Providing Public Services in Social Sphere of the Republic of Kazakhstan: World Practice

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Abstract: Now Kazakhstan is implementing the policy of open trade with broadening world markets and is going to join WTO in order to obtain advantage of access to modern technologies. The necessity of introduction of serious changes into the system of public services to improve the level of state management and quality of services provided is understood as a strategic aim of our state. By now we achieved some results in reformation of public services sector, regulatory framework has been adopted, status, duties and rights of state employees have been defined, authorities of state bodies have been definitely stated. Introduction of electronic government, standards in providing public services will allow to accelerate the process of joining of Kazakhstan to WTO, create favourable conditions for effective development of economic relations between Kazakhstan and leading economically developed countries. Use of world practice in the sphere of state regulation will form pre-conditions for increase in competitiveness of national entrepreneurs both in the internal and external markets

Key words: Kazakhstan • Public services • World practice • Social development

INTRODUCTION

Social and economic changes performed in Kazakhstan and aimed for formation and development of market relations determine the necessity of reforms in the system of underlying principles of formation of state regulation of social processes. Problem of reformation of social development must be solved in the context of search for common regional model of economic development in general. World practice is of utter importance: while using this accumulated experience problems of social development can be solved stage by stage.

Today's situation in Kazakhstan and its separate regions’ economy is to a some extent the consequence of crisis of state administration system which led to the loss of such dynamic characteristics as steadiness and balanced character. All this resulted in unique character of regional situations, difficulties in use of world practice in order to solve regional problems. In this regard the absence of certainty in state regulation of territorial development worsens regional conditions, hinders formation of effective territorial structure [1].

By now public services on regional level are not supported by resource base, mechanisms and principles which should provide for opportunity for creation of conditions for steady, balanced and socially-oriented territorial development. Such aims (principles) can be presented by the following functional areas of focus:

- Regulation of territorial development must be oriented to formation of social infrastructure, corresponding both to the complex of available conditions of development and the aims of reforms;
- Specific features of a region must be taken into consideration;
- Mechanisms of agreement of interests of the subjects of regulation must be formed;
- Tasks of regulation of social infrastructure development must be reasoned focusing on social component of development as well as financial and resource potential of the region.

We understand regulation of public services in social sphere as specially organized systematic actions for providing of steady and balanced functioning of social
infrastructure industries aimed to improve the life level of population [2]. Thus, one of the characteristics of the system of state regulation of social infrastructure development in the region must be support of mile-stones which are the factor of positive dynamics of life level.

World Practice in Reformation of Public Services Sphere: World practice has shown that reformation of public services is a part of more complex reforms of administration in state sector. Our analysis was aimed to establish main reasons, trends, approaches to implementation of reforms in such countries as Great Britain, the USA, Australia, Canada, Germany, Malaysia.

Comparative analysis of the reasons of reforms in state sector in different countries performed by World Bank in the framework of investigation of international experience in implementation of the administrative reform [3] has demonstrated that the reasons (motives) for the administrative reform and the state service reform were the wish to reduce state expenditure, increase effectiveness of political decisions and reinforce population and private sector’s trust in government.

Main approaches and principles of world practice are as follows:

- Reforms were carried out in accordance with distinctly formulated principles;
- Leadership in carrying out of reforms is laid upon state body of high level which was subordinate directly to the President or the Government;
- Implementation of the reforms is followed by establishment of wide network of research, consultancy, training and other supporting structures;

Identification of principles is one of the key elements in the process of creation of effective system of public services. Principles must correspond to the tasks and aims of the strategy of reforms in state sector. For example, in Great Britain implementation of reforms in public services sector started with elaboration of the strategy of modernization of state management [4]. The following principles were chosen as the base of this strategy:

- Development and implementation of national-wide standards;
- Giving more authorities to executive power bodies;
- More flexibility in providing of services: specific features and needs of the consumers must be taken into consideration;
- Opportunity for a consumer to choose the place and the provider of the service: it leads to increase in quality of services [5].

Thus, achievement of desirable results in the process of reformation of state sector to a great extent is determined by proper task-setting and choice of principles corresponding to these tasks.

In the USA the responsibility for development of concrete recommendations on increase of quality of state services was laid upon inter-departmental commission which dealt with re-forming of state institutions. This body included 250 state officers of high rank on federal and regional levels and independent experts [6].

In Poland the issues of reformation of state administration are coordinated by Governmental Authorized Officer from the Prime Minister Office. Functions of this body are as follows: development of strategic directions of the reforms in the sphere of state administration and control over their implementation as well as carrying out of privatization and international aid coordination [7].

Thus, world practice demonstrated that all countries considered the reforms of state administration to be of utter importance and assumed that coordination of this process must be done on the highest level. While doing the reform of public services, in order to achieve steady results, it is necessary to develop simultaneously appropriate elements of infrastructure to support the system of provision of public services.

In foreign countries such organizations function on the base of the following principles: maximal correspondence to the needs of consumers, professionalism in activity management and provision of services; steady character of the results, practical benefit from their activity.

For example, in Canada call-centers "1-800 Canada" operate which provide population with information on where and when specific service can be obtained. These centers are located in the buildings of state offices all over the country. Besides provision of consulting service these centers provide many services for entrepreneurs and operate in the "one-stop principle" [8].

In Germany the Program of electronic government "Bund Online"-2005 has been developed. Updated information technologies are aimed for improvement of providing with public services [9]. In Federal Government there are 170 kinds of services which are provided through Internet. Special attention is paid to simplification of procedures of registration of small and medium businesses.
In Malaysia reforms on implementation of e-public services are carried out by MAMPU, a part of Prime-Minister Office. These reforms are aimed for achievement of effective coordination between different offices and within one office and granting easy access to public services for entrepreneurs and people [10].

