

BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME



for Local Authorities in Moldova

Council of Europe
European Commission



Conseil de l'Europe
Commission européenne



Guvernul Republicii
Moldova

“Working together for excellence in local government”

Information about the BP Programme and Application Form



The aim of this Prospectus is to explain:

- Content and the stages of BP programme
- Themes in which the best practice will be selected
- Criteria for selection
- Application procedure
- Dissemination possibilities



Should you be interested in participation, please see the Application Form enclosed as annex to this Prospectus.



The quality of citizens' lives often depends on what their local authorities do and how they do it. That is why the Council of Europe fully supports the modernisation of local government.

To achieve this, not only do structures and processes have to be created; skills, attitudes and experience have to be developed and fundamental cultural change throughout local government need to be promoted. Local authorities need to explore new and imaginative ways of involving their local communities in their plans and programmes. New approaches to service delivery need to be explored, and innovative partnerships tried out and developed. It requires local authorities to be open to innovation, ready to share experiences, and eager to learn.

The Council of Europe's Best Practice programme gives all Moldovan local authorities an opportunity to learn and to innovate. The heart of the Best Practice programme is about helping to raise standards in local government, by identifying innovative and excellent examples of service delivery and helping the authorities concerned to spread best practice.

You now have the opportunity to participate in the programme, build on the successes of the Best Practice authorities and spread the message about delivering the high quality public services that people want and deserve. Working together, we can be sure that we will have in place many Best Practice examples for local authorities which can make a real contribution to the modernisation of Moldovan local government.

Strasbourg, November 2005

Philip Blair
Director of Co-operation for Local
and Regional Democracy



The activity of the authorities on the local level is much more than simple and mechanical application of a certain management system, since managing local communities is, first of all, understanding the value of real-time solutions which result in considerable increase in quality of life of local communities.

Local social-economic development is the key activity of the local public administration, urbanization being the core of it. We believe that determining the strategy of the local community should be the crucial prerequisite for the social and economic development. The local authorities should follow this strategy in order to more efficiently employ the resources locally available in order to support the economic, social and cultural development of a village or town.

The application of locally available instruments will enhance economic potential, thus efficiently allocating resources and creating new jobs. Besides, the local public authorities should more effectively use the local economic opportunities, which represent a key source for local budgets.

We are aware of the fact that there is no such thing as ideal system of public administration. Our difficulties lie in finding a system of local public administration which would fit the local social and cultural peculiarities, the local political and managerial culture, but in the meantime would be harmonized with the corresponding international standards.

The use of the best practices, which already exist in the country, will allow improving the quality of public services in both this area in other regions too. The Best Practice Programme for local authorities in Moldova represents, indeed, an educational program, answering such questions as: how to make it better, how to make it more effectively and how to make the citizens feel, that local authorities are really doing their job.

Chisinau, November 2005

Igor Semenovker
General Director of Agency for Regional
Development of Moldova



What is Best Practice Programme?

The Best Practice Programme for Local Authorities in Moldova (BPP) has been initiated by the Council of Europe in co-operation with local government Associations,

central Government, the Local Government Reform Project and other stakeholders. It is aimed at identifying, publicly recognizing and disseminating best practices among local authorities in Moldova. During the last few years, programmes with similar content have already been successfully launched or implemented in a number of European countries.

In Moldova, a similar program was launched in 2003 by the USAID Local Government Reform Project and was opened for participation to all local authorities in Moldova. This is now incorporated into this wider national programme. This project is funded by the Joint Programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission for Moldova.

The Best Practice Programme is designed to recognize local authorities that have successfully initiated and implemented a best practice – a successful initiative or model project in a key area of local authorities' activity that has had a significant impact on their community.

Local authorities with outstanding best practices will be awarded with Best Practice Status for a period of one year. In becoming a Best Practice Authority, the local authority will be provided with support in order to share the best practice with the wider local government community.

