

**Dialogue concept for state executive authorities, local
governments and non-governmental organizations in the
form of condominiums and homeowners’ associations**

developed with the assistance of all project partners

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1. Introduction

The Dialogue concept for the executive state authorities of Saint-Petersburg and Domodedovo with local governments, non-governmental organizations in the form of condominiums and housing owners associations has been developed by the working groups of the Project «Local housing policy» relying on the data of the analysis of stakeholders, efficiency of the available housing management system, current situation of local governance and the existing dialogue in the sphere of housing sector reforming.

Community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations constitute one of the most efficient forms of public involvement into forming and running of state policy in various spheres of public relations.

Implementation of this Concept will allow to use potential of the community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations for development of the civil society institutes, increase in social activity of St. Petersburg and Domodedovo inhabitants.

Stakeholders:

- Executive state authorities of St. Petersburg – Housing Committee;
- Administration of the municipal okrug Domodedovo;
- Local self-government – Municipal institution Grazhdanka;
- Non-profit organizations – housing owners’ associations (condominiums, building associations);
- Managing organizations; and,
- Owners of premises in the apartment buildings, i.e. citizens

2. The overall goal and objectives of the Concept

The overall goal of this Concept is to create conditions for closer interaction of the executive authorities, local governments with the actors of the housing management market, i.e. managing agencies, housing associations, condominiums and housing owners. It is necessary for securing actions efficiency in housing sector reforming, forming of the “conscious housing owner” and enhancing of mechanisms for participation of housing owners in the process of administrative decision making.

The goal will be achieved through the following objectives:

- to improve managerial, legal and economic conditions for development of the dialogue;
- awareness raising and promotion among inhabitants of St Petersburg and Domodedovo with the civil society institutes.



3. Mechanisms for participation in decision making process of the state authorities and local governments

State authorities' interaction with community organizations is based on the following principles:

- guarantee for rights and lawful concerns of community organizations;
- openness and access to information;
- collective decision making¹.

Interaction should be based on the principles of partnership, transparency and quality of relationships and services supplied.

3.1. The executive authorities of St. Petersburg and Domodedovo may hold public discussions of pressing issues in housing and communal reforms in order to bring to the notice of the state authorities proposals of condominiums, housing owners' associations and building societies that touch upon concerns of citizens, to take into account public opinion, reveal social problems and to develop recommended solutions.

3.2. In order to take into account public opinion, to reveal social problems and to work out recommended solutions executive authorities may form working groups of executive authorities and hold public discussions of regulations and municipal target-oriented programmes.

3.3. In order to increase efficiency of the awareness raising actions in St. Petersburg and Domodedovo on current housing management reforms, social services rendered by community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations the executive authorities of St. Petersburg and Domodedovo secure holding of round table discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences focusing on the economic issues of condominiums, building societies and homeowners' associations as well as on legal aspects, taxation and etc.

3.4. The key forms and principles of interaction include:

- 1) joint activities to raise social responsibility of the owner for maintenance of common property in an apartment building and living space;
- 2) joint activities and mutual information exchange aimed to elaborate and to make coordinated decisions in housing reforms;
- 3) coordinating of condominiums and housing owners' associations, non-governmental organizations dealing with housing problems in order to strengthen their positions in relationships with the state authorities;
- 4) when requested by the associations of condominiums and homeowners the executive authorities should provide any information they have in respect to the subjects of interaction, including personal initiative but taking into account the restrictions envisaged by the acting laws;

¹ The Concept for interaction of the state executive authorities of St. Petersburg with community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organization “Public Private Partnership” for 2008 – 2011.



- 5) arranging experience exchange activities among existing and new associations of condominiums, homeowners’ associations, building societies established with the assistance of executive authorities – holding of annual conferences; and,
- 6) assistance of executive authorities and local governments to associations of condominiums in holding of events, i.e. workshops, conferences.

