

Projekty lokalne i regionalne – interesariusze projektu

Redakcja naukowa

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w Katowicach

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Mainstreaming of Information and Communication Technologies' Application as Precondition for Successful Implementation of Ukrainian Micro-Regions Public Projects: Scientific Approach

The effectiveness of the work towards successful realization of public projects demands introduction of various advanced technologies for microregions. In particular, the use of information and communication technologies should be aimed at improving external communication process of local government with the public. This will ensure the mutual exchange of information between the microregions and communities, enhance civic participation in addressing local development and, consequently, to monitor the activities of local authorities as regulation actors of microregions.

Multiaspects studies of the characteristics of design techniques application, including in the local government, were covered in research of foreign scientists, in particular, H. Brandenburg¹, J. Esquierro et al.², V. Trillenberg³, as well as domestic ones: S. Bushuyev⁴, G. Minayeva⁵, A. Chemerys⁶, I. Chykarenko⁷, Yu. Sharov⁸ and others.

¹ H. Brandenburg, *Zarządzanie lokalnymi projektami rozwojowymi jako element realizacji strategii rozwoju miasta* [w:] F. Kuźnik (red.), *Studia regionalne w Polsce: teoria, polityka, projektowanie*, publikacja jubileuszowa dedykowana profesorowi Andrzejowi Klasikowi. Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Katowice 2005; H. Brandenburg, *Zarządzanie lokalnymi projektami rozwojowymi*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach, wyd. 3, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach, Katowice 2011.

² J.C. Esquierro, A.B. Valle, C.A. Pereira Soares, D.C. Vivas, *Implementation of a Project Management Office in a Public Sector Organization: A Case Study Involving a Sanitation Institution*, „International Review of Management and Marketing” 2014, Vol. 4, No. 1.

³ W. Trillenberg, *Project Management. Lectures and Seminars*, Ternopil: Economical Thought”, Ternopil 2001.

⁴ S. Bushuyev, *Methodology of Project Management as Universal Knowledge model* [in:] S. Bushuyev, N. Bushuyeva, *Project Management and Production Development*, Collection of Scientific Works No. 4(8), Lugansk 2003, p. 5-12.

⁵ G. Minayeva, *Management of the Project Activities of Local Governments to Strengthen the Infrastructure of the Territory*, „Theory and Practice of State Management: Scientific Specialized Edition” 2011, Issue 3 (34).

⁶ A. Chemerys, *Development and Project Management in the Public Sector: European Dimension for Ukraine: practical „Support of decentralization in Ukraine – DESPRO”*, DESPRO, Kyiv 2012.

⁷ I. Chykarenko, *Portfolio Approach to Project Management, Adaptation to the Sphere of Municipal Management*, „Public Administration: Theory and Practice” electronic scientific specialized

Features of formation of external communication processes (PR) for state authorities were investigated by N. Zrazhevskaya⁹, I. Vasylenko¹⁰, L. Gordiyenko¹¹ and others.

The study aims to identify and analyze features of information and communication technologies use as an important tool of project management in local government and enhance opportunities for its implementation.

Grass-roots territorial units, not having their own potential great enough for development, tend to more powerful center, creating microregion. Microregion as a functional association provides more opportunities to each of its members through achieving cumulative and synergistic effect of joint accumulation of all kinds of resources.

Determination of arguments for positioning and consideration of township Vyshnivets, Zbarazh district, Ternopil region of Ukraine (hereafter, Vyshnivets) as microregion, justifying the importance of regionalization of socio-environmental and economic policies and implementation of appropriate regulatory influences allowed to choose this place for the object of study.

Vyshnivets is known as the town where one of the historical monuments of Ukraine – Vyshnivets Palace is situated.

In addition, here is another general information for reference: *

- Citizens – approximately 4.000 people.
- Location – 309 m above sea level.
- Horyn river runs on the outskirts of the town, it is a tributary of the Pripjat river.
- Geographic location: 50 km to Ternopil (Regional center), 30 km to Zbarazh (District center), 20 km to the city of Kremenets (city of regional significance), 16 km to railway station (Karnachivka).

The road of regional significance runs through the town. Territorial location and transport connection of Vyshnivets are presented on Figure 1.

edition 2009, Issue 1 (1), http://128-56.dbuapa.dp.ua/zbirnik/2009-01/Chikarenko_IStat.pdf (accessed: 16.05.2017).

