

→ Coping with water threats as part of urban planning

Country Bulgaria

Project title Coping with water threats as part of urban planning

Twinning City region of Haaglanden (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Bourgas (Bulgaria)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,182

Project objective

Design a programme of technical, spatial and organizational measures to solve problems associated with lake Vaya in Bourgas and to enhance the communication strategy for the Black Sea Basin Directorate.

Project summary

The project aimed to improve the sustainable functioning of the canal connecting the lake with the sea, to reduce the threats of the floods and to take measures for improving the passage of the channel and to apply the tools of spatial planning to water management. The project enabled new co-operation forms and improved communication strategy for the Black Sea Basin Directorate.

Core information

Bourgas, with 206,000 inhabitants has an industrial character with strong tourist traditions associated with the Black Sea and culture. The well developed transportation infrastructure, being the largest port in the country and a free trade zone are factors supporting the economic development. The Black Sea Basin Directorate (headquarters in Varna, branch office in Bourgas) is one of the four water management directorates in the country which is responsible for water management and implementation of the European directives.

Problem analysis

The main problem concerned the territories around the lake and the passage of the canal to connecting the lake to the sea. The territories were often flooded and the lake was threatened by pollution. The canal has been cleaned on occasions in the past but without a sustainable result. Both the lake and the canal offer potential for stimulating the economic development of the area by means of recreation and leisure facilities.

Floods occur often and are particularly damaging because much of the sewage system lies below sea level and water discharge is ineffective. As water management is the responsibility of numerous stakeholders including the municipality, better co-ordination between these parties was required. Also communication was ineffective. The project focussed on solving the technical problems and on offering new forms of co-operation between the stakeholders.

Project implementation

First of all existing municipal plans and measures for the lake Vaya and regional water strategy requirements were analyzed. Organizational and technical measures based on the Netherlands' experience were prepared. Round tables, conferences and training activities on coalition forming and reaching agreement were organised. An advisory group to the waterboard was created, a monitoring scheme designed and knowledge transfer workshops were organized. Additional activities were undertaken together with land owners for area restructuring. The action plan was elaborated to include a communication strategy and an agreement for collaboration between stakeholders was prepared. A warning system and electronic board for water quality was installed. Citizens were involved in the public debate.

Process management

Common interests were defined to specify available resources, to create a dialogue between partners and to evaluate. Participation of the local elected representatives and citizens was significant. The most important changes were associated with upgrading the inter-institutional culture, co-ordination of joint activities, defining of the correct roles and responsibilities and correction measures according to stakeholders' interests. A number of stakeholders were involved, like the Regional Department of Environmental Protection, Civil Protection, Black Sea Basin Directorate, Chamber of Architects, Port of Bourgas, Bulgarian Association for the Protection of Birds and other NGOs.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Combine urban planning measures with organizational and technical tasks, the selection process of key-partners, ecological measures and stimulating recreational activities;
- Restructuring the territory and designing the communication strategy including an electronic information board offer good potential for extension to other constituencies.

→ Decentralized service delivery by a service desk

Country Bulgaria

Project title Pernik goes forward

Trinning Municipality of Doetinchem (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Pardubice (Czech Republic)

Municipality of Pernik (Bulgaria)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,974

Project objective

Assure the general public accessibility and effective service delivery to citizens and entrepreneurs from a new service desk.

Project summary

The municipalities of Doetinchem and Pardubice assisted the municipality of Pernik to upgrade services mainly to citizens and separately to entrepreneurs and investors by information provision and operational administrative service delivery.

Core information

Pernik is an industrial town of approximately 100,000 inhabitants. The city is known for the international mask festival 'Kukeri', in early spring. Pernik is located at a distance of some 40 km from the capital Sofia and is the nearest satellite city. Pernik is in transition as old industries like coal mining have almost ended activities and new entrepreneurial plants and businesses are developing. There is a boom in housing and real estate business and moreover 60% of the contacts between municipality and citizens are related to these activities.

Problem analysis

Pernik had difficulties in providing effective services to its citizens and businesses due a lack of clear understanding of what was needed, for whom and how it should be delivered. Local government staff were short on knowledge and experience and were served by outdated technology. The municipality wished to improve and innovate administrative services, optimize the service provision process, better satisfy citizen's needs, save time, and reduce corruption.

Project implementation

To provide effective services, first of all target groups were defined. Furthermore knowledge was gathered, staff trained and the kinds of services delivered were defined. A guidebook was created, an information campaign set up and relevant software and hardware were acquired for the service desk. The project resulted in a clear overview of Pernik's municipal structure and allocation of tasks, a well functioning work team, defined functional and technical requirements and relevant data was collected. This led to the awareness to publish more extensive and relevant information on the Pernik website.

