

Do Government Agencies Operate Effectively? Modern challenges and responses

The development and implementation of integrated systems for evaluating the effectiveness of government agencies in which citizens play a role allows for the systematization of evaluation processes of their work and identifies opportunities for improving their effectiveness.

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The views expressed in the study are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SYMPA, BIPART, and other organizations and individuals that may be associated with the names of the authors.

In this work the authors describe current approaches to assessing the effectiveness of the work of government agencies, analyze their strengths and weaknesses (taking into account their practical implementation), as well as offer a number of recommendations that would allow for the systemization of assessment of the activities of state bodies and organizations in Belarus in terms of their efficiency, determined in part by taking into account the opinions of citizens.

The topic of effectiveness of governmental organizations in Belarus is becoming increasingly relevant. Even a cursory examination of the performance evaluation system of state organizations demonstrates that it mostly consists of quantitative measures in which an organization is considered effective if it shows a quantitative increase over past performance but in which qualitative change is not addressed. These measures also do not take into account the social (human resource) aspect of the organization's work except for employee wage increases. Typically, performance measures of an organization focus primarily on the economic aspect of its work and do not include an assessment of its activities by citizens. This observation is also supported by the fact that the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of organizations (mainly in the form of evaluation of managers) is assigned to the Ministry of Economy.

With all the limitations of this type of evaluation, it can still be considered suitable for monitoring the economic and financial performance measures of government agencies in the context of financial stability and economic growth. However, in a situation of budget deficits and economic stagnation it is

equally important to evaluate how successful organizations are in adapting to a changing situation, predicting its development, and in taking appropriate action to ensure the quality of their activities and/or services.

This paper looks at modern approaches to the evaluation of the effectiveness of organization. The first group of approaches includes the evaluation system of government as a whole offered by international organizations. These evaluations are typically based on the general principles of "good governance." Since these evaluations are used to compare the quality of governance of individual countries and are the basis for recommendations for large-scale reform they only indirectly and after a certain period of time may have an impact on the performance of individual government agencies and organizations in the country.

The second group of approaches focuses on the evaluation of individual organizations in which such parameters as the quality and completeness of the performance of its mission, key objectives, potential and sustainability of development, etc. are assessed. An important role in this process is the evaluation of organizations by citizens.

This work looks at the methodology used in both approaches. Results of the analysis suggest the following recommendations for systematic assessment of government agencies:

- Development and legislative strengthening of principles and criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the state apparatus taking into account the socio-economic development goals of the country
- Identification of the government agency responsible for the implementation of policies and procedures to assess effectiveness
- Development of procedures for evaluating effectiveness taking into account international experience, in particular the concept of the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) and the system EPUS (Effective Public Service) developed in the Russian Federation on the basis of CAF
- Develop a plan for implementation of the policies and procedures for evaluating effectiveness with the participation of civil servants.

BIPART is a research project of the School of Young Managers of Public Administration (SYMPA).

Its goal is the promotion of public administration reform in Belarus in order to make it more effective: <http://sympa-by.eu/ru/research/center.html>