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# **REFORMING THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BELARUS: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Policy paper

# Summary

In the paper, authors outline perspectives for assessing the effectiveness of public administration in Belarus based on conceptual approaches and practices developed over the last two decades, including the concept of new public management.

The main goal of the work is to present some ideas for possible public administration reform in Belarus, and also inform the audience interested in public administration issues on some contemporary approaches to increasing effectiveness of government based on existing international experience. In the paper, we have considered two possible aspects of public administration reform:

1. Creating the system for effective policy development and evaluation in the environment where the state apparatus' monopoly on expert knowledge in this area is getting increasingly challenged;
2. Improving the system for evaluation of effectiveness of public organisation.

It is the first (at least, the first public) attempt to initiate a discussion on recommendations for reforming public administration in Belarus).

*The views presented in this document belong exclusively to its authors and do not represent the views of SYMPA, or other organisations which could be associated with the authors' names.*



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Summary

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Abbreviations

PAS – public administration system

NPM – new public management

CEU – Central and Eastern Europe

WB – The World Bank



# Introduction

In the end of 2011 it becomes increasingly clear that the existence in Belarus of the social and economic system based on the command-administrative and politicized distribution of resources (which come from outside through external borrowing and subsidies) is drawing to an end. Regardless of wishes and attitudes of the ruling group already in the short-term perspective a radical change in the economic and social management mechanisms will be required. This inevitability is determined by the two main factors:

- Significant shrinking of available public (budgetary) resources;
- Significant increase in external debt payment obligations.

It is obvious that the success of implementation of a complex reform package in the compressed timeframe and with deficit of resources would demand a coordination among all parts of the government apparatus in an effective development and implementation of several key policies. Belarusian expert community justifiably expects to see signs of political will necessary to initiate the reforms. However, it is not less important to realistically assess the capacity of the state apparatus to develop detailed, rational and realistic reform plans and implement these plans in reality.

The expert community in Belarus does not have a shared opinion on how effective the public administration in Belarus is. First of all, there are no clear criteria for assessing this effectiveness (besides reaching target macroeconomic indicators and utilizing the allocated budgetary resources – this can be illustrated by any public program<sup>1</sup>). Second, there is no widely shared understanding of how the results of the effective public administration should look like. In this situation, experts often come to diametrically opposite conclusions regarding the state of public administration in Belarus.

We can suppose that an individual perception of effectiveness is mostly determined by a personal experience of interacting with individual public officials or public organizations. Alternatively, it is a product of comparison of quality of quantity of state-offered services in Belarus and in neighboring countries (the best example of this are probably much-praised “clean streets” in Belarus which most foreign correspondents never fail to comment on).

The range of opinions can be grouped into the following two viewpoints. According to the first, majority of Belarusian bureaucrats are capable of working effectively under consistent and systematic political leadership. According to another, the ability of the national bureaucracy to effectively develop and implement government policies is very limited even in low-politicized spheres.

The current year's events supply arguments to adherents of both viewpoints (with the reservation that because of very specific political situation of this year, it is almost impossible to describe any policy area as low-politicized). From an administrative point of view, Belarusian bureaucrats are more effective in the areas where desired outcomes are clear, simple and can be quantified (for example, construction and renovation). In the areas where an administrative problem requires research, analysis and selection from several available options – which is then implemented and evaluated, Belarusian bureaucratic machinery either freezes in hesitation or picks the most superficial solution which it then attempts to implement using command-administrative tools (for example, a chair of local government suggested to de-dollarize the economy by prohibiting public officials to mention prices in dollar equivalents in their public statements).<sup>2</sup>

Therefore it seems interesting to consider possible approaches for assessment (and ideally, improvement) of the effectiveness of public administration in Belarus against the background of conceptual approaches and practices of public administration developed over the past two decades (specifically, the concepts of new public management as opposed to classic bureaucratic administration)

The authors realize the excessive scope of this task especially taking into account the nascent state of the public discussion in this sphere and therefore do not set unrealistic and overwhelming goals. The main objective of this paper is to present to the interested audience some ideas about possible ways of reforming public administration in Belarus, and also familiarize it with contemporary approaches to increasing the effectiveness of state apparatus, based on existing international experience.

In this paper, the authors will consider only two directions for reforming the system of public administration:

1. Creating an effective system of development and analysis of government policies in the situation where the state apparatus' monopoly on expert knowledge in this area is increasingly challenged;
2. Improving the system for assessment of the effectiveness of public organizations.

1. For example, “The National Program for Demographic Security for 2011-2015” (in Russian) [http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/new\\_url\\_1751033009/new\\_url\\_1383761826/new\\_url\\_1312348330](http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/new_url_1751033009/new_url_1383761826/new_url_1312348330)

2. Jacobson suggests to avoid dollarization of Belarusian economy (in Russian), BelTA, 26.10.2011 [http://www.belta.by/ru/all\\_news/economics/Jakobson-predlagaet-otkazatsja-ot-dollarizatsii-belorusskoj-ekonomiki\\_i\\_579334.html](http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Jakobson-predlagaet-otkazatsja-ot-dollarizatsii-belorusskoj-ekonomiki_i_579334.html)

An additional argument for selection of the above mentioned direction is that they illustrate two dominating approaches to contemporary public administration: the classic one which pre-supposes a clear division between politics and administration where the latter is implemented by technocratic public officials who possess expert knowledge, and so-called new public management which borrows from business practices – in particular, with its focus on effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

What worth noticing is the absence of both practical systemic approaches to the analysis of Belarusian public administration (apparently, apart from internal documentation of ministries and other public organizations) and academic research in the sphere (however an individual publications can be found, for example see the publications by Dr. N. Antanovich from Belarusian State University<sup>3</sup>). Also, Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) dedicates a section of its Yearbook to the issue of public administration, along with some independent analytical websites which occasionally public relevant materials (for example, “Nashe Mnenie” (Our Opinion) website). At the same time, official research institutions leave this issue largely without attention in their publications. An exclusion that mostly proves the rule is the research conducted under the aegis of UNDP called “Improvement of administrative procedures in the Republic of Belarus” which includes quantitative study of administrative procedures used in Belarusian public organizations<sup>4</sup>.

