



IN WHAT WAY DOES EVALUATION HELP TO MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE?

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Introduction

An integral part of democratic order is its orientation towards a dialogue with society, openness and transparency and establishing public trust with state authorities. Modern society requires that the Government should include characteristics such as openness, transparency, and readily-available, functioning feedback channels. Meeting such requirements can be ensured only through the use of dialogue-based forms of governance, which in turn can be implemented in various partnership models.

The proposed presentation will share a methodology of efficiency evaluation of the ministry and public agency interaction with the wider public and stakeholders.

The interaction with the wider public and stakeholders is an important functional component of the activities of a ministry or public agency. They primarily include receiving feedback, monitoring the public's reactions to current policies, and ensuring that state institutions' activities are both transparent and open. Ukraine's experience demonstrates that at present, there are many initiatives and practices by state authorities which are related to proper PR. However, the viability of these practices often depends on the leadership of respective bodies. Existing legal mechanisms often identify insufficiencies in certain forms and methods of such cooperation. The topic of interaction between governmental institutions and the wider public shifts then to the provision of information, or more precisely – PR-strategies.

The first step toward improving the interaction of a governmental institution with the wider public may be to introduce an evaluation of its activities in the respective sphere. This will enable us not only to see the real picture, but also to identify problems and receive the necessary understanding of what needs to be changed and improved.

Through a joint effort between representatives of Ukrainian civil society and the Government, a pilot methodology was developed and tested for evaluating the efficiency of interaction between an executive body (a ministry, agency, etc.) with the wider public.

The object of evaluation

The object of evaluation is the level of fulfilment of the executive body's function related to its interaction with the wider public, in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and commitments of the Ukrainian Government for the implementation of good governance principles.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology is based on the understanding that interactions with the wider public take place on four levels, including:



PROVISION OF INFORMATION – one-sided interaction, during which an executive body provides information to citizens and stakeholders about drafting, adoption and implementation of public policy as well as mechanisms of involving citizens and civil society organisations in the development and implementation of public policy. Such relations include both provision of information upon the initiative of an executive body, and provision of information upon public request;



CONSULTATIONS – a type of communication, during which an executive body publishes its draft decisions in order to receive comments, remarks, and proposals from the public, or holds consultations with the public on the process of implementation of public policies. Usually, the process of consultations is initiated by a governmental institution;



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION of the public in the development and implementation of public policy (dialogue) – the level of interaction, during which an executive body includes and involves representatives of the public as members of working groups, expert councils, and the like during the process of drafting specific normative legal documents, decisions or policies. Representatives of the public are fully involved in the decision-making process. The result of such cooperation is a joint decision (a draft law, recommendations, etc.). The dialogue may be initiated both by state authorities and by civil society organisations.



PARTNERSHIP – the level of cooperation, at which an executive body and civil society organisations are engaged in a mutual exchange of various resources (for instance, delegation provision of certain services to civil society organisations, organisation of joint events, etc.).



At each of these levels, a governmental institution should ensure that a three-stage process is in place:

PLANNING-ACTION-OUTCOMES

At the planning stage, it should be evaluated how the executive body develops and approves the necessary action plans, instructions, procedures, and so on. The action stage involves how the executive body ensures adherence to procedures, which effort is made, which events are organised, respective products created, etc. Then, at the outcome stage, what was actually changed and what happened as a result of the effort taken at the previous two stages is evaluated.

Within each of these stages, a general assessment is determined to offer an idea of the progress achieved in ensuring the efficiency of interaction of the executive body with the wider public, including stakeholders. Based on the assessment results, recommendations are developed on improving activities in order to achieve higher efficiency.

The progress (trends and dynamics) at each of the stages, and within every stage, is measured using a five-point scale, from 0 to 4 with a 0.25 increment, whereby:

- 0 - 1** the results are not measured because they are absent, or because only intentions are declared;
- 1.25 - 2** insignificant results are available, or individual (one-time) instances;
- 2.25 - 3** meaningful results can be seen;
- 3.25 - 4** excellent results can be seen that demonstrate sustainability.

INTERACTION LEVEL	A STAGE	THE STATE OF PROGRESS (TRENDS OR DYNAMICS)				CONCLUSIONS
		0 - 1	1.25 - 2	2.25 - 3	3.25 - 4	
		the results are not measured	insignificant results are available	meaningful results can be seen	excellent results can be seen	
INFORMATION	planning					
	action					
	outcomes					
CONSULTATION	planning					
	action					
	outcomes					
COLLABORATION	planning					
	action					
	outcomes					
PARTNERSHIP	planning					
	action					
	outcomes					



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