The dissemination of the best practice will be achieved through activities like: national events for each service, at which the Best Practice local authorities will present their best practice to other interested municipalities, followed by individual dissemination activities developed by each Best Practice Authority. These activities will include open days, study visits, etc. Best Practice local authorities will be invited to participate in training programmes in the selected field to help them to learn how to disseminate their best practices to other local authorities.

The Best Practice authorities will also produce dissemination materials on their best practice, including brochures and publications on Internet.



What are the objectives of the Best Practice Programme in Moldova?

- To raise standards in local government by identifying and recognising innovative and excellent practices in service delivery by local authorities;
- To acknowledge and reward the best performing local authorities in key areas of local government work and to help them act as centres of excellence from which other authorities can learn;
- To develop better public services, higher standards of service delivery and improved local government management;
- To promote innovations in various areas of local government responsibilities;
- To share ideas among central government institutions about how they might encourage good management practices in local government;
- To contribute to the creation of strong civil society through the promotion of effective democratic local government.

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Who is involved?

Besides the Council of Europe, the Government of Republic of Moldova and the LGRP, the Best Practice Programme for local authorities is implemented with the help of:

■ **Steering Group**

Has the role of monitoring and evaluating the successful implementation of the programme, and of controlling the evaluation and selection of the best practice examples.

The Steering Group is composed of representatives of Local Government Associations, the Government of Republic of Moldova, Agency for Regional Development of Moldova, Council of Europe, mayors, NGO's working in local government field, USAID and other donors representatives.

■ **Selection Panel**

The role of the Selection Panel is to evaluate and to recommend the winning Best Practice local authorities to the Steering Group by:

- ▷ short-listing a small number of applicant local authorities to whom the Best Practice status could be awarded on the basis of a written evidence and documentation;
- ▷ conducting verification visits to short-listed local authorities and, together with the Steering Group, listen to their presentations of Best Practices;
- ▷ participate in developing the concept of training events for Best Practice authorities;

The Selection Panel is a group of independent experts in the areas of the three themes that have been selected for this Best Practice Programme. The members of the Selection Panel were recommended and selected by the Steering Group of the BPP.



**The Best Practice Programme
will be supported by:**

■ **National Co-ordinator
– Olesea CRUC**

Supports the Steering Group in developing, managing and evaluating the Best Practice Programme.

■ **Institute for
Development and
Social Initiatives (IDIS)
“Viitorul”**

Ensures the administrative support and logistical framework for the BPP

■ **Council of Europe
expert – Dr. Luba
VAVROVA**, from the Local Government Development Centre of Slovakia, with experience of more than 10 years in supporting the development of local government and managing local government programmes in the region.

■ **Local Expert -
Lilia TVERDUN**, Training and Development Specialist, Local Government Reform Project, USAID.





Themes

The applications for the Best Practice Status should be submitted in one of the following themes:

I. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Best Practices addressing this issue should have generated economic growth and an equitable distribution of the fruits of that growth within the community and for the benefit of the community. They can target specific business sectors for development or specific disadvantaged groups for greater integration into the work force and for an improvement of living conditions. They can cover such diverse areas as business training and business support.

The activities focused on economic development should be cost effective, sustainable and with a positive impact upon citizens' lives.

Examples of outcomes local authorities should use while describing their practices:

- Compatibility of the practice with the Strategy on local economic development;
- Compatibility of the practice with the Strategy on local sustainable development;
- Its impact on the improvement of local infrastructure and environment, as well as on the life of disadvantaged groups of citizen;
- Instruments developed to monitor and evaluate local growth;
- New local business development and external investment that has been attracted;
- An increase in the employment rate, etc.

The purpose of local sustainable socio-economic development is to build the capacity of a locality to create an interconnected system between the environment, economy and society on local level.

II. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is an essential element of good governance and local development. Engaging citizens in decision-making and in service provision contributes to better local governance because the authorities will be focused on meeting citizens' needs, and citizens will have a stronger sense of ownership.