⁸ Yu. Sharov, *Strategic Planning in Municipal Management: Conceptual Aspects*, Publishing House UADU, Kyiv 2001.

⁹ N. Zrazhevskaya, *Communication Technologies: Lectures*, Cherkasy: Brama-Ukraine, 2010, http://eprints.cdu.edu.ua/241/1/Зражевська_Н._І._курс_лекцій_комунікаційні_технології.pdf (accessed: 16.05.2017).

¹⁰ I. Vasylenko, *Administrative State Management in Western Countries: USA, Great Britain, France, Germany*, Publishing «Logos», Kyiv 2000.

¹¹ L. Gordiyenko, *Administrative Management/Lectures*, KhNEU, Kharkiv 2005, http://globalteka.ru/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=304&Itemid=56 (accessed: 16.05.2017).

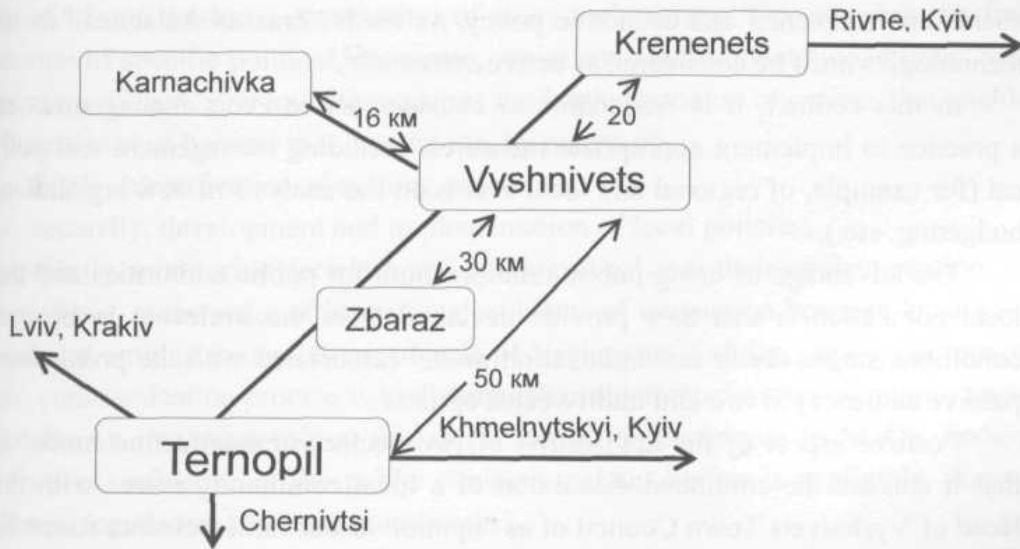


Figure 1. Territorial location and transport connection of Vyshnivets

According to statistics, there are 69 subjects of business (small enterprises, private enterprises, entrepreneurs). Large companies: none. Historical sites: Vyshnivets castle, church.

Since Vyshnivets is a relatively intact reproductive social, ecological and economic system, which stands out for its economic and geographical location, the complex natural, material, labor, financial resources, and is the primary economic constituency by further splitting of which these features are lost and characterized by very low levels of development, we will consider Vyshnivets as problematic microregion.

The external communication process (PR) of state authority bodies as subjects of development regulation of this microregion, should include: the formation of information-communication provision, the implementation of information, promotional and instructional activities, implementation of consultancy activities, conducting outreach and others. The information that is the basis of this communication process can be seen in such aspects as: achievement of public service, political instrument of authorities, management technology.

Public relations have to play an important role in the implementation of local state policy, as under condition of informing of relevant audiences about the nature of policy tools used by these authorities, provide greater efficiency of their work. For example, communication technology as a social technology of impact on the community can be focused on enforcement of relevant target groups to be responsible for violations occurring in the implementation of local

social, environmental and economic policy. As the N. Zrazhevska states "social technologies must be considered as active systems"¹².

In this context, it is reasonable to consider active event management as a practice to implement appropriate measures, including management and political (for example, of regional and local events on the analysis of new legislation, budgeting, etc.).

The advantage of using public relations both for public authorities and the local population is that they provide deviation from the irrelevant in present conditions single-vector communication model (associated with the promotion, passive audience) to two and multi-vector options .