### **The context of research**

General characteristic of PAS reform in Central and Eastern Europe: according to the assessment of UNDP and some other international organizations, most countries in the region (especially non-EU members) share common problem in the sphere of public administration, including: legal base and definition for majority of significant public services, inadequate pay, inadequate qualification of civil servants, politicization of civil service, ineffective management of public resources. This results in increased level of corruption, disparity in pay levels among different groups of civil servants and low motivation for employment in public sector which leads to decrease in quality of the services offered by the state.

This situation is aggravated by high level of politicization combined with the long tradition of using state institutions for attaining political, even ideological goals. All of this does not contribute to the positive outlook of any public reform efforts in the countries of the region.

In 2002, when the candidate countries were evaluated for readiness of their public administration for accession to the EU, the following problems were identified as the most common: low level of professionalism among civil servants, fragmented and deficient legal base, non-merit-based recruitment system in civil service, difficulties in reforming the pay system combined with underdeveloped system for motivating civil servants. All these problems are also relevant for Belarus and help to understand the challenges of possible public administration reform in the country. However, specific national characteristic need also be taken into account, in particular, the 17-year authoritarian rule and the absence of any attempts to carry out any public administration reform apart from a few very superficial changes.

4. The list of publications is available here <http://www.law.bsu.by/users/?132>

5. An interesting characteristic of this research is the structures that were commissioned to implement it. The annotation to the document indicates that the research was coordinated by the National Center for Legislative Activities at the President of the Republic of Belarus, and implemented by private company NOVAK (which activities were rarely viewed positively by the authorities).

# Chapter I.

## Creating an effective system for policy development and evaluation in the environment where state apparatus' monopoly on expert knowledge in this area is increasingly challenged

Since one of the objectives of this paper is to facilitate public discussion in Belarus on how public policies are developed and analyzed, it seems appropriate to provide here a brief description of policy process as it is commonly understood.

In its most general definition, public policy is a practical implementation of political decisions. In this paper, we will not consider various ways in which these political decisions are formed, since the main object of our interest is how the plans for implementation of these decisions are formed (since these decisions very often are very general and frequently packaged as attractive party/election programs).

Leaving political component of a policy outside the brackets may seem a bit radical, however this approach is over a hundred years old and is closely related to the Weberian theory of bureaucracy. This theory which still dominates in the sphere of public administration draws a clearline between political decisions (which are produced by politicians sensitive to opinions of their electorate) and administrative decisions which are taken by rational bureaucrats who possess expert knowledge in specific policy areas. As in any model, this distinction is an ideal construct which however allows to identify and analyze the administrative component of policymaking.

One of the arguments in support of using this approach is that even a most democratically produced political decision based on perfect consensus will mostlikely to remain just an outline (in the best-case scenario) or produce directly opposite results (in the worst-case scenario) if there is no clear understanding of how to implement it and how the success willlooklike (and also what are potential side effects of the success).

Although political decisions are often based of ideological notions, their implementation is based on realistic assumptions of how the desired outcomes can be achieved. Ideally, these assumptions should be based on deep understanding of how the society is organized and works. Even thelaws of economy which seem objective, in fact to the large extent are based on very specific assumptions of what influences behavior of individuals and groups.

This is how a policy processlook in the most generalized form: after a political task is formulated, experts suggest several options for accomplishing it. These options are then evaluated in accordance with various criteria (economic effectiveness, social effect on different groups, practical feasibility etc). Often an important criterion is how easy – or complicated – it is to explain a particular option to the electorate. Obviously some criteria can have more weight than other. In the end, the decision is made to follow one of the options, with a detailed description of its expected results (and consequences). Policy options can be therefore described as specific ways to achieve policy goals with maximally effective use of public resources.

In November 2011, Belarusian government attempted to publicly follow this model of policy process, when the Council of Ministers presented several versions of economic policy for the coming year and described how implementation of each option will affect macroeconomic and financial indicators. The government then recommended one – intermediate – option based on several relevant criteria<sup>5</sup>.

Again,leaving the political reaction to this technocrats' recommendation out of consideration, it is important to note that if in the economic policy the main problem is presented by thelack of political will to conduct reforms, in the social policy the situationlooks even more complicated.

5 «Share of the state in the economy can be reduced from 70% to 50%» in Russian // Naviny.by, 08.11.2011 [http://naviny.by/rubrics/economic/2011/11/08/ic\\_news\\_113\\_380192/](http://naviny.by/rubrics/economic/2011/11/08/ic_news_113_380192/) (viewed on 15.11.2011).

## Policy development in Belarus

For more visualization, let's consider social policy development in Belarus and two main issues related to it. The first problem is not specific to Belarus only, but rather common in post-Soviet countries as a whole – the lack of understanding of how real practical implementation of a social policy affects social and economic processes in the country. This problem is a reflection of a bigger issue: the lack of understanding – and interest – in the social and economic reality. Throughout the twenty years that passed from the break-up of the Soviet Union, despite the decline of influence of the communist ideology, there were no meaningful attempts to conduct a full-scale study of the real state of society which could become the base for the development of rational public policy. Belarus did not become an exclusion.

This situation is very well described by Russian researcher Simon Kordonsky: “We believe that both the reforming and modernizing authority and its critics use the system of false mirrors, in which, no matter what their wishes are, they can see reflections of their a priori and statistical assumptions based on the ideology of reforming by imitation. Procedures of reforming and modernization based on the assumptions that “all is wrong” in turn lead to the appearance of new mirrors, which are also false.

We believe that it is possible to find an exit from this dead-end, if we “change the optics” and start describing, without bias, ways in which modern Russian life is organized, the ways which are now reflected in administrative, scientific and political mirrors – if reflected at all indeed – as a “negative” and not as necessary attributes of life. The legitimization of these widespread forms of sociality seems inevitable if of course the desire to break and sacrifice this way of life for building a new happy future will not prevail again”.

This Kordonsky quote illustrates the situation in Belarus as well, with one correction – here we deal not with a reforming and modernizing, but with “preserving” authority, whose main assumption about the society is not “all is wrong”, but “all is right”. “The change of optics” therefore may not necessarily include the legitimization of all social forms, but at least forming scientifically produced understanding of them.

However, referring to the definition of public policy given above, it is necessary to make a correction for Belarus, because in the current situation the question is not just about how to use the resources with maximum effectiveness and how to measure the effectiveness. The motif of “lost years” has already become a dominating one in the discussion about inevitability of reforms in Belarus, and the main dilemma seems to be what can be sacrificed with minimum damage for 1) the stability of social situation 2) long-term social and economic development.

