRATEGY OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOGILEV OBLAST AS A NEW APPROACH OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT IN BELARUS

Mogilev oblast is located in the east of the Republic of Belarus, borders on the Smolensk and Bryansk regions of Russia to the east, the Vitebsk region in the north, the Gomel region in the south, on the Minsk region in the west. The area of the Mogilev oblast is 29, 100 square kilometers. The population of Mogilev oblast is 1070.6 thousand persons (11, 3% of the population of the Republic of Belarus). Largest city of Mogilev oblast: Mogilev -374.7 thousand persons, Bobruisk-218.2 thousand persons. Mogilev oblast has a number of local environmental problems, such as affected areas by radionuclide contamination from the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, high level of industrial pollutions, intensification of farming and logging practices, growth of mining. The main branches of the Mogilev oblast economy are mechanical engineering, chemical and light industries, mining, agro-industrial complex, logging and woodworking industries.

Strategy of a sustainable development (SSD) of the Mogilev region is developed by joint efforts of local general public and specialists within the Project of the international technical assistance «Assistance to regional and local development in the Republic of Belarus» financed by the European Union. It was first experience of elaborating of the regional sustainable development strategies at the middle level of administrative territory division in the Republic of Belarus- oblast level.

Strategy determines the potential, the main problems of the region, priorities and practical steps which need to be undertaken for ensuring stability of a development of the region in medium-term (2016-2020) and long-term (till 2025) prospect.

Strategy is one of the tools to implement territorial strategies in an integrated way. The conceptual basis for elaborating the Strategy is the complexity which is based on a triad of a sustainable development: social, ecological, and economic aspects of development.

The following regional initiatives of devising of priorities of the Strategy was taken into account: consideration for the interests of many participants of regional process

(the national and local government, business, institutes of civil society, local community); feasibility of tasks within competence of local authorities and self-government according to the current legislation; priority of measures which realization is followed by a synergy of effects (simultaneous achievement of positive results in economic, social and ecological spheres); existence of the corresponding financial security and the accounting of the operating financial and budgetary mechanism and prospect of its improvement.

The best international and national practices of strategic planning and regional development were considered in the course of work on Strategy. Definition of priorities of regional development of the Mogilev oblast was based, besides the accounting of national priorities; first, on an assessment of natural resources and social and economic potential; secondly, on identification of the existing region problems from positions of the concept of a sustainable development; thirdly, the account of developed and realized now and in the forthcoming prospect of the state and regional programs and projects in various directions of development of the Mogilev area. As a result of the carried-out work the following priorities were offered:

1. Strengthening of human potential, increase of level and quality of life of the population.
2. Favorable environment – a necessary condition for development of present and future generations.
3. The Mogilev region – an attractive and reliable platform for internal and external investment.
4. A sustainable development of an industrial complex of the Mogilev area, competitive in foreign markets, on an innovative basis.
5. Complex development of rural territories, actions, small and average towns of Mogilev

The Strategy is finding logical sequence as the whole unit document after the process of elaboration of the priorities of sustainable development of Mogilev oblast was held out. The main collaboration researches were conducted by experts in the peculiar spheres on this stage of work. The scheme of strategy is classical for such kinds of documents and consists of the next Chapters:

1. The strategy of Mogilev region in the context of national and international instruments for sustainable development.
2. Detailed analysis of socio-economic status of oblast, analysis of environmental problems, SWOT analysis.
3. Image of the desirable future of the Mogilev oblast.
4. The strategic goal, priorities, directions and tasks of the Mogilev region.
5. Regional growth points of the Mogilev oblast.
6. Sustainable development indicators Mogilev oblast.
7. Organizational support and monitor the implementation of Strategy.
8. Financial support for implementation of the Strategy.

The peculiarities of working-out of the Mogilev oblast SSD consists in implementation of the new approaches in spatial development in the Belarus. Sub-regional zoning are offered as base for regional study. The center of sub-regions in Mogilev oblast is three industrial centers: Mogilev, Bobruisk and Krichev. The status of these towns is not mentioned as the centers of sub-regions at the legislative level. Inner-migration process, spatial features of geographical configuration of Mogilev oblast, and industrial development of these centers give a reason for such kind conditional zoning. More than 80 % of all private companies in Mogilev oblast are registered in these towns and in the surrounding the same name administrative region. It specifies the leading role of these towns in inner-oblast socio-economical development.

It should also be noted, that some regions of Mogilev oblast were strongly affected by radionuclide contamination from the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The most suffered regions by the effects of radioactive pollution are situated in the south-east part of Mogilev oblast. Regional policy of state authorities is built on understanding of the significance and uniqueness of socio-economic development of these distinctive areas. It was approved by local authorities of Mogilev oblast the special regional development program of peculiar regions in the south-east in 2015 year. Socio-economical situation in the south-east is characterized as depressive with high level of depopulation processes, due to ecological problems, poorly-developed industry sectors, mono-specialization of regional economy. The special regional development program envisage the measures for development new branches of regional economy, as alternative energetic, transport and logistic sector, tourism sector. Decree of President of Republic of Belarus- № 235 adopted in 2015 year «On the socio-economic development of the south-eastern region of the Mogilev oblast» provides the measures for implementations for intensification of socio-economic development by special tax privileges for business and workers, social benefits for local people (long-term special credit for housing building programs with lowest interest rate in the Belarus and others stimulating programs). All these initiatives of authorities were reflected in the Strategy.

It is planning, that the strategies of a sustainable development (SSD) will be one of strategic documents for Belarus local authorities of oblast level in the nearest future. These strategies will be additional for indicative plans of socio-economic development of territories and of spatial development schemes. Integrating approaches of targeting process are new for Belarus. It was elaborated the system of indicators which allow to estimate the step-by step progress in regional development, according with chosen priorities of Strategy. The targets and objectives of sustainability are reflected by indicators that characterize the living standards and quality of life, the level of economic development and changes in the state of the environment.

The chapter of the regional growth points of the Mogilev oblast is important part of Strategy. The methodical instruments for determination of these regional growth

points were based on statistical data, specialist conclusion, clusters and the sub-regional division approaches, elements of scientific foresight methods. Clusters are suggested as regional growth points. There is not firm definition of *cluster* in the Belarusian law. Belarus economy is making first steps on clusterization of its economy. There are prerequisites in Mogilev oblast for appearance classical *Porter's clusters*. We could say that we have *proto clusters* in Mogilev oblast. Now it is just the group of companies in the same branch of economy. Emerging competition on foreign markets, deficit of some resources on the regional economy level are key factors for genesis of clustering in Belarus. The following regional growth points of the Mogilev oblast were suggested on mid-term perspective till 2025:

- Cluster of agricultural mechanical engineering and tractor construction (Bobruisk)
- Chemical-technological cluster in the production of tires and rubber products (Bobruisk)
- Chemical-technological cluster (Mogilev)
- Cluster of light industry (Mogilev)
- Cluster of production of cement and industrial house building(Krichev)
- Sector of tourism (The territory of Mogilev oblast with tourist attraction sites)

It could seem from first sight that these traditional industrial clusters contradict of objectives of sustainable regional development. Cluster approach means creation of the new type production (ecological-friendly) by new players within cluster structure and modernization of existing industries. Mid-term character of Strategy, also become one of the reason for choosing traditional activities as points of growth.

Strategies of a sustainable development (SSD) in Belarus on oblast level could become real instrument for noticeably improving the quality of life of population, and suggest the solving for environmental problems.