Positive aspect of the application of two-vector communication model is that it enables the continued discussion of a local community issues with the Head of Vyshnivets Town Council of as "opinion leader" and therefore forms its image.

The importance of the use of multilevel model is that the impact of all of regulation subjects of the microregion on the citizens characterized by interdependence and multi-vector features. This is a very important factor for the development and implementation of local environmental and socio-economic policy.

Channels and means of disseminating of information within the multi-vector model should include: production of internal corporate publications; formation of web-site of the Town Council; providing continuous content updates and bulletin boards; establishing feedback.

Moreover, model of arguing communication should be put as the basis to be used by local authorities, because it aims to obtain approval response from the audience and involves the following: defining the issues that are important to the population, identification of the parties' positions arguments, systematization and further grouping arguments as "pros" and "cons". This approach will provide higher efficiency of communication links in the system "subject of regulation – public", increase the probability of success in solving local problems in order to promote development of the local community, improve the image of local government. Moreover, in addition to public entities, the process of forming the image of local government should include: consumers of services; employees of these bodies; partners (e.g. resources providers); investors; housing entities.

Social, ecological and economic development of Vyshnivets as microregion needs the implementation of processes that provide welfare, improving the quali-

¹² N. Zrazhevska, *Communication...*, op. cit.

ty of life of the local community, of everyone's safety. This requires the formation of specific political, economic, social and environmental conditions. The creation of these prerequisites requires the implementation of actions that enable the removal of barriers that prevent this by means of:

- firstly, identification of existing problems;
- secondly, development and implementation of local policies;
- thirdly, monitoring decisions and public control over their implementation.

Thus, at the stage of identifying problems of interaction between local government entities as regulation subjects of Vyshnivets with the public, the role of the communication process is to distinguish problematic issues that require resolution. An important role at this stage should be discharged to NGOs. Today, however, influence of the public decision-making bodies is negligible, due to flawed legislative and legal framework.

In addition, public involvement in solving problems and providing of public projects implementation requires the formation of proper information management, which insufficient level led to the situation of extremely low awareness. Despite this, a thorough knowledge base for decision-making by local authorities and addressing local issues demands not only the collection and systematization, but proper interpretation of necessary data, as any management actions of local authorities are reflected in various aspects of life of Vyshnivets territorial community.

To confirm the abovementioned, we have analyzed the information practices of cooperation between local authorities in providing social services to the elderly people at the beginning of 2016 (after the local elections and the election of a new the Head of the town). For this, survey among 100 respondents was conducted, including senior citizens, on how they are informed about the system of social services and opportunities to influence it. This is due to the fact that Ukraine has a stable tendency to increase the proportion of people who need social protection, social assistance and social services. For the leveling of social risks local social assistance system should be able to respond quickly to people's needs. This, in turn, needs innovative approaches that expand the range of participants of service (service providers), appropriate information and communication, public relations and more.

Questionnaire form on public awareness of social services system and a real opportunity to influence it, offered to the respondents, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire form on public awareness of social services system and a real opportunity to influence it

No.	Question
1	Where, to your opinion, the residents of Vyshnivets get information about the work of local authorities (Town Council, the Head of the town) to address issues of social assistance? 1) local television 2) local radio transmission 3) local press 4) ads, information billboards, billboards on the territory of Vyshnivets 5) general meetings, public hearings, organized by local authorities 6) meetings with local representatives 7) systematic reports of Town Council's heads of divisions 8) placing information on the Internet 9) newsletters, brochures issued by the village council 10) the source of such information is absent at all
2	How do you think, to which extend most social assistance recipients influence the effectiveness of social services? 1) large; 2) small; 3) not exert any influence
3	Have you as social assistance recipients personally been involved in the implementation of public control over social services? 1) yes; 2) sometimes (rarely); 3) never
4	What measures, in your opinion, should be taken to improve the quality of social assistance, including public control and improvement of cooperation of public institutions with social services recipients in Vyshnivets?

Considering the possible impact on the state of social care in the Vyshnivets from the public including elderly people as potential recipients of social assistance, we find out to what extent, and how they receive information about the work of local authorities and social services.

Analysis of the results of our survey showed that 20,0% of respondents consider themselves sufficiently informed of such opportunities, not sufficiently – 37,7% of respondents, while the majority of respondents (42,3%) do not possess such information.