An exhaustive description of the situation was given in May 2011 by Financial Times blogger Joseph Cotterill: “Whoever ends up bailing Belarus out, they've got the mother of all policy adjustments on their hands.”<sup>6</sup>

The issue of policy trade-offs is not of course unique for Belarusian public administration. It can be said that any political program is a list of future achievements, but it is rarely explained to the public (even more rarely discussed with the public) are drawbacks of a particular choice. Edward Lucas, foreign editor of the Economist, summarized it perfectly in his article about reform scenarios in Belarus in August 2011: “Every policy option has a pitfall. Generous stabilization support from outside lenders risks giving bad government a free ride. Tough external constraints mean that hardship derails reforms and demoralizes reformers. Speedy privatization breaks the power of state bureaucrats. But it hands ownership to thieves and cronies. Foreign direct investment brings money and know-how. But it creates feelings of dispossession and resentment: people feel their country's crown jewels were sold too quickly and too cheaply. Economic liberalization paves the way for future prosperity. But it brings a big psychological shock for voters, who may then opt for stability rather than more discomfort. A tough approach to crime and corruption is vital. But the result can be a powerful state agency that is itself another kind of mafia. If the outside world gives plenty of advice, its credibility is then tarnished by the disappointing results. If it humbly hangs back, it looks neglectful and disengaged.”<sup>7</sup>

A different matter is that public policy in Belarus is mostly based on value judgments not only in its political, but

<sup>6</sup> Cotterill Joseph. Autocracy risk, Belarus edition. <http://ftalphaville.ft.com/blog/2011/05/17/570936/autocracy-risk-belarus-edition/>

also in its administrative part, i.e. essentially does not have a rational ground. Let us briefly explain why the rational ground is important using social policy as an example.

Any element of social policy – money transfers, benefits, rights to receive good or services at a discount or for free – changes people's behavior. These changes can be planned and expected, or occur as side effects during the implementation of a policy. It should not be forgotten that people would often try to "outsmart" any system of restrictions. In most general terms, the goal of any social policy developer is to find an optimum balance between the desired and undesired changes, and to build in a mechanism for detecting side effects including conscious attempts to "fool" the system so that the policy can be adjusted later. To accomplish this, it is necessary to have realistic assumptions about the society one deals with.

However, it is obvious that in Belarus, the authorities have a nascent understanding of the society. For example, despite the Belarusian's government focus on economic growth, the knowledge about one of the key growth factors – labor – is almost absent. Only in the late November 2011 under the pressure from the World Bank the authorities launched a research of the real state of unemployment through household surveys. The government does not have real data on how many Belarusians work abroad – on temporary or permanent basis. Therefore, the base for understanding and prognosis of future labor movement virtually does not exist. Partially, this problem is related to the fact that there is no independent sociology in Belarus, because precisely quantitative and qualitative (increasingly the latter) sociological research provides the data for analysis of social policy options.

But the main problem, very similar to the one Kordonsky points to is that the rational "fa ade" of Belarusian public administration is, at best, the most attractive part of "the building" and – at worst – is not attached to the building at all. Traditionally in Belarus, policy analysis is interpreted in practice as the analysis of implementation of various laws which could not be interpreted as a set of alternative options – primarily because implementation of laws is just a part (often the least significant one) of a complex of formal and not-so-formal rules by which real public administration functions. The paradox here is obvious: ideological political decisions require rational knowledge in order to be implemented, but without this rational knowledge the implementation becomes just an ideological imitation.

## Policy Capacity

The second problem is common for the majority of countries: government's monopoly on policy advice becomes blurred as public policy becomes more complex and individual policy areas become more and more interconnected. This results in the problem of coordination and the necessity for deeper analysis of policy advice coming from a variety of courses. Below is a short summary of this problem and a few examples of how different countries tackled it.

As it mentioned above, public policy development is based on the analysis of several options of achieving a politically defined objective and the selection of the one that meets most selection criteria. The analysis consists, among other things, of the detailed prognosis of outcomes of individual options (both direct ones and side-effects) and is based on assumptions about people's behavior. The question is who and based on what knowledge suggest and recommend particular options.

We can identify three main sources of policy advice applicable to today's Belarus:

- Government experts working within the state apparatus
- Independent research structures (think-tanks)
- International experts and international organizations

Traditionally, the main source of policy advice were government experts who possess technocratic knowledge and institutional memory, and understand the principles of functioning of the state's machinery. The situation started to change in the second half of 20th century when it became obvious that many national governments simply "lack capacity" to develop and analyze numerous policy options. There were many reasons for this, including:

- **Inertness of state apparatus** which tends to adhere to already tried and tested methods, and is risk averse – these characteristics are determined by various factors including human resource management practices in civil service
- **Complication of the environment** in which public policies are implemented – policies becoming less and less contained within national boundaries and are affected by numerous external factors (often outside of control of national governments), societies becoming more complex (people having less and less similar needs)
- **Public activity of academics and intellectuals** who started coming up with competing policy options and



criticize policies originating from within the state apparatus (joined by experienced retired top civil servants)

- **Exchange of information and experiences** of reforms in different countries, interpenetration of ideas, approaches and best practices.

This resulted in stable supply in the “policy advice market”, where governments had to choose between different strategies, including:

- Improvement of internal expertise through recruiting best talent, training, coaching, exchanges etc;
- Cooperation with independent analytical centers, often on contract basis (in this case government experts’ role is to pick a partner and oversee the contract implementation)
- Cooperation with international experts and organizations (mostly in the countries undertaking large-scale reforms)

General pros and cons of each approach are summarized below:

**1. Government experts** (Lindquist<sup>8</sup> compares this strategy to the strategy used by football managers where talented players are recruited early in their careers and then coached to develop their talents):

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess to internal data and information (on what has already been tried, which options considered etc;</li> <li>- Understanding of organizational culture (including how to present policy options to decisions-makers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reluctance to present unpopular options to decision-makers;</li> <li>- Lack of information about research from external sources and/or mistrust of this research;</li> <li>- Ignoring or favoring specific options;</li> <li>- Influence of party, clan, personal and other loyalty</li> </ul>
<p>Human resource implications for civil service: requires significant investment in human capital (to prepare expert teams and maintain their motivation), potential for a conflict between loyalty to an organization and analytical impartiality.</p>	

**2. Independent experts** (Lindquist compares this strategy to the strategy of football managers who recruit already accomplished star players):

This strategy is especially important for countries undertaking large-scale reforms. For example, in post-socialist states during economic and political reforms, most technocratic experts were recruited from universities and research institutes since previously they had no access to public service because of their questionable loyalty to socialist regimes.<sup>9</sup>

By independent experts we mostly refer here to policy analyst rather than representatives of academia as it is traditionally understood. Policy analysts are usually less constrained by various restrictions (first of all, by time) of traditional academic research which is usually based on empirical data and peer reviewing. However, traditional academic research is invaluable in policy analysis when it comes to analysis of already implemented public policy options.

