

Project proposal

'Public Forum'

An urban communication platform for Siberian metropolitan areas

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1. CORE INFORMATION

Project name	'Public Forum' An urban communication platform for Siberian metropolitan areas
Location	The Russian Federation, Novosibirsk and other metropolises in the Siberian region, Novosibirsk
Theme referring to MATRA document	Capacity building in Good Urban Governance, Information service provision, Education management.
Theme	Capacity building in Good Urban Governance: Recognising that transforming urban governance requires more than training. Building a critical mass of 'new urban governance' politicians and professionals via the creation of a 'Public Forum' as a platform for promoting urban governance discourses (both face-to face and web-based), facilitating learning partnerships and for providing ongoing management support.
Target group	Officials, politicians, academic staff and students, urban professionals, citizens and the international professional community
Dutch implementing organisation	Institute of Social Studies (ISS)
Implementing organisation in the Russian Federation	Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management (NSUEM)
Project collaborators	Local Authority, City Administration
Duration	1 February 2004 – 30 March 2006 (26 months)
Total project budget	XXX thousand euro
Contribution requested from MATRA	YYY thousand euro (incl. contingencies 5%)

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

This project is aimed at strengthening the capacity for good urban governance in the Russian Federation and in particular in the Siberian region. The key underlying assumption of the project is that whilst good training programmes are a necessary pre-condition for the transformation of urban governance, they are not sufficient. Also crucial is building and sustaining a critical mass of politicians, officials, professionals and citizens committed to new urban governance. It is hypothesised that the building of this 'critical mass' can be achieved by helping significant actors internalise, develop and critically apply new governance ideas and practices. Such help, it is proposed, should take the form of an urban communication platform 'Public Forum', which on the one hand promotes and provides a basis for ongoing public and professional discourse and which on the other hand provides a locus from which ongoing and 'on-the-job' management support can be provided to politicians, officials and citizens.

It is proposed that the 'Public Forum' implemented in both a face-to-face and a web-based modality, would serve as an interface between local, regional and international professionals, urban administrators, academic staff and the general public and provide them with proper access to information and knowledge, increase opportunities for exchange of opinions, build partnerships and learn from good practices in the field of urban management and 'good urban governance'. A focal point of the information and knowledge component of the platform will be creation of a web-based database on relevant best practices which can be interfaced with similar databases elsewhere (like the UNCHS best-practice website). The platform would also facilitate the provision of ongoing 'on-the-job' management support (both web-based and face-to-face).

In summary, the proposed platform will have multiple functions:

- Serving as a vehicle for promoting discourses and the development of a 'critical mass' of urban development actors who "own" and who have internalised new approaches to urban governance.
- Serving as a base for the provision of ongoing 'on-the-job' management support
- Providing a data and information base
- Promoting skills acquisition by augmenting face-to-face training with on-line training courses
- Serving as a vehicle for identifying and promoting common interests locally
- Encouraging and soliciting innovative thought

This proposal is an outcome of an ongoing project 'Innovative Methods of Urban Governance' (IMUG) realised by NSUEM and ISS (December 2001-March 2004). During the IMUG project it became clear that despite the success of the project there still exist a few objective limitations which could influence the sustainability of its output: (1) present access to project deliverables is limited compared to the 'scale' of the revealed needs in the region and required further involvement of innovative IT technologies to reach a wider audience; (2) emerging partnerships and coalitions are not yet sustainable and need further assistance; (3) those, who during the IMUG project period started to share the ideology of good urban governance are not sufficiently experienced in practical application of their knowledge and need further guidance and management support; (4) problems of a city often caused by inefficient metropolitan management still persist: mending those, however, was not a scope of the IMUG project. Accordingly, this proposal aims at creating conditions which will sustain the results of the IMUG project and extend its impact on urban integration and ongoing democratisation in the Russian Federation and in Siberian region.

The proposed project will further facilitate the practical application of principles of good urban governance in Russian metropolises and in particular in the Siberian region: A combination of international experience, expertise and knowledge about Russian conditions will be concentrated

in the 'Public Forum' and become accessible to urban practitioners, administrators and the general public, as well as to international experts.

The title 'Public Forum' refers to a well-known earlier form of democratic governance, originated from ancient Greece polises. The platform will help to involve experts and representatives of non-governmental sectors in discussions about the local situation, provide leadership and other skills, reduce the fragmented and hierarchical character of present decision-making in the region, equalise public access to information and increase co-ordination and integration of different participants of urban development in the region.

ISS will take the lead in the project and will contribute its knowledge and achievements in related thematic areas and web-based technologies in order to develop a proper bilingual Russian-English urban communication platform.

2.1 Key problem

The key issue to be addressed by the project is lack of capacity of local governance.

2.2 Overall objective

To strengthen the capacity for and to achieve Good Urban Governance in the Russian Federation and in particular in Siberian region

2.3 Project goal:

The goal of the project is to create a critical mass of trained officials and individuals in the Siberian region and in particular in the Novosibirsk area, within representatives of key actors from government, civil society and the private sector, who are able to carry forward the improvement of Good Urban Governance in a sustainable way, through an interactive education and communication platform ('Public Forum').

2.4 Project results

- An urban communication networking facility: a platform 'Public Forum' in place, operational and sustainable. (LF1)¹
- Institutions and individuals support and pursue a common vision on Good Urban Governance. (LF2)

2.5 Main activities

Activities to Result 1 (LF 1)

- Develop shared concept of a platform (LF 1.1)
- Formally establish, operationalise and launch the platform (LF 1.2)
- Securing sustainability of the platform (LF 1.3)

Activities to Result 2 (LF 2)

- Develop theme-based /or activity based face-to-face forum for ongoing communication (LF 2.3)
- Develop electronic communication forums (LF 2.4)
- Conduct components of IMUG training courses to web-based format (to create a model for ongoing development of web-based training courses) (LF 2.1)
- Develop web-based knowledge management system / Good Urban Governance database (LF 2.2)
- Develop face-to-face management support system (LF 2.5)
- Develop electronic management support system (LF 2.6)

¹ LF- Logical Framework

2.6 Management structure

The project will be carry out in tight collaboration between the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and the Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management (NSUEM). A key partner and target group is envisaging from the City Administration in Novosibirsk.

A major part of content and technological input will be provided by the Russian partners, while ISS will play a crucial consulting role in devising training, a knowledge management system as well as management support system.

Both the NL- based part of the project and the Russian part will be run under a local management structure. The overall project co-ordination is in the hands of ISS. The project secretariat will be established at ISS's center for the study of Transition and Development (CESTRAD)