Television is considered to be the most popular source of information as to the social services in Vyshnivets by 74,9% of respondents. Second place (61,0%) holds local press.

Regarding the possible impact of Vyshnivets residents as recipients of social assistance to the efficiency of social services, the opinion of the respondents is the following: 9,2% of respondents believe that their impact is significant; 37,1% believe that this influence is negligible; 53,7% believe that they have no influence at all.

Answering the question on the possibility of recipients of social assistance in person participation in public control over social services, respondents were divided as follows. 8,8% of respondents were often involved in the implementation of public control of the government. 21,2% of respondents were occasional-

ly involved in public control – and 70,0% have never been introduced to the procedure of public control. Thus, we can conclude that the experience and skills to carry out public control over the activities of social services in the public is virtually absent.

Our greatest interest, as organizers of the survey, as well as the most respondents' had a question on what measures should be taken to improve the quality of social services, including through public control and improvement of cooperation of public institutions with social services.

We have received a number of practical and useful proposals that show real interest of most respondents to state of affairs in the field of social services and their desire to improve this condition. The majority of respondents expressed their opinion on the need for the modernization of the social assistance system towards improving its targeting, fairness and openness.

Therefore, the analysis of information practices among local public authorities in providing social services to elderly people indicates that such cooperation is being carried out. However, in the provision of social services to population, including elderly citizens, no united information database exists as well as coordination of activities of local government, local authorities and NGOs, which makes impossible the effective and targeted use of available resources. Clearly, this situation becomes a hindrance to review possibilities of territorial communities to become participants of the implementation of public projects.

In addition, the cooperation of local authorities in providing social services to elderly people is inert in terms of public relations. So, for example, at the local level it would be appropriate to adopt a Regulation on the system of cross-sector interaction between social services, non-governmental institutions and the public in the field of social assistance to vulnerable populations with the use, in particular, Internet and system of direct communication (written and by telephone). In this context it is also necessary to direct target efforts of public and charitable organizations on providing information, spiritual, intellectual support to citizens, engaging them in active social life.

Moreover, one would involve older people, active and viable disabled, etc., who are representing the interests of vulnerable groups to participate actively in the development of local social policy and implementation of public projects, ensuring proper representation in the various collegiate, consultative and working bodies formed with public authorities and independently. A transfer of consumers of social services and representatives of socially vulnerable groups from objects to the subjects of social benefits by stimulating social activity would be also a positive aspect for local authorities in the social sphere.

Regarding environmental protection, it is important to point out that as according to the results of 2015, local authorities become more active on covering materials on environmental issues in the media. So, if 14 items were published in 2014; there were 21 publications in 2015. Definitely there is a tendency of increasing the coverage of environmental issues in the media, particularly on the radio. There is an annual intensification of work: 15,9% in 2014 and up to 46,1% in 2015 (chain growth rate).

The tools of communication with the public, which can be used by Vyshnivets subjects of regulation at the stage of identifying development problems and prepare for the implementation of public projects are the following:

- 1) direct providing of information by local representatives, authorities and officials of local government to population (on the state of implementation of local policies addressing social, economic and environmental issues). In this case, the information submitted must meet the following requirements:
 - be directly related to the interests of the local community and its members (those interests should be identified through a sociological survey);
 - be essential for the development of the territorial community of Vyshnivets;
 - play a significant role in ensuring the proper life of certain categories or groups (for example, retired persons, youth);
 - be comprehensive and all-encompassing that will allow the targeting of citizens' appeals and thoroughness of responses. Data on the outcome of requests for public information received by Town Council of Vyshnivets during 2013-2015 years indicates that there has been a tendency to increase the number of requests during this period as a whole, and in terms of sources of income. Thus, compared with 2013 in 2014 and 2015 the number of requests increased by 2.73 and 3.18 times respectively. The number of requests received from individuals (from 17 in 2013 to 59 and 80 in 2014 and 2015 respectively) is characterized as sustainable growth.

All requests during 2013-2015 years were considered in the legally stipulated period for information requests and were answered. For 92% of requests the answers were given within 5 days, and the failure rate was 3%.

Analysis of the issues raised in the appeals by citizens, shows that the largest share of them took the appeal associated with social protection of citizens.