8 Evert A. Lindquist and James A. Desveaux “Policy Analysis and Bureaucratic Capacity: Context, Competencies, and Strategies” in L. Dobuzinski, M. Howlett and D. Laycock eds., Policy Analysis in Canada: The State of the Art Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007)

9 Goetz Klaus H., Wollmann H. Governmentalizing central executives in post-communist Europe: a four-country comparison. Journal of European Public Policy, December 2001. pp. 864–887.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independence (see below);</li> <li>- Timeliness and flexibility;</li> <li>- Require only running costs for the duration of a contract (it is not necessary to keep experts on staff)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May not have enough experience to understand the realities of policy development and implementation;</li> <li>- May not speak “common language” with civil servants, which may result in difficulties of transforming the language of academic research into the language of policy options;</li> <li>- May be influenced by international experts (and therefore lobby a specific policy option).</li> </ul>
<p>Human resource implications for civil service: ambiguous. On one hand, requirements for competency of government experts are less strict since their main task is to formulate the problem, conditions and to pick a partner (the focus here is on their managerial skills) On the other hand, they still must have enough competence to pick appropriate partners and evaluate results of the research.</p>	

It is worth mentioning that even in the countries with long tradition of cooperation between the government and independent experts, the questions of the independence of their approach to policy analysis and recommendations does not have a simple answer. It is related to the fact that “independent experts” do not have a single established identity, and in different context may play different roles: those of classic academic researchers, journalists, party advisors and even business people who market their analytical products. Those interested in the issue might refer to the article by Thomas Medvetz “Public Policy is Like a Having a Vaudeville Act: Languages of Duty and Difference Among Think Tank-Affiliated Policy Experts” which is based on interviews with the US leading independent analysis and discusses their “fluid” identity.

### 3. International experts

«за»	«против»
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professionalism and experience</li> <li>- Often bring financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Normative attitudes</li> <li>- Utilize information (including statistical) provided by local experts (government or independent)</li> <li>- Experts in narrow spheres sometimes do not have a strategic understanding of how a specific policy will affect other policy areas</li> <li>- Experts providing advice on a national level sometimes do not have deep understanding of local practices of public administration</li> </ul>
<p>Human resource implications for civil service: ambiguous. On one hand, government experts working with international partners should be competent enough to analyze their suggestions and present them to decision-makers. On another, their competency (and the views it based on) should not make them non-receptive to the recommendations made by international experts. Financial component of cooperation may skew the incentives for adopt recommendations made by international partners.</p>	

Of course, identity, independence, motives and competence of international experts (both with narrow and broad expertise) is even more ambiguous issue then it is in the case with independent national experts. Those interested in learning more about it could find the following book interesting: Ivona Sobis and Michel S. De Vries “The story behind western advice to Central Europe during its transition period.”

## Institutional aspect

Therefore it seems clear that none of the individual policy advice sources is self-sufficient. Since it is the government's task to formulate a research problem and to find the most effective method to obtain experts' recommendations, and also the government has a final say in making a policy decision, its role as power broker could not be overestimated.

The importance of this was recently recognized even by the head of Belarusian state who admitted that academic community is not capable of providing a sound advice to public administrators.<sup>10</sup> Regrettably, he did not specify what kind of advice was sought and how a sound advice should have looked like in his opinion, but recognition of the problem is obviously the first step towards solving it.

When developing a strategy for increasing policy capacity of government, it is important to take a number of institutional aspects into account, including:

- Necessity for a balance between long-term and short-term perspective. In the situation where an expert community is relatively "young" and does not have enough experience of cooperation with government experts, the latter should take the leading role in setting long-term tasks;
- Desirability for continuous exchange of ideas and experience through communication between government and independent experts, especially informal communication (could be more difficult in the case when independent experts provide already "finished" product)
- Human resource dimension – how to attract talented young experts to public service, how to motivate government experts to cooperate with independent experts (often such cooperation could be only nominal, for example when it is a condition for obtaining donor financing)
- Costs – time and money, capital and running costs. Resources saved through not keeping a full-time team of government experts can be used for finding the best partner and subsequent management of the contract).

Therefore centers for public policy development in governments should be headed by experienced leaders who have a strategic vision or the development of their sphere, good contacts in independent expert community and in academia, who can talk on equal terms with international experts. Their main role is to formulate tasks for public policy development, communicate (formally and informally) with colleagues inside and outside the government, and create attractive image of their organizations. These leaders should have an independent reputation in scientific community. Canadian researchers who study this issue called them "bridge people".<sup>11</sup>

### *Examples*

In the Appendix I, a few examples of such government centers for public policy development are given. These centers were created in order to fully utilize the potential of national expert communities.

These centers share several common characteristics, including:

- Centrality in relation to the government (Cabinet of Ministers);
- Pro-activeness;
- Publicity;
- The government is required (often by law) to respond to recommendations submitted by these centers;
- Networking with expert community nationally and internationally.

10 «Lukashenko reproaches academics for insufficient practical assistance to the state» (in Russian) // BelTA, 24.11.2011. [http://www.belta.by/ru/all\\_news/president/Lukashenko-uprekaet-uchenyx-v-nedostatochnoj-prakticheskoy-pomoschi-gosudarstvu\\_i\\_582372.html](http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/president/Lukashenko-uprekaet-uchenyx-v-nedostatochnoj-prakticheskoy-pomoschi-gosudarstvu_i_582372.html)

11 Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy, Julie Devon Dodd and Michelle Hebert Boyd, Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Regional Office, Health Canada October 2000

## Chapter II.

### NPM (New Public Management) in the reforming of public administration systems: main characteristics

The goal of this chapter is to analyze the possibilities for projecting principles of NPM on the public administration reform in Belarus. An additional goal is to discuss the possibilities for evaluation of the effectiveness of administration, in particular, transition from quantitative macroeconomic indicators which are currently widely used in Belarusian planning system, to both qualitative and quantitative analysis of costs and benefits.