Process management

To resolve the problems, first of all attention was given to the political involvement. Awareness for the process of change and changed working processes was inevitable. Focus was put on publicity and transparency by awareness raising and providing conditions for sustainable development of the delivery. The municipal administration, supported by the Municipal Council, was involved as a supplier of the administrative services, while citizens, entrepreneurs and NGOs were involved as consumers. The involvement of the Czech municipality Pardubice as a tripartite partner proved to add valuable experiences and knowledge to the team since Czech municipalities recently went through the transition process towards EU membership.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Clearly define organizational structure, procedures and processes;
- Ensure data is accurate and relevant so that local government staff know they are using the latest information;
- Ensure local government staff are trained effectively in all relevant areas of local government operations. The quality of staff determine how well local government operates;
- Elaborate the municipality guidebook with procedures and processes;
- Offer direct help to the helpdesk itself.

→ Developing Public Private Partnerships

Country Bulgaria

Project title Razgrad-Beating heart

Trinning Municipality of Assen (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Poznan (Poland)

Municipality of Razgrad (Bulgaria)

Project period 6 september 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,457

Project objective

Provide specified services to the citizens - especially the businesses and NGOs - for the development of sustainable joined projects, preferably European funds.

Project summary

The partner municipalities of Assen and Poznan assisted Razgrad to expand the range and improve the quality of delivered public services by establishing and developing a Public Private Partnership (PPP), and a Municipal Project Service Point for elaboration and management of joint projects.

Core information

Razgrad has a mixed industrial and agricultural character and has a population of 57,000 inhabitants. The municipality is relatively well organised and committed, though with limited experience of self determination and a dynamic local economic development. Many municipal public services are well organised, including waste collection and disposal.

Problem analysis

The main problem was that the municipality lacked the capacity to develop sustainable joint projects as to directly improve service delivery. Other problems included ineffective communication with citizens, businesses and NGOs, insufficient familiarity with regulations, and opportunities for joint projects. Furthermore municipal staff lacked the capacity to act as moderators in the process of integrated project development and numerous economic opportunities were waiting for development.

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Project implementation

The project started with defining procedures, tasks and responsibilities. A booklet on good practices of Public Private Partnership (PPP) was published and an accessible Municipal Project Service Point with relevant facilities was established and promoted. The project resulted in improved access and quality of services for citizens and development of mechanisms for creating PPPs. A brochure for best practices and information on principles of PPPs was developed. This led to the elaborating and implementing of sustainable projects with partnership between local government, businesses, NGOs and professional organisations.

Process management

To resolve the problems, the politic involvement was encountered and the process for change was analyzed. Reliable and efficient information provision and equipment was secured and conditions for sustainable development of the delivery were provided. Publicity and transparency was provided by awareness raising. The municipal council was involved as a supplier of the administrative services. Furthermore municipal elected politicians, institutes and consumers were involved in the process.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Clearly structure and implement a communication plan;
- Ensure maximum engagement of citizens;
- Create an effective inspiring webpage;
- Communicate activities and best practices;
- Ensure that management has the knowledge and experience to handle complex projects and is committed to stimulating the local economy.

→ Improving public transport services

Country Bulgaria

Project title Improving public transport services in the municipality of Sandanski

Twinning City region of Haaglanden (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Sandanski (Bulgaria)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 58,115

Project objective

Create a logical bus network with clear information about how to use the bus system, a clear ticketing system and attractive stops.

Project summary

The project improved the public transport system by creating better bus routes, better connections between lines and upgraded the stops. The project contributed to the general improvement of services by the local administration.

Core information

Sandanski, with a population of 42,000 is mainly an agricultural municipality with high potential for development due to its geographical location, natural resources and abundance of archaeological and historical sites. Spa tourism is the main economic sector.

Problem analysis

Sandanski suffered from insufficient know-how in the field of modern public administration and lacked experience in solving problems of regional imbalances, especially the relationship city-countryside. Also, it had insufficient experience in Public Private Partnerships to address urban planning issues and revitalize the region and weak interaction within local government bodies and underdeveloped citizen participation.

Project implementation

The project was based on exchange of experience between partners and discussing and specifying concrete initiatives to improve transport services in Sandanski. A communication programme covered publications, press releases, newsletters, updating websites and advertising in local media. The integration of ticketing systems could not be implemented due to

accounting problems. The project resulted in a provision of transport information to passengers on routes, time-tables and connections on the stops. This information is provided in brochures and on the internet. Bus stops were refurbished and their quality improved. The bus routes and stops were restructured according to the passengers' needs. Many local people were trained and a policy recommendation was prepared.