Characteristic feature of reforms of public services in these countries is duration of this process. For example system of "Service Charter" initiated in Great Britain in 1991 was meant to last for 10 years but modification of separate components of this system is carried out by now. "First priority is customers" program adopted in the USA in 1993 is also being carried out at present time.

Analysis of Status Quo in Kazakhstan: As it was identified by preliminary analysis today in Kazakhstan there is no regulatory framework in regard to the standards of public services, there is no structure which must deal with these problems, no system researches have been carried out.

In 2003 by the initiative of the Agency in the framework of PROON project "Supporting reforms in state sector" an investigation and analysis were carried out intended for identification of current situation in the sphere of public services; the review of world practices of reforms, recommendations on updating of public services system were made [11].

The interview covered state employees in central and regional level, population, entrepreneurs. Quality of services was assesses by central state officers and local state officers in a different way: with local officers the proportion of good "grades" for public services was 43,5%; with central officers it was only 21,4%. This can be explained by the fact that most of the services are provided on local level. The answer to this question was regarded as assessment of their own work [11, 18].

Consumers’ opinion of the quality of services is quite the opposite: proportion of answers from entrepreneurs and population who gave unsatisfactory "grades" (42, 9%) is much higher than the proportion of answers from local state employees (13,3%) [11, 23-25].

This difference in evaluation can be interpreted as follows: most of state offices do not pay attention to such parameters as the price of service and do not think that this factor influences the quality of services.

World practice suggests that quality of public services depends on the number of state employees operating in the sphere of provision of such services. In Kazakhstan the number of state employees can not be assessed correctly. It is worth mentioning that opinion of state employees who work in different levels of state bodies do not differ greatly in regard to this issue. In their turn, entrepreneurs and population (34%) believe that the number of state employees is too big. This probably can be explained by established practice of public services when for solution of very simple problem the consumers of services must address a great number, as they think, of state employees. Only 13,6% of respondents expressed opinion that information in the documents with which they dealt is stated distinctly and can be easily understood. 80,3% of respondents pointed out to their unsatisfaction with the quality of documents regulating the order of service provision.

Comparison of opinions of state employees of executive bodies of different levels allows to conclude that on local level most part of respondents point out to great amount of work as the main obstacle to service provision (35, 2%).

The answers demonstrate that there exist too main groups of problems: imperfection of laws at force and absence of appropriate information-inquiry support of the system of public services. Special attention must be paid to the problem of systematic study of needs of public services’ consumers. Examples from world practice can be given how in the processes of updating of public services system many countries were aiming for more flexibility and orientation of state bodies to service consumers. In order to achieve this aim the key factor was provision of information about activity of state bodies, standards of services provided by them and practical use of feedback to monitor the quality of services. Chosen by these countries approach side by side with other measures facilitated increase in effectiveness of public services system in general.

Recommendation on how to improve public services system in Kazakhstan.

The principles are based on the problems mentioned above and are as follows:

The principle of orientation to the customer. Service providers must fulfill specific requirements. Firstly, they must understand the needs and expectations of the consumers in regard to quality of services, their price, the order and time of their provision. Secondly, the system of indicators must be developed to assess consumers' satisfaction with service quality. Thirdly effective management system to control process of interaction of state employees and the consumers of services must be established.

The principle of information support of the consumer. This means organization of constantly functioning system of information support which must engage different sources of information: mass media, ICT (information and
communication technologies) etc. This must provide for availability of information and regular information support of the consumers about organizations providing specific kinds of services.

The principle of the least efforts. This suggests maximal simplification of the procedure of providing public services. The procedures must be simple, understandable and therefore reliable. In other words every action must engage as little resources and time as possible.

**Inference:** The sphere of public services, study of world practices and analysis of current state of the system of public services in the Republic of Kazakhstan allow to define the following paths of reforms of public services system:

- Formation of the quality increase strategy in provision of public services as a part of the general strategy of administration reform in Kazakhstan;
- Identification of the authorized body responsible for realization of the strategy of improvement of the quality of public services;
- Updating of regulatory framework which regulate procedures of public services;
- Development of appropriate infrastructure (creation of information centers, data bases in regard to public services) in order to improve information support of potential consumers about public services and the order of their provision;
- Improvement of effectiveness of state service thanks to corruption elimination, increase in responsibility and accountability of state employees; elimination of bureaucracy and reduction of length of procedures.

While implementing the reform in public services sphere appropriate elements of infrastructure and support must be developed. Such infrastructure suggests organization of office and institution network which facilitate provision of public services, through carrying out of investigations, formation of information data bases, consultancies and training both state employees and consumers.

**CONCLUSION**

As it follows from the study we are supposed to do much work in the sphere of development and implementation of the standards of public services. In the West such process started more than 20 years ago and lasts till present time.

Main task for Kazakhstan in our opinion is changing of mentality of state employees in all levels who must understand that their duties are not to order and command but to provide services for main consumer - population, who pays for salaries of state employees. By experts' estimates 58.8% of Kazakhstan people can not use computer, therefore the citizens in any region are not kept well-informed etc.

By now the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the affairs of state service is doing an analysis of services provided locally and in central governmental level. The results of this analysis will be submitted to appropriate state bodies in order to identify further measures in this sphere. Introduction of the standards of provision of public services, orientation of activity of state employees to the consumers of services will require higher abilities to work with population.

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