



Training workshop on using the PIMS

DESPRO Project Manager Oksana Garnets emphasized that regional partners who do not yet have access to the Internet or computers will have been provided with everything necessary by the end of July this year. In August it is planned to start working with PIMS in test mode, while September will mark the start of the intensive entry of information into the system by all users. •

DESPRO project expands expert pool and initiates public discussion of reforms in the country

The Swiss-Ukrainian Decentralization Support Project in Ukraine, DESPRO, has established an Expert and Advisory Board of the project. Leading experts in local self-government, regional development, state administration, information technology and other areas were invited to participate in the Board.

The purpose of the Board is to ensure the transparency of project activities and take into account expert and public opinion in the process of DESPRO project implementation. The main tasks of the Board's experts will be to elaborate analytical materials in the fields of regional policy, local self-governance and decentralization, to represent civil society interests in the work of DESPRO, and to develop proposals and recommendations on improving regulatory legislation.

The first meeting of the Expert and Advisory Board was held in Kyiv on June 23, 2010. Members of the newly established advisory body discussed current issues in the field of decentralization and local self-government as well as organizational matters.

The experts agreed that discussion of such urgent and important issues for the country should involve representatives from the government, the general public and the mass media. Similar expert meetings are tentatively scheduled to be held on a quarterly basis. Council members will elaborate practical recommendations with



regard to improving the programs proposed by the new state leadership in the intervals between meetings.

The following experts participated in the meeting of DESPRO's Expert and Advisory Board:

Anatoliy Tkachuk (Chairman of the Civil Society Institute);
Ihor Koliushko (Chairman of the Centre for Political and Legal Reforms)
Anatoliy Chemerys (Director of the Center for European Management);
Yuriy Ganushchak (DESPRO expert);
Vitaliy Malashchenko (Vice President, National Academy of Public Administration under the office of the President of Ukraine);
Dmytro Vasylyev (Communication agency Publicity Ukraine) and others. •

SUCCESS STORY: Through difficulties to the stars

In the village of Hushchyntsi, the benefits of a mains water supply used to be enjoyed only by the staff and pupils of Hushchyntsi Higher Vocational School № 32 and the residents of a five-storey building on Lenin Street. The water supply system, built during the Soviet era, was in need of major repairs. The remaining residents of Lenin Street and the three other streets and their lanes got their water from private wells where, to make the problem more acute, the water level was falling each year. Then the village community created a CBO (community based organization) and applied for assistance to the Swiss-Ukrainian Decentralization Support Project in Ukraine, DESPRO.



As experience demonstrates, persistence on the part of those involved is a common feature of all successful projects. And the Hushchyntsi village project turned out to be a success due to the exceptional persistence in overcoming difficulties shown by the members of the "Nadbuzhzhya" Street Committee CBO.

After establishing the CBO, Hushchyntsi residents provided the following:

- => Social mobilization by shaping positive attitudes to such projects and self-belief within the community;
- => Involvement of the village and rayon authorities in the project;
- => Development of the project's budget estimate documents;
- => Carrying out of geological survey work;
- => Connection to the electricity supply, installation of a hydraulic accumulator;
- => Construction of a 4.54 km-long water supply system to the households.

The work with the community was not plain sailing — at first the village residents had some reservations regarding participation in an international project, which is fairly common in these situations. People did not believe that the financial assistance from DESPRO would be irrevocable, so the CBO members had to explain to their fellow villagers what benefits they would receive through joint participation.

Having mobilized the community, the CBO faced further difficulties. Partly these were caused by the inability of some residents to participate in auxiliary work due to poor health, which led to deadlines being missed.

Another set of problems was related to interaction with the contractor. It turned out that the contractor had changed the method of drilling boreholes, thereby increasing the costs by nearly UAH 32 000. An independent expert had to be brought in to help the CBO in resolving the issue by reviewing the cost of the work through negotiation, thus avoiding a court case that could potentially have dragged on for years.

Nevertheless, the Hushchyntsi village community's persistence paid off as they successfully overcame all obstacles to provide good quality drinking water to 82 households.

So stars can be reached! •