Process management

Significant steps were made in solving the problems of information exchange between the municipality and transport firms. Passengers were made aware of the information available and at the same time the changes in transport time-tables. All local administration departments, citizens, NGOs and transport firms were involved. Advertisers were also enlisted. Municipal councilors were involved in the preparation of the policy recommendation document. As each of these parties had a somewhat different view about the organization of public transport, it was important to involve them all in discovering priorities, making decisions and introducing changes.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Design the project in a manner that makes it easily applicable for other municipalities;
- Encourage other local authorities to take on a more client-oriented approach to service provision. This will require them to obtain the knowledge and skills to increase the trust and confidence of citizens;
- While it is evident that concrete products such as time-tables and local priorities might not be directly transferable to other municipalities, the general principles will apply;
- A well-functioning partner network for transfer of experiences improves local services.

→ Improving services for the young

Country Bulgaria

Project title Development of a strategy to enhance service delivery to the young

Twinning Municipality of Dordrecht (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Varna (Bulgaria)

Project period 1 December 2006 – 30 September 2007

Project budget € 32,754

Project objective

Provide better services to citizens of Varna, particularly the young.

Project summary

The quality of services for children and young people was improved by determining priorities in municipal policy based on assessment of needs and exchange of expert experience and traditions in the field of service delivery.

Core information

Varna, with a population of 320,000 is the third largest town in Bulgaria, an industrial and tourist centre in the north east. Known as Bulgaria's 'sea capital', in 2006 the immediate region welcomed 5 million tourists.

Problem analysis

Social services for the young, though inadequate, mainly target those with specific problems, like homeless, disabled and orphans. Services targeting prevention, early warning, discovering and solving the problems were lacking. The municipality of Varna wanted to improve the quality and increase the quantity of social services for the young by unifying the efforts of the various involved institutions and NGOs and creating a long-term action strategy.

Project implementation

During the project, representatives of the municipality of Varna were introduced to good practices and ideas on providing social services by the municipality of Dordrecht. The advantages and disadvantages of current work were evaluated as well as the need for a new approach to Varna residents. In preparing the strategy, all institutions related to the target group in fields of personal and physical care and development of the

young were involved. Civil servants were trained how to delegate social services to NGOs. A municipal strategy for the care to the young was prepared for the period 2007-2013. Its priorities are prevention, early warning and preparation of solutions to problems, upgraded care and the creation of a more attractive living environment.

Process management

Firstly efforts were invested in unifying the work of state, the municipality and NGOs. Secondly, a new long-term approach to the target group with new types of services focusing on prevention and early warning were investigated and introduced. In practice that meant change in political participation, awareness raising and organizational changes. Parties involved included state institutions (Social Assistance Directorate, Child Protection Unit, Regional Educational Inspectorate), NGOs, children and parents. This offered an assurance that the strategy's priorities were appropriate to customer needs.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Create an integrated strategic approach to the solution of problems by involving all relevant stakeholders;
- The services delivered should not be limited to children and the young with problems;
- Create early warning indicators to allow for rapid reaction;
- Put the needs of customers as top priority, and not the capacity of the state or local government. If these are not sufficient then invest efforts to upgrade them.

→ Optimization of water supply services

Country Bulgaria

Project title Development of distribution management in ViK Razgrad

Twinning PWN Water Supply Company (the Netherlands)

ViK Razgrad (Bulgaria)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 43,464

Project objective

Improve service delivery of the drinking- and waste water company ViK Razgrad to the inhabitants of the area.

Project summary

The Netherlands' water supply company PWN assisted the drinking- and waste water company ViK Razgrad to improve service delivery by technical assessment of the water supply network and investment plan for its modernization and training of staff to improve their work with customers.

Core information

ViK Razgrad is an extended area of 133,000 inhabitants in 82 settlements, 5 municipalities in 3 districts. Most settlements are rural, except for the city of Razgrad itself that is a major urban centre with an industrial character. The territory offers good conditions for agriculture.

Problem analysis

The main problem concerned the inefficiency of water supply. The old water supply network leaked and water losses in the area were over 60% (EU average 3%). The supply of support services to water users in the form of such things as information provision, clear costs and supply reliability was poor.

Project implementation

With the assistance of the Netherlands' water supply company PWN, water supply services were improved by optimizing the network (control of debits and pressure), creation of an investment plan to attract investments from EU funds and a model for working with clients. The project created a model of the water supply network with a pilot area in which the model was verified. An investment plan was developed and specialists from ViK

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Razgrad were trained. Seminars with customers and ViK companies in neighbouring areas were organized and implemented for dissemination of the lessons learned.

Process management

Efforts were invested at the personal and organizational levels in creating new approaches to service delivery in order to optimize the supply network, to create a clear investment framework to upgrade it and to work with citizens in awareness raising to rationally use the limited available water. Stakeholders involved were the municipality of Razgrad and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. Both sides assisted ViK Razgrad to design improvement projects funded by EU funds.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Disseminate results to other ViK companies in other areas of Bulgaria;
- Co-operate with municipalities on preparation of investment projects for rehabilitation of the network;
- Ensure good communication and involvement all stakeholders.