#### Main principles of NPM and the examples of their integration into PAS

The concept of NPM had appeared in the 1970s and has been used in reforming the administrative systems in Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The main goal of NPM reforms was to introduce market principles - e.g. goal-oriented approach to management, as well as de-politicization, decentralization and de-bureaucratization of public administration.

Emergence of this approach is related to increasing criticism of the existing system of governance (so-called old public administration) for its high costs of maintaining state apparatus, ineffectiveness of provided services, absence of indicators to measure effectiveness of governance, as well as lack of mechanisms for monitoring and control of civil servants' activities. Later, NPM principles were utilized by international organizations, including International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)<sup>12</sup> as standardized recommendation for reforming public administration systems in developing and transition countries. Among the first to "import" NPM reforms were Malaysia, Chile, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, reformation of PAS using NPM principles was undertaken by several CEE countries and some former Soviet republics. It is important to mention that NPM practices differed in developed and developing countries which tells us that this model does not have a consolidated set of practices. As the experience of NPM implementation shows, NPM reforms were not successful in the countries which lacked the following:

- Stable economic development
- Clear legal base
- Transparent and accountable public policy mechanisms
- Division of powers
- Sufficient (for implementation of the reforms) financial and human resources<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, according to international organizations, NPM reforms in the new EU member countries were quite successful (among the examples given are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia). With the reforms based on the EU legislation (Acquis Communautaire), these states have been able to integrate NPM principles (at least on formal level) while on an informal level there is some resistance as some old practices (most importantly, informal connections and corruption) are still widely employed.

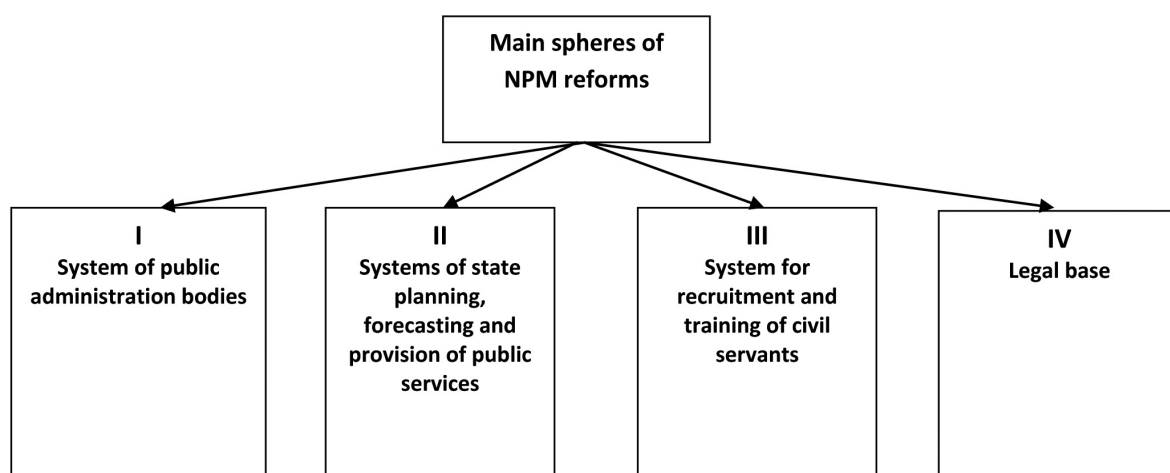
Key NPM ideas: **managerialism and utilization of market mechanisms to increase effectiveness of public services** (in particular, consumer-oriented approach). The former involves introduction of management system based on the principles used in private sector, into public administration.

Main spheres of public administration reform using NPM principles are shown in Picture 1, some tools used for reforming each sphere are described below.

12 Advancement of standardized reform projects in accordance with NPM principles by international donor organizations is frequently criticized since, according to the critics, specific characteristics of national systems (e.g. their readiness for reform, competence of local administrators, availability of resources etc) are not always taken into account

13 Common, R. (1998), Convergence and Transfer: A Review of the Globalization of NPM, International Journal of Public Sector Management, volume 11, no. 6, pp. 440-448; Hood, C., Scott, C. (2000), Regulating Government in a 'Managerial' Age: Towards a Cross-National Perspective, Discussion Paper No 1, p.2. Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation, London, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Picture 1. Main spheres of NPM reforms



Main tools used for reforming the Sphere I, “System of public administration bodies”, are:

- Decentralization of the system of governance (reducing the role of government);
- Re-structuring institutes of governance;
- Re-distribution of roles, missions and tasks among different levels of governance
- Reduction of number of civil servants;
- Reduction of costs for maintaining bureaucratic apparatus.

Main tools used for reforming the Sphere II “System of state planning, forecasting and provision of public services” are:

- Introduction of competition and principles of bidding and licensing for allocation of contracts for provision of social services;
- Creation of an auxiliary (to the state) mechanism for provision of public services – in particular, development of the “social contracting” system, introduction of “public-private partnership” principles;
- Revision of principles for measuring performance and efficiency of planning, forecasting and provision of services;
- Introduction of customer- (in this case – citizen-) oriented approach.

Main tools used for reforming the Sphere III “System for recruitment and training of civil servants” are:

- Reforming the system for recruitment of administrative cadres and for measurement of the effectiveness of their work;
- Giving more freedom of action to civil servants while increasing the level of their responsibility and accountability;

Main tools used for reforming the Sphere IV “Legal base” are:

- Identifying gaps and problems in the legal base regulating public administration;
- Reforming the legislation on public administration.

In general, NPM includes introduction of **new principles and indicators for measuring effectiveness of PAS**. In particular, it suggests the transfer from qualitative gross indicators (e.g. GDP) to qualitative and comprehensive indicators based on measuring policy outcomes (an example of such indicator used on international level is Human Development Index). Therefore one of the main **instrumental** goals of NPM is the introduction of clear indicators for measuring qualitative results of public administration, public policies and forecasting. <sup>14</sup>

14 OECD, 2005b Modernising Government, The Way Forward, Paris; Hood, 1991, A Public Management for All Seasons?, Public Administration 69, pp. 3-19.

# Possible scenarios of an NPM-based reform of public administration

Summarizing the practices of introduction of NPM principles of PASs of different countries, it is possible to identify the following possible reform scenarios:

1. Preserving the current PAS. Overall existing PAS is preserved with some minor changes made in various institutions, and also in all the spheres mentioned earlier. The main goal – to eliminate most obvious flaws while preserving overall status-quo in the system.

