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PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS INNOVATION IN SYSTEM OF REGIONAL MANAGEMENT IN BELARUS

Implementation of project management in the activities of local government in Belarus can be considered as one of the innovative approaches to reforming the system of regional management. The country has not had such a practice before. The implementation of the regional and local development projects carried out in Belarus only within the framework of international programs.

Why this approach is urgent for Belarus and may find implementation?

Currently continuous improvements of the management of the socio-economic system development of regions take place in the country. Key directions may be specified as: redundancy in the number of employees of the local and self-government institutions; optimization of performed functions by the regional development management; moving from directive and administrative managing approach to indicative and indirect management tools, maximum possible use of principle of subsidiarity. The most significant changes are expected in the sphere of public finance management in Belarus. In particular, the plan of budget expenditure will be implemented over three years (currently applying an annual horizon of financial budgeting). The bulk of the budget expenditure will be distributed on a special-purpose basis. As expected, the principle of competition between programs (sub-program) will be applied. The planning process will be carried out on basis of the priorities and expected management results of supervisory control activities of budget funds (currently planning is carried out on basis of previous years expenses).

What effect can be expected from the implementation of project management in a system of local authorities?

Firstly, despite the fact that the development and implementation of projects carried out within the tactical management, they are closely related to the strategic targets of regional development. It will reduce the level of use of so-called «manual control» of socio-economic development of regions.

Secondly, the efficiency of interagency cooperation on a partnership basis while joint venture implementation can be improved, which is important from the standpoint of overall development of the region and the participants of the regional process expand.

Thirdly, system management becomes more adaptable to external conditions, timely response to potential risks is provided, transparency and prompt of decisions are achieved.

Fourthly, the local community can be actively involved in issues related to local development.

Fifthly, new competitive advantage is forming in the region, as the application of new management methods, important for attracting foreign investors.

Which problems of regional development of Belarus may become the object of project management on the level of institutions of local government?

For example, the Russian experience of project management implementation to the institutions of local development in the pilot areas of the first level in 2014 (Yaroslavl oblast, Belgorod oblast, Perm kraj) approve the possibility of realization of the following project types: «Development of the computer literacy centers on the territory», «Implementation of dual education (in the context of public partner partnership)», «Creation of network of public municipal services of multipurpose centers», «Revival of all-Russian physical culture complex « Ready for labor and defense»» and others.

What are the potential risks and threats to the implementation of project management at the level of local authorities?

Taking into account the lack of experience of project management in institutions of local and self-government in Belarus, it is important to consider the following risk situations.

- Currently there is no unified methodology, appropriate regulatory and legal framework of the project management in the local executive authorities.
- Rigid organizational structure on executive committees, legal restrictions of the ability to form teams for projects implementation.
- There are problems with the changes in the culture of managerial work of staff of regional executive committees caused by the human factor. Therefore, there is a risk of subjective resistance to the implementation of innovations in the management of local authorities.
- There is a lack of experts in project management, there are no relevant competence of public servants, system of motivation of public servants which aimed to promotion of the implementation of and participation in the project management has not been developed.

- There is a lack of appropriate software for supporting project activities and there is a certain complexity of automation and integration of informational systems aimed at providing project management in the executive government.
- There are problems of financial support associated with the preservation of the current fiscal policy framework.

What measures should be implemented to minimize these risks and create the background for the implementation of project management in the system of regional management of Belarus?

Among the priority measures can be considered the following:

1. Development of standard methodological instructions and provisions, patterns, schedules, by-laws, provisions that necessary for the implementation of project management in the system of management of the local executive committee.
2. Development of the management concept of motivation for participants of the project (financial encouragement and moral incentives) and its implementation, as well as the development of new competences, ranking officials by the experience, performing of tests.
3. Development of educational programs and the organization of training project management of the project participants.
4. Organizational support of the project activities, creation of suitable structures in local executive committee. For example, it can be coordinating collegiate authority with the following functions: preparation of methodological documents; approval of activities or projects portfolio; monitoring the progress of the projects; change management projects (time, budget, and other results.). According to international practice, it is viable also to form a project office with the following functions: the development and support of the regulatory and legal framework for project management in a particular field of management; portfolio project construction; harmonization of key project documents.