In the years of 2013-2015 unsystematic measures to create a system of keeping public information of Vyshnivets Town Council were carried out. However, by now an integrated accounting system of public information has not been elaborated, which is a significant drawback in the work of local authorities.

Monitoring of public information and work with public inquiries of Vyshnivets Town Council show that in 2015 this local authority received two requests from citizens (individuals), which were affected by the issue that is not within its competence due to the current legislation. In addition, 7 requests were asking to solve a problem or provide a recommendation, including 5 of these people who had a personal appointment with the Head of the town.

- 2) representing (coverage) of Vyshnivets Town Council and its Head's work in the media (for example, through annual statements of the Head to the local community and his/her written public report on the findings for the year);
- 3) access for local people to the documents adopted by the Town Council and its executive committee, local regulatory acts;
- 4) establishment of the information center of Town Council, where the territorial community residents could get information on the resolution of issues concerning local life, and which would provide information and advertising, work with information materials (newsletters, postcards, etc.), along with their distribution.

Using of these communication tools by regulative actors of Vyshnivets will provide both parties with the following benefits:

- establishment of partnerships between local authorities, which are subject to regulation of Vyshnivets as microregion;
- improvement of preparation and decision-making process through the most complete reflection of the interests of the territorial community and the needs of local residents;
- increase of the activity of the inhabitants of Vyshnivets;
- due to feedback, tracking and evaluating the reaction of the local population to the actions of local governments, local government system will be more focused and strategically oriented, turns to opportunities for both personal development and socio-ecological-economic development of Vyshnivets as microregion.

The tools of communication with the public, which can be used by the subjects of regulation of Vyshnivets at the stage of formulation and implementation of local policies are:

- 1) holding public meetings with media representatives, discussing issues of local politics, work of public authorities as subjects of regulation of Vyshnivets;
- 2) active public discussion of draft legislation, governing the implementation of local policies (through publication in a newspaper or Town Council official issue, publication on the website);
- 3) cooperation with research institutions and experts;

- 4) creation of an Internet resource of Vyshnivets Town Council (official site);
- 5) consulting service to individuals and legal entities that are participants of the formation and implementation of local development policies, and are active in such development;
- 6) formalizing in local legal acts (Charter of territorial community, Town Council regulations) of the principle of "adaptation of information to different population categories" (this will eliminate such negative characteristics information as biased and incomplete, will provide its closeness to the individuals).

Regarding tools of communication with the public during the implementation of decisions and monitoring and control phase of their execution, it is interesting to outline distinguished by I. Vasylenko communications which are included in the decision-making process: joint discussion, identification of community in the process of thinking during the discussion, which is the stage of gathering information. This stage is based on statistical, survey, results of interviews on social aid project groups, on the results of meetings and monitoring¹³.

Formalizing in the local legal acts (Charter of territorial community, Town Council regulations) of the principle of "adaptation of information to different population categories" will create conditions for greater protection of citizens as the members of local community. This, for now, is very important, because of the current local policies as well as practices, public relations; promote deterioration of public security that is associated with the potential threat from the public authorities in terms of instability and inconsistency of social, economic and environmental policies, ambiguity of certain procedures for them. Also, a major problem is a large number of legal acts which regulate the conducting of these policies and often contain inconsistencies, duplicate the functions of local government, and not clearly define their responsibilities.

Thus, among the instruments of communication with the public, which can be used by subjects of regulation of Vyshnivets at the stage of decision-making, monitoring and public control over their performance are:

- cooperative discussion of local authorities and the population of the territorial community main issues of microregion development;
- assessment of the quality of the content at the official website of Town Council that characterizes the work conducted by Town Council and its Chairman;
- assessment of satisfaction of town residents with adopted decisions of local authorities and the services provided;

¹³ I. Vasylenko, *Administrative...*, op. cit.

- public assessment of public participation in the management of microregion;
- assessment of human rights realization.

Effective work to attract public to cooperation with authorities as subjects of regulation of Vyshnivets requires overcoming the following obstacles:

- average citizens are not always informed about the different forms and mechanisms of public participation in solving problems at local level;
- insufficient or distorted information may affect the choice of the public as to the ways of solving relevant problems.

Removing these obstacles should be done through the introduction of information and communication technologies as a prerequisite for the successful implementation public projects by microregion.