2. Modernization. Involves more radical changes of PAS, in particular, re-distribution of public expenditures in the sphere of governance, creation of new administrative bodies, changing the employment contracts system for civil servants etc.

3. Marketization. Active introduction of market principles in PAS as a method for increasing effectiveness and efficiency, and for decreasing public administration costs in general, and civil service expenses in particular.

4. Minimization/Reduction of the role of government in the system of governance. Maximum reduction of public sector through privatization and contracting out public services.

A specific characteristic of post-Soviet states including Belarus is that they don't need just "a reform", but mostly a new public administration system.<sup>15</sup> This is not always taken into account which leads to reforms ending up as modernizations (second scenario). As a result, some most obvious "gaps" are filled without changing overall systems and therefore without improving their efficiency.

Goals of NPM reforms:

- Increasing trust to public administration bodies (in particular, the government) through transparency and accountability (one of the mechanisms – regular reporting of the results of government programs);
- Transforming the system for measuring the effectiveness of PAS and government programs through introduction of indicators of effectiveness and efficiency, with the focus on results and quality of public services, as well as on citizen satisfaction (viewed as customers from NPM standpoint);
- Improvement of PAS structure, in particular, principles of employment in public sector and civil service in particular.<sup>16</sup>

## Assessment of the PAS in Belarus from the NPM standpoint

In this sector we attempt to assess the public administration system in Belarus taking into account the four spheres of reform identified earlier. The following grades are used in the assessment:

- «++» successful implementation and introduction of NPM principles
- «+» implementation of the reform
- «+-» some reform
- «-» no reform
- «- -» developments in the opposite direction of the reform
- 0 – no information.

<sup>15</sup> Diversity in action: local public management of multi-ethnic communities in Central and Eastern Europe ed. By Anna-Marie Biro and Petra Kovac, p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> USA: Government Performance Results Act of 1993 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/mgmt-gpra/index-gpra>

Sphere/Tool	Grade	Comments
<b>Sphere I "System of public administration bodies"</b>		
Decentralization of the system of governance (reduction of the role of government)	- -	After the election of Alexander Lukashenko in 1994, the opposite trend has been taking place, namely the centralization of power which resulted in the following: decrease of the role of local governments, building of the "vertical of power", leveling the division of powers (The referendum of 1996) and giving extended powers to the President
Re-structuring institutes of governance	+ -	Mostly of superficial nature, was not meant to improve effectiveness (as of 2011, there are 24 ministries and 9 state committees in Belarus)
Re-distribution of roles, missions and tasks among different levels of governance	+ -	Some redistribution towards more centralization of the system (only minimum powers left at the local level)
Reduction of number of civil servants	-	Throughout 2003 – 2009, there were around 53 000 civil servants in Belarus <sup>17</sup>
Reduction of costs for maintaining bureaucratic apparatus	0	Not enough information
<b>Sphere II "System of state planning, forecasting and provision of public services"</b>		
Introduction of competition and principles of bidding and licensing for allocation of contracts for provision of social services	+ -	With some reservations, some developments along the lines of "state social contracting" system can be put into this category (see below)
Creation of an auxiliary (to the state) mechanism for provision of public services – in particular, development of "social contracting" system, introduction of "public-private partnership" principles	+ -	According to the information in official Belarusian media, introduction of the "state social contracting" system will start in 2013 as outlined in the new version of the Law on social services which is currently being considered by the National Assembly. <sup>18</sup>
Revision of principles for measuring performance and efficiency of planning, forecasting and provision of services	-	According to the assessment of the expert from BSU, the following methods are used for assessment of the effectiveness of a policy: "Reports of heads of state agencies, inter-agency meetings and consultations with stakeholders, parliamentary hearings, control commissions and inspections, development and analysis of the budget, evaluation by professional associations and the media" etc. <sup>19</sup> Therefore the indicators used do not meet the required criteria.
Introduction of customer- (in this case – citizen-) oriented approach.	+ -	Implementation of the project for de-bureaucratization of administrative procedures in Belarus (in particular, introduction of "one stop shop" principle).

17 More information is available here [http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2010/10/13/ic\\_articles\\_112\\_170832/](http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2010/10/13/ic_articles_112_170832/)

18 For more details, see here [http://www.belta.by/ru/all\\_news/society/Vnedrenie-v-Belarusi-gosudarstvennogo-sotsialnogo-zakaza-voz-mozhno-s-2013-goda\\_i\\_582843.html](http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Vnedrenie-v-Belarusi-gosudarstvennogo-sotsialnogo-zakaza-voz-mozhno-s-2013-goda_i_582843.html), and also "Recommendations on the implementation of the mechanism of contract-based provision of social services to the population (an analytical note of the research institute of the Ministry of labor and social protection) 06.09.11 [www.belwomnet.iatp.by/docs/socZakaz.doc](http://www.belwomnet.iatp.by/docs/socZakaz.doc)

19 Antanovich N.A. The methodology for political analysis of the effectiveness of public administration (in Russian) // Проблемы управления. 2009. № 4 (33). С.95-100.

Sphere/Tool	Grade	Comments
<b>Sphere III "System for recruitment and training of civil servants"</b>		
Reforming the system for recruitment of administrative cadres and for measurement of effectiveness of their work;	-	The system for recruitment of civil servants preserves the Soviet legacy of nepotism. The assessment of performance of civil servants is done in accordance with the Ordinate of the Council of Ministers of Belarus from 25.06.2004 #759 "On the criteria of assessment of work of managerial cadres of national bodies of public administration and other government organizations subordinate to the government of Belarus, regional executive committees and Minsk City executive committee». <sup>20</sup>
Giving more freedom of action to civil servants while increasing the level of their responsibility and accountability	- -	Opposite trend is taking place where civil servants have minimum responsibility for outcomes of their activities, and the same time each of them can be dismissed for political reasons (if something goes wrong and a scapegoat is needed)
<b>Sphere IV "Legal base"</b>		
Identifying gaps and problems in the legal base regulating public administration;	+ -	Since this sphere has to some extent auxiliary character, all activities undertaken here were of mostly decorative and quantitative nature and did not result in any real changes.
Reforming the legislation on public administration		

### Conclusions:

Taking into account the assessment above, it is possible to identify some preliminary conclusions of the chapter:

1. The scenario that is currently being implemented in Belarus is focused on preservation of status quo in PAS, where some local changes are made (in individual institutions and aspects) however these changes aim to level most obvious flaws than to produce any real transformation. The main goal of the currently existing politicized PAS is preservation of status-quo and maintenance of balance.

