



RGD – Making a Difference

Pioneering Regional Strategy Monitoring in Zakarpattya

We Have a Regional Development Strategy – What Difference Does it Make?

Planning and monitoring are not new ideas for Ukrainian regions. The Soviet system was if anything over-planned and monitored, leaving little room for flexibility and adaptation to changing circumstances. In the period since independence, Ukraine's regional level of government has continued to be responsible for quarterly monitoring of national and local socio-economic programs, an activity which absorbs a tremendous amount of regional officials' time and energy. However, this monitoring is sector based and tracks changes in the rate of growth or decline in separate areas in the oblast economy. It does not aim to look at development in an integrated and holistic way or against a set of clear strategic and operational objectives. This was the task agreed on by RGD and its regional partners in Zakarpattya in the spring of 2009. Rapid progress has been made since then and the region now has its own strategy monitoring system ready to be introduced this autumn and ready also for dissemination to other regions of Ukraine.

Sharing Canadian and International Experience

When RGD's Canadian expert Bohdan Wynnicky and his Ukrainian counterpart Myroslava Lendel ran their first Zakarpattya workshop on international approaches to monitoring and evaluation in April 2009, they and their workshop participants quickly found the weaknesses in the strategy document adopted by the Oblast Council a couple of years before. Although the strategy followed the classic model and had 5 clear priority directions (ecology, economic and business development, tourism, social development, cross-border co-operation) and 24 operational goals, the use of indicators was at best patchy and a number of priority objectives and programmes had no system for benchmarking progress at all. Nor was it clear who was responsible for the collection or analysis of data related to those indicators that had been identified.

Myroslava and Bohdan, who is a fluent Ukrainian speaker, led a very well attended and lively 2-day workshop during which they presented a variety of approaches to the content and structure of the monitoring process: what makes a good indicator? how often should it be monitored? what information should be collected and by whom? most importantly perhaps, how to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation

process is open and transparent and continues to engage the wide range of community interests that took part at the strategy design stage?

Sharing Ukrainian Experience

Zakarpattya's neighbouring oblast Lviv had developed its own strategy monitoring system as the result of an earlier programme of co-operation with a British Department for International Development (DFID) project. With the support of the RGD project and through contacts established by one of RGD's international experts who had previously worked in Lviv, a small study group from Zakarpattya made a fact-finding visit in the summer of 2009. As is often the case with these things, the Lviv experience was as useful for the problems and pitfalls it illustrated as it was for suggesting a model approach for Zakarpattya to follow, but the study group were keen to learn from Lviv Oblast Administration's multi-level approach to indicators and benchmarking and their inter-agency structure for managing the monitoring process. Some of these ideas were later adapted for use in the monitoring and evaluation system that has since been established in Zakarpattya.

Some Context

Although the first steps in implementation of Zakarpattya's regional strategy began to be taken shortly after its approval in late 2006, it is really in the last 15 months or so that the realization of concrete operational programs has started in a systematic way. RGD's partners in Zakarpattya oblast have been quick to realize the importance of keeping track of progress in putting these operational programs into practice and evaluating their impact on the key indicators of regional development. In developing their monitoring system they have learned much from the experience of Canadian and other international experience, as well as that of neighbouring Lviv oblast.

Setting up a Monitoring System in Zakarpattya



Zakarpattya Regional Monitoring Committee

So, where are we now? By an order of the Regional Governor, a Regional Strategy Monitoring Committee has been set up with some 25 members including elected deputies, business and NGO representatives, academic specialists and officials from local and regional government. Each of the 5 original working groups responsible for strategy design also has a place on the Committee. The Committee, advised and supported by RGD regional experts Ludmyla Hrytsak and Svitlana Slava, was charged initially by the Governor with responsibility for introducing a comprehensive system of measurable indicators of progress in relation to both the strategy's 5 priority objectives and its 24 short and medium term operational goals.

This multi-level approach combines Canadian and Ukrainian experience, particularly from Lviv. So for example, while an indicator at the *social development priority objective* level might be a measure of progress against the United Nation's Development Programme's (UNDP) human development indicators, at the level of an operational goal it is translated into specific measures such as life expectancy, infant mortality and students graduating annually from higher education institutes in the region.

The Committee has also recommended an inter-agency structure for data collection and analysis, which clearly identifies the departments and individuals with reporting responsibility and the frequency with which data is to be recorded and published for public discussion. Lead responsibility for coordinating and managing the strategy monitoring process will lie with the Oblast Administration's Department for Strategic Planning and Socio-Economic Analysis.

Key Impacts

The monitoring system outlined above is being approved and recommended for adoption by the Oblast Administration as this briefing goes to press. The first monitoring of progress in regional strategy realization is expected to take place in the autumn and its results will be published by the end of the year. RGD experts Bohdan Wynnycky and Myroslava Lendel will visit in October 2009 to advise on this and to lead a seminar on participatory evaluation techniques. The rapid progress made on the monitoring issue this year in Zakarpattya region, and the adaptation of the Oblast Administration's traditional approach to planning and evaluation to the standards of international good practice, is an example of technical co-operation and assistance at its best.

Project Information

The Regional Governance and Development (RGD) Project is a five-year (2005-2010) cooperation project of the Canadian Urban Institute, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency. The Project promotes civic engagement in regional governance, providing opportunities for Ukrainian citizens and communities to shape their common future and to put their region on the path towards sustainable development.

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