In current conditions, the role of new information and communication technologies is growing, development of which is aimed at:

- emergence of powerful personal computers and the possibility of unification of network (local and global);
- establishment of joint networks of public authorities;
- use of information technology as a means of providing communications (video conferencing, email, etc.)
- creation of integrated databases that are used at different levels of management by public authorities;
- IT support of processes of providing services (such as process of automation of manufacturing services).

Two classes of information technologies (traditional information technology and computerized information technology) used by public authorities, are characterized as follows. Traditional systems include simple information systems (IS). For local government it enables observation of processes taking place inside it, and in its external environment, and usage of this information to perform the functions assigned to it by the state. For example, the traditional information technology is used in the work of public authorities for monitoring the employees' work.

Traditional systems also include information on paper data storage. They allow to: store information, provide easy access to it, track the movement of sensitive information (e.g. through instructional materials, minutes of meetings, service records, etc.).

Computerized information technologies as a part of the information environment determine the state of formation and use of information as an important resource and ensure its protection.

Using communication technologies in public authorities' administrative management can get the following benefits:

- improving the performance of public authorities and administration of them;
- ensuring the transparency of their activities.

There are five functions of computerized information technologies: operational, monitoring, maintenance of management decisions, communication and expert ones. According to these functions same name systems are created (Table 2).

Table 2. Functions of computerized informational technologies in the context of systems that provide their implementation

Function	Feature
Operational	Software that provides in due course implementation of operations and allows the authorities to get the desired result. It is based on the electronic exchange of information data.
Monitoring	The computer system that is designed for data processing and the provision of consumer information on the manufacturing process of services by a public authority.
System of ensuring of decision making process	The computerized system used in the preparation and decision making process.
System of knowledge	The system, which operates using a logic in the preparation and adoption of expert solutions.
Communication systems	Systems that ensure the operation of internal communications and public authority communication with the external environment (e.g., e-mail).

Source: Formed by the author with the use of L. Gordiyenko, *Administrative management/Lectures*, KhNEU, Kharkiv, 2005, http://globalteka.ru/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=304&Itemid=56 (accessed: 16.05.2017).

Regarding the functions of computerized information technologies in the framework of systems which provide their performance, it is important to single out the advantages of Vyshnivets communication technologies. To ensure the provision of personalized service, the local government should allow access to information and services through a single, integrated source. This will enable the local community to demonstrate their own attitude to local authorities, identify their needs and expectations. As a benefit local community will participate more actively in the democratic process as they will have access to public information.

Reasons which predetermine the importance and need for intensification of the use of information and communication technologies as a prerequisite for the successful implementation by Vyshnivets as microregion public projects in a dynamic environment are:

- 1) the need for domestic electronic document and automatization of the process of database elaboration, email systems for both internal control activities (of

the local government, its departments and officials) and external ones (from the public).

- 2) the need for a unified register of electronic public services, the promotion of e-government and shaping the culture of consumption of electronic services among citizens;
- 3) the importance of using the communicative potential as a resource for performance of the functions assigned to Vyshnivets Town Council by the state. For example, the main task of the information service of the public authority should be communicative potential use as a resource of local policies, training and decision-making, as well as preparation of information basis to implement public projects.

In this context, it is advisable to use the following approaches for the implementation of local government information technology to solve this problem and improve the administration of its work in general:

- 1) the importance of using the communicative potential as a resource for the performance of the functions assigned to Vyshnivets Town Council by the state. For example, the main task of the information service of the public authority should be communicative potential use as a resource for local policy, training and decision-making.

During the public consultation and public participation in the development of the local policy, Vyshnivets Town Council can use such forms of modern communications: public hearings, round tables, videoconferences, polls.

The use of information technologies while conducting local government public debate should provide support for dialogue with the public through the Internet, the use of multimedia applications, the use of special instructional and teaching materials.

- 1) the necessity of control over the inner work of Vyshnivets Town Council, monitoring its process;
- 2) the need for the implementation of official and public control over local authorities.

Thus, based on the abovementioned, increasing of the amount of information which Vyshnivets Town Council operates, the importance of its adequate assessment and application within the benefit of microregion and its territorial communities, require mainstreaming the information and communication technologies use as a prerequisite for the formation of this microregion's effective local policies and successful implementation of public projects.

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