2. The recommended scenario for public administration reform (and also for the reviewed below the system for assessment of effectiveness of government organization) seems to be a modernization. The main aspects of this scenario are re-distribution and re-allocation of public resources in the PAS, and also comprehensive re-organization with creation of new institutes and new principles of functioning (recruitment and employment system of civil servants etc).

3. More radical scenarios (Marketization and Reduction of the role of state) seem to be less feasible for Belarus since they are not possible without radical a transformation of the political and the underlying economic system. Taking into account paternalistic views of the role of state which dominate in Belarusian society, and low probability of transformation of the regime in the near future, it does not seem realistic to expect radical changes in the PAS.

It is worth mentioning here, that the concept of NPM itself is considered controversial in reviews of public administration practices. For example, expert community in Lithuania calls it "stillborn" – i.e. the one that lost importance long before it was suggested for introduction in the PAS as part of the EU ascension process. One of the main problems for possible introduction of NMP principles in Belarus is the opposition between the unreformed PAS in Belarus and the main principles of NPM. It may seem like an exaggeration, but in our opinion if Belarus ever undertakes to radically reform its PAS, the examples to follow could be found not in CEE countries, but in those African states where the system of public administration was practically created anew under the influence and insistence of external actors. The main justifications for this view are that the public administration system was left to re-create the Soviet model to the extent possible without introduction of any meaningful changes; absence of enough qualified personnel ready to take on new principles of work. As a result, for any NMP-inspired reforms Belarus would have to practically demolish the existing system of governance and create a new one (i.e. the path somehow analogous to the one travelled by some African countries).

<sup>20</sup> It is suggested to use the following main criteria for assessment: implementation of main target indicators of the forecast of social and economic development; general indicators of the effectiveness of national bodies of public administration, regional executive committees, other government organizations subordinate to the government; requirements for professional and personal qualities of managing cadres. It is worth noticing that these criteria does not include a definition of "effectiveness" which is mostly interpreted as purposeful usage of public resources and fulfillment of work duties (see the Annex 1 to the Ordinance mentioned above).



# Chapter III.

## Improvement of the system for assessment of effectiveness of public organizations

The objective of this chapter is to consider possible ways to improve the system for assessing the effectiveness of public organizations and the public administration system as a whole. To approach this objective, it would be useful to discuss the problem of indicators used in development and evaluation of public policy in general and governance in particular.

### Indicators

The problem of methodology for assessing activities of government and public administration is approached in international practice using different tools. For example, since 1996 the studies based on the methodology called Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) have been taking place in more than 200 countries. According to this methodology, the following dimensions of governance are assessed: openness and reliability, political stability and absence of violence (terrorism), effectiveness of the government, quality of regulation, rule of law and control of corruption.<sup>21</sup>

In this methodology, governance is defined in the following way: "Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes 1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; 2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; 3) and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them." However, these dimensions are more useful for external evaluation and comparative studies than for internal audits with the purpose of a governance reform.

It is necessary to note that the problem of measurements and evaluation of governance is in the focus of international organizations promoting related reforms (for instance, the World Bank).<sup>22</sup> According to one of the reports prepared at the request of this organization, taking into account the ever-increasing number of indicators, it is possible to say that the most important aspect in any assessment is the consensus of the parties (the one doing an assessment and the one being assessed) regarding the indicators being used and their value. The following five "dimensions" of indicators are identified:

- Specific characteristics of the institutions of governance
- Specific characteristics of the results that demonstrate "good governance practices" in action
- Reliability and transparency of the indicators being used
- Quality and accurateness of indicators;
- Sufficiency of information explained by indicators.

We can conclude by saying that the indicators are required to be replicable, transparent and demonstrably accurate.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the only proved correlation between the indicators being used and improvement of governance is that the "black box" of the political system also affects the outcomes of the system of governance which, in turn, lead to the decrease of poverty levels.<sup>24</sup>

21 More information about the indicators is available here [www.govindicators.org](http://www.govindicators.org)

22 Over past 30 years, the number of indicators for measuring and evaluating different aspects of governance has skyrocketed. On national levels this process as a rule had two phases: during the first stage, importance of governance for development of the country was "re-discovered". As a result, it was recognized that problems of governance and related issue of reduction of poverty should be included in the political agenda. The second phase (late 90s) is associated with increase in number and types of indicators of governance' quality. However, during this period there was no consensus on indicators used by different organizations and their usability during various reforms supported by donor organizations.

23 Governance: The World Bank's Experience, World Bank, Washington DC, 1994

24 Towards consensus on governance indicators. Selecting public management and broader governance indicators. Steve Knack, Nick Manning. World Bank, March 7, 2000.

## Planning according to the “costs and benefits” principles

Even a superficial review of the planning and forecasting system in Belarus shows that, first of all, it is based on political principles, and second - that they are focused on increase of already achieved target indicators but do not take into account the aspect of their qualitative change. This type of planning could be somehow acceptable during periods of financial stability and economic growth. However, in an unstable environment where reforming of public administration becomes critically important, it becomes “crucial to create the system for finding alternative planning scenarios and their comparison in order to find an optimal one. The rationalization of the selection of variants which to the maximum extent meet the effectiveness criteria lies in the bases of the “costs and benefits method”.<sup>25</sup>

Among the main criteria used for the assessment of PAS through the principles of costs and benefits are the following: cost effectiveness, efficiency and performance. Since it is not our objective to discuss the exact theoretical meaning of these concepts, we will just provide their working definitions:

- Cost effectiveness characterizes the cost aspect of effectiveness. Plans, decisions and forecasts are cost effective when resources of adequate composition, quality and quantity are acquired and used with minimal expenses possible;
- Efficiency – the ratio between the quantity of goods and services (in this case – forecasts and plans) and costs of their production;
- Performance - correlation between forecast, plans and policy goals (or, more widely, public good). Analysis of performance focuses on addressing specific societal needs and preferences.

