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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS A GROWTH FACTOR FOR THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

The social sphere in Belarus is formed mainly by state-owned enterprises, which are financed from the republican and local budgets according to the cost estimate principle. Social business gives only the first shoots. The specificity of these enterprises and their unequal position on the market is accompanied by such problems as the higher cost of the product or service; complexity with embedding in large retail chains; the problem with the sale of products in the face of fierce competition from large manufacturing enterprises whose products are cheaper; lack of financial resources, lack of microfinance and subsidies, as well as the need for regular expensive certification and standardization of products regardless of income, weakness of the innovation component in the organization of activities of such enterprises, etc.

The source of growth and efficiency of social enterprises in Belarus can be digital technologies. For this, it is necessary in Belarus to develop *The concept of a digital platform for the development of social entrepreneurship*, primarily at the city level. This concept is based on the provisions of the *State Program for the Development of the Digital Economy and the Information Society for 2016–2020 in the Republic of Belarus* and may represent one of the components of local strategies for the sustainable development of the urban economy, which defines social business as the point of growth of the urban economy.

The main thrust of the digital transformation of social business in Belarus should be linked to the ability to use new network forms that are implemented at various stages of the business process, including at the international level.

First, network forms of consumption, which are important for low-paid and socially vulnerable segments of the population, because they lower the price of goods and services; and are effective for social enterprises as suppliers of goods and services, since they increase sales.

Secondly, educational networks in the field of social entrepreneurship organization, first of all, free on-line training. They expand access to educational programs of geographically distant users, as well as socially vulnerable groups of the population (disabled people, young people, retirees, etc.) with a view to their further employment in a social business company.

Thirdly, the sales networks of social entrepreneurs, including the provision of services in such areas as the development of new markets, assistance in entering online trading systems; the formation of networks of interconnections between social entrepreneurs both domestically and internationally; joint network marketing. This will expand sales opportunities, exchanges of experience; will contribute to the growth of a variety of product offers.

Fourth, information networks for organizing startups for start-up entrepreneurs and establishing contacts between large and small businesses, including with the aim of forming cluster structures. Here can be cited an example of the positive experience of private initiatives using information and communication technologies in Belarus. «*The social weekend*» online platform is actively working, which offers small grants for social projects, organizes foreign trips to study the experience of social business.

Fifth, financial networks designed to expand sources of financial support for social entrepreneurship, including crowd-funding platforms. There is a certain experience in this field in Belarus: these are the «*Hive*» crowd-funding platform, and the «*Talaka*» social platform, which are used to find sources of additional funding for social business.

Sixth, the creation with the use of digital technologies of associations or associations of social entrepreneurs, the inclusion in international associations to promote ideas and protect the interests of social entrepreneurship at the national and global levels. Developing a digital platform for social business creates a barrier-free environment for interactions between countries and regions in this area, expanding online access to global markets for all citizens, including the socially vulnerable segments of the urban population; will enhance the competitiveness of social business in the country.