Local authorities that can prove through their activities that they understood and have applied these principles in their activities are invited to submit their application forms in the theme of Citizen Participation. Citizen participation range from informing or consulting local people and organizations to their involvement in such mechanisms as neighbourhood committees to which resources and decision-making powers have been delegated. The theme can also include, for example, the communications activities of the local authority and the use of the media.



Examples of outcomes local authorities should use while describing their practices:

- Mechanisms for developing and facilitating citizen participation;
- Instruments of informing citizens on their rights and possible ways of involvement;
- Public information campaigns addressing relevant problems;
- Surveys to find out citizen's opinions of relevant problems;
- Visible results in areas that citizens themselves defined as priorities;
- Partnerships with local business and civil society organizations.

Citizen participation can be approached or defined in many ways. Best Practices in the field of citizen participation are focused on identifying activities with voluntary participation that seek to improve the community and that involve community decision-making.



III. LOCAL PUBLIC FINANCES MANAGEMENT

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Beside the local budgets and local income taxes, local authorities have access to alternative financial resources that can be attracted and used for community development. In spite of the fact that every local authority needs to develop various fundraising methods in order to

support different activities, these activities are mostly associated with civil society organisations.

At the same time, finding innovative ways to manage local finances is not an easy activity and local authorities that have achieved it deserve recognition and further support.

Examples of outcomes local authorities should use while describing their practices:

- Local autonomy of budget scheduling;
- Increase in their capacity to use public finances;
- Attraction and proper use of extra budgetary financial resources, etc.



Local public finances are presented as a complex system of relations between the administrative levels, socio-economic liaisons within a community, as well as a model of legal control of all these relations of the system.

Criteria

In order to be awarded with Best Practice Status, a local authority must demonstrate the following:

- Excellence in one of the three themes, by fulfilling the criteria
- Plans and willingness to disseminate their best practice to other local authorities.

In order to be eligible for Best Practice Status, the best practice should fulfil the following **CRITERIA**:

- **Initiative** - to be initiated by local authorities
- **Innovation** - to provide a new approach to the problems to be addressed
- **Cost effectiveness** - efficient use of local resources
- **Verifiability** - demonstrate the results of successful implementation
- **Applicability** - suitable for replication in other local authorities

How to apply?

All local authorities of the Republic of Moldova are invited to apply for **BEST PRACTICE STATUS** in one of the themes presented above, where they believe they are performing well according to the criteria set out in the Prospectus.



All local authorities interested in taking part in the competition should complete the application form which is enclosed in this Prospectus, and send it by mail, e-mail or fax to the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) Viitorul no later than 17th of February 2006.

The applications should be submitted exclusively by persons who are authorized to represent the local self-government unit.

There is no limit to the topics in which one local self government unit can apply, i.e. one local authority can apply for Best Practice Status in one, two or more topics. However, the application for each topic should be sent separately.

! Please note that the best practice must have been
● fully implemented by or before January 2006 to be eligible for Best Practice Status.



How will the Best Practices be selected?

On the basis of an evaluation of the application forms in the light of the criteria explained in this Prospectus, the Selection Panel will prepare a short-list of 12 local authorities for further assessments. **During March 2006**, the representatives of the Selection Panel of the Project will visit the short listed authorities for an on-site review of the functioning of their best practices and an assessment of the relevant documentation.

After being visited, the representatives of short listed local authorities shall be invited to present their best practices to the Selection Panel and the Steering Group of the Project at a meeting held in the end of March 2006. Based on their presentations and on the conclusion of verification visits, the Selection Panel

and Steering Group members shall make the decision on the **6 local authorities to be** awarded the status of “Best Practice Local Authority” in the area where they applied for. In each of three themes of the programme a minimum of two local authorities will be selected. Others local authorities on the short-list will receive Certificates of Good Practice.

All local authorities that applied for Best Practice Status will be informed by mail of their results and of the short-listed authorities by **the end of March 2006** and will be invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony.

National Awards Ceremony

The Best Practice local authorities will be recognised at a National Awards Ceremony with the presence of the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Europe, Steering Group members, presidents of all 32 districts of Moldova, local authority staff who were personally responsible for the best practice, local government associations

and other organisations supporting the programme, press and electronic media.

