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## **IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS BASED ON DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

The system of local authorities in the Republic of Belarus is based on the so-called state model. According to it, local government bodies represented by the «presidential vertical of power» have a greater influence on the socio-economic development of regions than local self-government bodies (in Belarus, local Councils of deputies).

Digital technologies related to the creation of «local e-government» can become one of the key factors for strengthening the system of local government and self-government. This task has been set and is being solved in the Republic of Belarus in accordance with the State program for the development of the digital economy and information society for 2016-2020.

In the first case, in fact, we are talking about the development of e-democracy, which should promote the involvement of citizens in local decision-making and strengthen citizen's confidence in the state, as well as reduce the cost of interaction with regional citizens.

In the second case, the use of information technologies is designed to optimize the work of the administrative apparatus of Executive and administrative bodies of local

government and change the nature of interaction of Executive committees with the external environment (the population, private sector enterprises), which should be transformed into the provision of public services.

## **1. Institutional conditions created in Belarus for the development of «local e-government»**

Currently, the Republic of Belarus has created certain legislative and institutional conditions for the formation of a digital economy and the digitalization of the public administration system, including at the regional and local levels.

First, the legal framework is being formed. A national strategy for sustainable development for the period up to 2030 has been developed and is being implemented, which includes several initiatives related to the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in various sectors of the Belarusian economy.

In 2015, in order to strengthen the role of ICT in e-government, a strategy for the development of Informatization in Belarus for 2016-2022 was developed.

Second, the institutional framework is being developed. Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus from November 8, 2011 № 515 «On some issues of information society development in the Republic of Belarus», the country has established the Council on information society development under the President of Belarus [1].

## **2. Problems of formation of «digital local government and self-government» in Belarus**

The most complex is the process of digitalization of regional management. In Belarus, restrictions remain for the development of digital local self-government and the transfer of administrative functions of local government to a digital basis, including:

- incomplete readiness of the population to participate in the work of digital government, low "electronic maturity»;
- only a part of the country's population, mainly young people, uses ICTs for interactive transactions (online shopping, banking, online job search).
- regional differences in the level of equipment of citizens with access to ICT;

- insufficient funding for projects aimed at developing the digital economy, high costs of implementing information and communication technologies;
- lack of demand from government agencies and enterprises for data storage, processing, analysis, and transmission;
- lack of qualified personnel (including outflow of the best specialists);
- etc. [2].

### **3. Direction of digitalization of local authorities in Belarus**

One of the key conditions for the formation of local e-government in Belarus is the smooth functioning of the communication system between citizens and local self-government bodies and the information openness of the local Executive power.

First, between regional Executive authorities (local government) and local councils of deputies (local self-government in Belarus) at various levels. This is one of the components of the interdepartmental network and the state database, the formation of electronic document flow and the electronic vertical of power, etc.

Secondly, between the local authorities and population, as well as non-governmental organizations (voting, referendums, public information, survey, public opinion, education and the promotion or formation of civil position).

Third, between local Executive authorities, on the one hand, and the population and businesses, on the other hand, regarding the provision of so-called public services.

### **Conclusions**

The creation of «electronic local government and self-government» in the Republic of Belarus will contribute to more active involvement of citizens in decision-making at the local level; transparency and de-bureaucratization of local authorities, expanding their capabilities and proximity to citizens; and the introduction of electronic document management at the local level will reduce communication costs, reduce red tape and speed up decision-making. As a result, the prerequisites will be formed for the transition to more progressive models of building the system of local self-government in Belarus within the framework of the public model, etc.

## References

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