STRATEGY FOR INNOVATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE AT LOCAL LEVEL

Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform

Directorate of Democratic Institutions
Council of Europe

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WHAT IS THE STRATEGY?

- A **practical instrument** for improving governance at local level

- It can be used to generate **synergies between all stakeholders-** local, regional, national or European

- Defines 12 European **principles of good governance** at local level

THE TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AT LOCAL LEVEL

1. Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation

2. Responsiveness

3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

4. Openness and Transparency

5. Rule of Law

6. Ethical Conduct

7. Competence and Capacity

8. Innovation and Openness to Change

9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation

10. Sound Financial Management

11. Human rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion

12. Accountability

HISTORY OF THE STRATEGY

- Endorsed by the Ministers at the Valencia Ministerial Conference (October 2007)

- Adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2008

- Pilot countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Norway, Italy, Netherlands, Ukraine

WHY GOOD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE?

- Put **citizens** first

- Improve the **quality of services** of public authority

- Ensure **democratic input** in and **control** of the process

- Effective local democracy: a **wise investment**

WHY A EUROPEAN STRATEGY?

- Define a **common European vision** (12 Principles)

- Ensure an **implementation mechanism**

- Create **synergies** among all stakeholders: local, regional, national, European

- Ensure **exchange** and **learning from best practice**

THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Through "*the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance*", the Council of Europe:

- *encourages* the ongoing *improvement of the quality of democracy* at the local level;

- *urges* governments to put in place the policies and tools which help local authorities run their affairs more *effectively*.

- *supports* local authorities that genuinely commit themselves to *effective democratic governance*.

- *facilitates exchange of experience and practice and learning* from each other.

- *recognises* authorities that meet the targets of good governance.

HOW IS IT IMPLEMENTED?

1. **Local authorities** commit themselves to improving their performance, on a continuous basis. They are invited to adopt "The Strategy" and its 12 principles formally.

2. The **Governments or Associations of Local Authorities** draw up and adopt national action programmes.

3. A **European Label** prepared and accredited by the **Council of Europe** is awarded nationally to local authorities having achieved a certain overall level of good governance under the 12 principles.

WHAT CAN CENTRAL AUTHORITIES DO?

- *discuss* "The Strategy" with the national associations of local authorities;

- officially *join* and set about implementing it;

- *invite* municipalities to help take part.

Implementation steps :

- appointment of a *project manager* to co-ordinate implementation;

- a *needs analysis* in the light of all or some of the 12 principles;

- *discussion of the results* of the needs analysis and sharing experience and know-how with other countries;

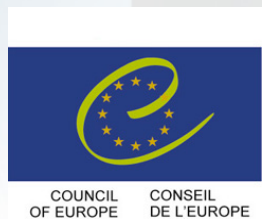- adoption of a *Programme of Action* setting out specific activities for improvement.

WHAT CAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES DO?

➔ **In countries having officially adopted "The Strategy":**

- *sign up* and *pursue* implementation of the 12 principles.

➔ **In countries where it has still to be adopted:**

- formally *acknowledge its commitment* to the 12 principles;

- make its commitment *public*;

- *inform the Council of Europe* as well as the central and regional authorities;

- select *priority principles* that it can work on;

- create a *plan of action* for improving its performance;

- *Evaluate* its *performance* and results against the priority principles.

WHAT CAN REGIONAL AUTHORITIES DO?

- in some case, *decide to join* the strategy;

- *promote* "The Strategy" at local level;

- *invite* local authorities to join "The Strategy" officially;

- *set up meetings* for the region's local authorities to exchange experience;

- provide a *platform for discussion*;

- *create, facilitate or support* the conditions favourable for local authorities to improve the quality of their governance;

- encourage local authorities, where possible, to implement "The Strategy" by *giving recognition* to those showing the most commitment;

- *take inspiration* themselves from the guidelines offered by "The Strategy".

WHO IS LOOKING AFTER "THE STRATEGY"?

The **Council of Europe's Stakeholders Platform** is responsible for "The Strategy".

The **Platform structure-** representatives from:

- the Committee of Ministers;
- the Parliamentary Assembly;
- the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities;
- the Conference of International NGOs;
- the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR).

The **Platform role-** follows and gives guidance on how to implement "The Strategy" :

- *provides support* in developing programmes of action;
- *endorses* these programmes of action;
- *promotes* the European Label for Innovation and Good Governance;
- *approves* individual member states' arrangements for awarding the label to local authorities and
- provides any *technical assistance* necessary for developing these arrangements.

Anyone -the Mayor, a local authority manager, a political decision maker or a citizen - can **contact** either :

- the **Association of Local Authorities** in their own country or

- a representative from the **Directorate of Democratic Institutions** at the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg, France (contact details on the following slide).

THANK YOU!

CONTACT