Looking at the system for assessing the results of public administration in Belarus, we can describe it as a system of hierarchically organized political reporting rather than assessment in accordance with qualitative integrated indicators. For example, according to Belarusian legislation, short- and medium-term forecast of economic and social development is approved either by the president or by the government.<sup>26</sup> For instance, main parameters of short-term social and economic development are approved by the president, who – especially during pre-election or crisis periods – appeals to and legitimizes his decisions by decisions made by All-Belarusian National Congress (vox populi of sorts). Therefore, the basis of forecasts is formed not by effective and calculated indicators, but by politically popular slogans to which even statistical information is “adjusted”. One of the most vivid examples of such “adjustment” is the situation where average salary was “forced” to reach the equivalent of 500 US dollars during a very brief 2010 pre-election period, but after two months of financial crisis the average salary de-facto decreased to the 2009 level.

25 Jacobson L.I. The economics of public sector (in Russian), M. «Aspect-press», 1996, p. 2.

26 The Law of the Republic of Belarus «On state forecasting and programs of social and economic development of the Republic of Belarus” from 5.05.1998 #N 157-3.

# Conclusions

Preliminary conclusions of this chapter are the following:

1. The system for assessing public administration in Belarus cannot be considered effective since it has an ideological and not a rational character.
2. It is practically not possible to measure qualitative performance of the system of public administration since all main indicators are quantitative and based on the existing “level of achievement” without taking effectiveness into account (for example, in accordance with the existing legislation, the program for medium-term social and economic development is based on the results achieved in the previous 5-year period);
3. A possible recommendation for qualitative transformation of this situation involved the following steps: changing the reporting system to focus it on the indicators of effectiveness, amending the hierarchical reporting and accountability system with horizontal evaluation mechanism within institutions and external audits (including independent audits by NGOs, analytical centers etc), ensuring transparency and availability of the results of the evaluation for the general public through the media and independent websites.

# Conclusions

Summarizing the paper, it is necessary to once again re-visit one of its main theses that public policy in Belarus is not rationalized and is based on value judgments of political leaders and top officials not only in the political, but also in administrative sphere. Additional problem is the lack of reliable and verifiable information for effective decision-making. This irrationality is shown by the example of social policy in Belarus. A paradox identified here is that ideological political decisions require rational knowledge in order to be implemented, but without this rational knowledge the implementation becomes just an ideological imitation.

In the paper, three sources of policy advice which are applicable to today's Belarus are considered: government experts who work within the government apparatus, independent policy research organizations (think tanks) and international experts/organizations. Using western research centers as examples, it is demonstrated that governmental centers for policy research should be led by experienced leaders who possess strategic vision of the development of their areas of expertise, who have good contacts in independent policy research and academic community, who are able to communicate with international experts as peers.

It is necessary to mention that with regard to public administration reform Belarus represents an **“outlier” case** in Central and Eastern Europe in general and among post-soviet countries in particular. On one hand, it will sooner or later face the same problems as the above-mentioned countries, on the other – these problems have more varied and complicated character because of the long delay of comprehensive reform and non-democratic practices in public administration. The examples considered in the paper show that in the spheres of policy analysis, policy advice and evaluation of the effectiveness of governance Belarus is lagging far behind its neighbors. While in other countries of the region cooperation between government and independent experts is an established practice, and modernization of public administration system in order to improve its effectiveness and develop mechanisms for monitoring of political and administrative developments has been progressing for over a decade, in Belarus the opposite developments are prevailing.

A methodological paradox which became evident in the paper is that the authors could not get full access to the information regarding the public administration system and performance of various governmental institutions, as well as the possibility to fully apply policy analysis tools. In other countries - as shown for example in the World Bank reporting – experts advising on preparation and implementation of public administration reforms can get at least limited access to information on government's performance, in Belarus even this limited access is not available. The same is true in regard of various auxiliary tools (e.g. interviews with top public officials) which are impossible to conduct in the present environment.

# Annex 1. Government centers for policy research

## 1. The Policy Research Initiative (Canada)

[www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca)

The need for such an organization was identified in 1993 when the federal government created a working group for improvement of government capacity to develop strategic and horizontal (based on connections between different ministries) policy. PRI was created in 1997 with three main tasks:

- Conduct research on medium-term problems related to horizontal policy
- Convert results of the research into policy options that policymakers can work with
- Identify needs for data and priorities of public policy.

PRI has 30 full-time staff members, out of which a third is employed on rotation basis and leave every year to work in different ministries. Its annual budget is 3 million Canadian dollars.

The goal of PRI is to work with experts inside and outside the government (including analysts working for private companies), scientists and international organizations in order to identify priority problems for the country, conduct deep research, train government experts, and most importantly facilitate horizontal cooperation in the projects that influence many policy areas (youth policy, multicultural policy etc).

Research results are presented to expert community through reports, conferences and a periodical published by the institute.

## 2. The Scientific Council for Government Policy (Netherlands)

[www.wrr.nl](http://www.wrr.nl)

The Scientific Council for Government Policy (the WRR) was established in 1972 by a special act of Parliament. Its task is to identify issues of public importance, conduct scientific research on them and pass the results to the government. The Parliament act contains the requirement that the government should respond to the WRR in writing about what actions it undertakes or is going to undertake on its recommendations.

The Council should have 5-11 members, as a rule – university professors who are specialists in specific spheres. The Council's annual budget is 3 million Euros, it has 40 staff members, most of them scientifically trained. It helps to preserve good organizational memory but sometimes lead to problems because of narrow specialization of staff.

Official reports are passed to the Cabinet of Ministers where they are discussed and then published (including on the WRR website). Usually, WRR reports stimulate active public discussions. Presentations of reports are also carried out in different ministries. Among the latest report topics – national security, welfare state and climate change.

WRR also conducts a range of events, including WRR Lecture, where known experts (from Netherlands or from abroad) are invited for public presentations on strategic or scientific issues. The WRR's main task for the nearest future is closer cooperation with other European organizations.

### 3. The Strategy Unit (Great Britain)

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy)

In one form or another, departments for strategic planning and policy advice always existed in the British government since the First World war. The Strategy Unit in its current form was established in 2002. The main task of this organization stated in its mandate is to identify and research long-term and/or horizontal strategic issues and facilitate innovative approaches to public policy in individual departments.

The Strategy Unit is closely connected with the Cabinet Office and regularly holds meetings with Prime Ministers and their advisors. It also regularly has meetings with other ministries and provides them with recommendations on specific public policies.

The organization employs about 45 people and its annual budget is around 4 million pounds. Additional staff members are recruited from ministries on temporary basis. The work is organized around individual projects (e.g. education and healthcare) and as a rule engages external experts.

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**Mission of SYMPA Think tank is to promote reforms  
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