



Ukraine Public Dialogue

– STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY BY COMMUNICATION

DIALOGUE, OPENNESS AND transparency are key features of an open democracy. Media and the civil society are important actors, but in order for them to perform their democratic functions government must understand the different roles they have and provide services and information.

The aim of Ukraine Public Dialogue is to improve public communication and the dialogue between the state, media, civil society and the public by creating a framework and increasing the capacity of key staff working with public communication at Ukraine's executive government authorities.

The Ukraine Public Dialogue project is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project is a part of the Swedish efforts to support the development of democracy in Ukraine by establishing a better understanding among key staff how public communications function in a democratic market economy.

The project should be seen as part of the public administration reform in Ukraine, and in a broader context, as a tool to improve relations between the State and the public in Ukraine.

Creating conditions for a dialogue

During the Soviet period the State disseminated information to the citizens via state owned newspapers, radio- and TV stations. All information was one-way, with no dialogue or feedback mechanisms. The consequence of this legacy is that civil servants working with public communication generally have a low understanding of the nature and framework of a dialogue between the state, the media, civil society and the general public in a democratic market economy.

Reforms mean changes and in order for people to understand the processes and decisionmaking the authorities must communicate in a way that is comprehensible and accessible to the citizens.

It is also vital to create an understanding among civil servants of the need to establish a dialogue with media and the civil society. In this process,

public information officers are a key group as they are the first to be contacted by the media and the general public when seeking public information and knowledge.

Political administration, civil society institutes and media need to go through a period of learning and renewal of ideas to develop the base on which a new system can be built. To some extent, this has taken place in Ukraine over the last years, but there are a number of challenges ahead.

One of the main challenges is to find an approach that is adapted to the prevailing conditions, but at the same time succeeds in increasing the openness and transparency by changing attitudes and the level of professionalism.

Sweden is one of the world's leading countries in the aspect of public communication. By connecting Swedish experts (government, media, civil society, academics) with their Ukraine counterparts the projects aims at improving the public dialogue in Ukraine.

Working method

The project works through a demand-driven process towards an increased understanding how public communications function in a democratic market economy. By drawing on experiences from Sweden and other countries it will be possible for the Ukraine stakeholders to form their own structure.

The methods used in Ukraine Public dialogue consists mainly of workshops, seminars and study visits, where civil servants, journalists and representatives from civil society meet and discuss how to develop improved relations.

Target groups and stakeholders

The primary target group consists of Communication officials at different government agencies. There are approximately 500 civil servants working with communication in Ukraine. Other stakeholders and target groups include journalists, politicians, representatives of NGOs and universities, the international community and the general public of Ukraine.

Activities within the framework of the project

- Study visits. In order to learn from Sweden, Estonia and other countries a number of study visits are being organized.
- Seminars and workshops. A number of seminars and workshops are taking place, involving civil servants, media and civil society.
- Tri-part cooperation. With the aim to establish links between Sweden, Ukraine and Estonia in the field of public communication and capacity development, a tri-part cooperation has been initiated.
- Training of civil servants. Combining hands on-examples with modern communication theories creates a dynamic learning environment.
- A comprehensive handbook. The handbook on public communication will serve as an important tool, not only for those directly involved in the project, but for all parties interested in public communication.
- Legal documents from other countries. A large number of legal documents (laws, regulations, agreements, policies etc.) has been translated from Swedish, Estonian, Spanish and other languages, in order to serve as a base for the Ukraine process.



- Informal meetings and contacts. Informal meetings and contact with different actors within the Ukraine society is constantly held during the project. These meetings serve as a platform for dialogue between the key stakeholders in the area of public communication, improving understanding between the different groups.
- Base line studies. Studies on perception, obstacles and other aspects among media, NGOs, academics and civil servants will be produced as part of the project.
- Cooperation with other stakeholders. Coordination, cooperation and exchange of ideas with other actors are important. Among the cooperating partners are OSCE, the journalist federation IMTUU and several Ministries.

Swedish support. Ukraine Public Dialogue

The Ukraine Public Dialogue project is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The aim is to strengthen the reform process for democracy, public communication, popular participation in the governing in Ukraine. The project is run in cooperation with The Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the project coordinator Global Reporting.

Global Reporting

Global Reporting is a Media and Consultancy Company specialised in communication for development. The company offers expertise knowledge in a wide range of communication areas related to development, such as strategic communication and communication planning, journalism, photography, graphic design, exhibitions, organising events, seminars, study visits and conferences.

The company was founded in 1996 and has during its ten years of existence gathered experience from more than one hundred countries.

Contact in Ukraine

E-mail: sergii.maidanevych@globalreporting.net

Phone: +38 0676051946

Contact in Sweden

Global Reporting, Box 2014, SE-103 11 Stockholm, Sweden

Phone: + 46 (0)8 791 10 00

E-mail: david.isaksson@globalreporting.net

lars.tallert@globalreporting.net

Read more about the project at <http://www.ukrainepublicdialogue.org>.