The ceremony will take place in the beginning of **May 2006** and will be an outstanding opportunity for all local authorities to inform the public about their achievements and raise significant media and public attention.

Dissemination and Training activities

The Best Practice authorities will be asked to sign an agreement with the BP Steering Group to confirm their commitment to disseminating their best practice. The dissemination events will depend partially upon the demands from other local authorities for specific training, consultancy support and information, but also on the willingness and capacities of Best Practice authorities.

An **initial launch event** will be organised for each Best Practice theme, acting as a training vehicle for the local government community. Best Practice local authorities would have the opportunity to present an overview of their best practice and to



promote their forthcoming dissemination events. This would also allow the Best Practice authorities in each service or theme to exchange experience and ideas regarding dissemination possibilities.

Each Best Practice municipality will be required to organise a number of **best practice events**. These events should be intensive learning processes for both the visitors and the host authorities. They would allow open exchange of ideas and information. Visitors would benefit from new ideas and approaches that they could put into practice when they return to their own communities. Host authorities should benefit from their visitors and receive feed-back. These events might include activities such as: **open days, conferences, seminars and workshops; publications and use of the Internet; development and dissemination of information materials; newsletters; exhibitions;** etc.



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With the goal of further supporting the dissemination of best practice, Best Practice Local Authorities will be called on to participate in a **training programme** to help them to:

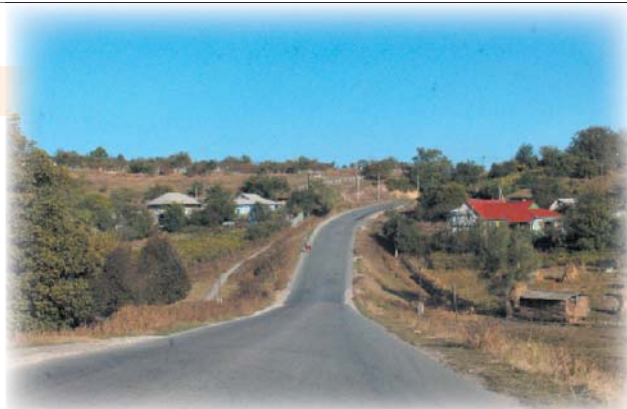
- explain how they exercise their competencies in the Best Practice theme;
- explain how they reached that level of best practice performance;

- act as trainers, prepare the training material and plan training methodology and arrangements for open days and study visits, etc.;

- discuss openly the issues that arose in the course of exercising their competencies in the selected service or theme.

Separate training days could be held for the groups of authorities selected for each of three themes.





Why should you apply?

Any local authority that believes that it meets the criteria for Best Practice Status detailed in this Prospectus should apply.

Some of the benefits of local authorities applying for Best Practice Status are:

- opportunity to review current performance;
- opportunity for local achievements to receive public recognition;
- opportunity to obtain feedback on performance;
- success rewarded by publicity and status;
- exchange experience with other authorities from Moldova and abroad.

In addition, we believe that the project will result in many valuable best practice examples that deserve to be disseminated on national

and international level. Therefore, the awards for the best practice authorities are primarily aimed at the acknowledgment and support of their work and at disseminating the information on their best practice among other local authorities, professionals and citizens.

All local self-government units, **which apply for Best Practice Status and which fulfil the general criteria of the programme**, will receive a **certificate of participation** in the programme. The examples of best practice from all shortlisted local authorities shall be described in the publication on best practice in local self-government.

In addition to the benefits of achieving Best Practice Status, the application process itself provides many opportunities for organizational learning and exchange.



**SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATION
IN THE BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME,
PLEASE SEND BACK
THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:**

10/14, Iacob Hancu Str., Chisinau, MD-2005,
Moldova Institute for Development and
Social Initiatives (IDIS) Viitorul
For Olessea CRUC

Application by fax
or e-mail could be sent at
Tel./Fax: 22.18.44;
E-mail: olesea.cruc@gmail.com