4. Securing of the dialogue among executive authorities, local governments and the housing owner (condominiums, Associations of condominiums)

- 1) To improve administrative and legal conditions for development of the dialogue via:
 - activities aimed at improving of legal culture of leaders, members and shareholders of community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations;
 - establishing and securing operation of different councils and other advisory and consultative bodies under the jurisdiction of state executive authorities involving representatives of community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations;
 - improving of the available and elaboration of new regulatory legal acts regulating interaction of the state executive authorities of St. Petersburg with community organizations and other non-governmental non-profit organizations.
- 2) to organize events jointly held by the Housing Committee involving local governments and existing associations and condominiums both in the city in general and separately in the administrative districts of the city;
- 3) participation of representatives of the authorities executive (Housing Committee of St. Petersburg, administration of Domodedovo) in the events held by municipal institutions and associations of condominiums;
- 4) to set up a database of existing and newly established condominiums both in the administrative districts and the city in general;
- 5) to set up a database of the situation and development dynamics of the housing sector in the city;
- 6) using of Internet facilities and mass media by local and state authorities to build up a dialogue with local community;
- 7) to develop multilateral contacts of civil society organizations with regional non-governmental organizations of the Russian Federation and foreign countries;
- 8) innovation forms of public involvement: public forums, public expertise and community monitoring;
- 9) to initiate and support (mediation, negotiations, support in conflicts resolution and etc.) training programmes, including methodical publications on analysis and resolution of conflicts for chairmen of the associations and condominiums, managing organizations;

It is necessary to improve feedback mechanisms and representation of homeowners’ interests through local self-government bodies and condominiums’ associations in relationships with authorities.



5. Key activity areas of the state executive authorities (the Housing Committee) of St. Petersburg and Domodedovo aimed at improving of the involvement mechanisms/ feedback

Activities of state executive authorities as to development of the dialogue with community organizations in the sphere of housing and communal reforms are designed:

- to arrange and to conduct efficiency researches of premises owners' interaction with executive authorities and local governments;
- to set up a database of condominiums and housing owners' associations;
- to set up a database of managing companies registered and functioning in accordance with the procedure established by the Law;
- to render support to coordination of the available housing owners' associations;
- to form quality criteria for services supplied by the managing agencies and condominiums, building societies and housing owners' associations.

Special consideration is given to:

- Peopleware in housing sector reforms, professional development and raising competence of condominiums and housing owners' associations managers, leaders of managing companies, officials of executive authorities and local governments
- elaboration and running of scientific, methodical and educational programmes on housing laws and multiple dwelling management practices;
- introduction of direct and correspondence training forms for experts and further training programmes with advanced methods of distant learning that would include lectures and practical parts;
- development of co-operation with institutions of higher education of St. Petersburg and Moscow region (Domodedovo) for the purpose of training programmes elaboration, to involve teaching staff to deliver lectures and practical trainings for specific target groups held by the associations of condominiums and executive authorities; to train staff for working with citizens and non-governmental organizations; to train state and municipal officials working skills and practices of partnership with citizens.

Development of the dialogue is secured via improving of managerial and legal conditions of the dialogues and promotion of mechanism for interaction of the state executive authorities of Domodedovo and St. Petersburg with civil society institutes and is achieved through:

- Elaboration and introduction of information and telecommunication technologies into awareness raising of population in St. Petersburg and Domodedovo of housing sector reforming and participation of the housing owner in this process
- to form an integrated database system of housing laws and regulations;
- to compile a catalogue of printed matters and specific websites of St. Petersburg Government, its executive authorities, local governments, housing owners' associations and its dissemination in the city in order to achieve general awareness of citizens (e.g. website of St. Petersburg Government «Information



for citizens», «Citizens’ appeals» and “The guide”- where and what information can be traced);

- to develop an independent municipal information and analytical portal “condominium”, for instance, on the basis of the Association “Housing complex” dedicated to the issues of condominiums’ activity, legal situations, case studies from court practice of condominiums’ activity, contractual relationships with suppliers of public utilities, best practices of the most successful condominiums and etc.;
- to create and maintain homepages of the housing owners’ associations;
- assistance provided by the executive authorities in arranging of radio and TV broadcasts that would cover the housing reforming process, problems in establishment and functioning of condominiums in the form of recurrent programmes and direct radio and TV channels for interviews and open “question-response” channel with participation of executive authorities, public, housing owners and etc.

6. Expected outputs

Realization of the present Concept of the future dialogue will allow to stir up the institutionalization process of civil society and its self-organization, to secure development of public self-administration and public control mechanisms, increase efficiency of interaction between the state authorities and community organizations or other non-governmental non-profit organizations that would have positive impact on the social service quality supplied to the residents of St. Petersburg and Domodedovo.

