

# Staffing of sustainable rural development project management

## Dotación de personal de gestión sostenible en proyectos de desarrollo rural

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### Content

- [1. Introduction](#)
  - [2. Methods](#)
  - [3. Results](#)
  - [4. Discussion](#)
  - [5. Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

#### ABSTRACT:

The research studies staffing of sustainable rural development project management. In this article, the authors summarize and systematize problems of implementing the state personnel policy of the Russian Federation with regard to sustainable rural development. Fewer than 15% of current municipal officers have specialized education in State and Municipal Management. Public offices in local governments are mainly held by specialists in humanitarian, social and allied areas: economists, lawyers, teachers, sociologists, agrarians, mathematicians, engineers, specialists in natural sciences, military officers. It is impossible to transfer to the project management of agricultural economy strategic development without skilled staffing of the system of state and municipal administration. Grand-scale socio-economic transformations provide for a continuous drift of skilled project management specialists, rural local government authorities inclusive. The authors offer to improve the education program approach focused on mastering technologies of municipal project management taking into account the peculiarities of rural areas in compliance with modern demands placed on the quality of education of such managers and specialists.

#### RESUMEN:

Los estudios de investigación de la gestión de proyectos de desarrollo rural sostenible. En este artículo, los autores Resumen y sistematizan los problemas de aplicación de la política estatal de personal de la Federación de Rusia con respecto al desarrollo rural sostenible. Menos del 15% de los actuales funcionarios municipales cuentan con una formación especializada en gestión estatal y municipal. Las oficinas públicas en los gobiernos locales son principalmente de especialistas en áreas humanitarias, sociales y aliadas: economistas, abogados, profesores, sociólogos, agrónomos, matemáticos, ingenieros, especialistas en Ciencias naturales, oficiales militares. Es imposible transferir a la gestión de proyectos de desarrollo estratégico de la economía agrícola sin personal cualificado del sistema de administración estatal y municipal. Las transformaciones socioeconómicas a gran escala proporcionan una deriva continua de especialistas en gestión de proyectos calificados, autoridades de gobiernos locales rurales inclusive. Los autores se ofrecen para mejorar el enfoque del programa educativo enfocado a dominar las tecnologías de gestión de proyectos municipales teniendo en cuenta las peculiaridades de las zonas rurales en cumplimiento de las exigencias modernas puestas en la calidad de la

**Keywords:** state personnel policy, education programs, professional development, specialized department, Master's program, municipal management, sustainable rural development project management.

**Palabras clave:** educación de tales gerentes y especialistas, programas de educación, desarrollo profesional, departamento especializado, programa de maestría, gestión municipal, gestión sostenible de proyectos de desarrollo rural.

## 1. Introduction

Growing globalization, improved communications and reduced transport costs determine new challenges in rural development. Rural areas face the problems of population ageing, high migration, and bad infrastructure resulting in the reduction of possibilities of efficient state management and business development. Thus, it is needed to re-analyze the role of rural areas in the frames of modern economy and to find ways for their efficient development (Sharkov & Rudoi, 2015; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016b; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2015a; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2015b; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014a; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014b; Papelo, & Kovtun 2015).

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) experts note the increasing productivity gap between the regions inside the country, as well as its consequences for well-being in different regions, in their report *Regional Outlook – 2016*. The Outlook shows the influence of the structural policy, state investments and multilevel management reforms on productivity, studies different types of rural areas and tendencies in labour productivity increase, and, what is the most important, it underlines one key aspect that countries transfer to the "agricultural policy 3.0" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016b).

These facts determine the topicality of improving the training and career development system for local government authorities and rural economy. The efficiency of the existing system of municipal officers training and professional development in Russia is less than 50%. Almost 90% municipal officers attend short-term courses, but they do not get any useful knowledge and skills in the process of professional development (Butashin, 2016; Research Materials of the All-Russian Council of Local Government in "Local government staffing", 2014; Merkulov & Karadzhova 2015).

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## 2. Methods

The goal of the research is to elaborate methodological backgrounds to form the staffing system of sustainable rural development management.

The object of the research is the rural management training and career development system.

The observation object is rural population, higher education establishments, and agricultural state governing bodies in the Novosibirsk Region.

The research involved general scientific methods: monographic, abstract-logical, system approach, etc.

Based on the monographic method, the authors substantiated the necessity of elaborating a mechanism that improves the efficiency of state and municipal management of rural socio-economic development.

Problems of sustainable rural development in the Russian Federation and staff training for rural local government authorities were defined by means of the abstract-logical method.

The behavior of key figures that characterize the number of workers in Novosibirsk Region, who held public offices and offices of the municipal service and got additional specialized education, as well as information on qualifications of municipal officers in the Siberian Federal District,

were found out by means of the statistic method.

Scientific works by local and foreign scientists on the topic concerned, regulatory and legislative acts of the Russian Federation form the theoretical and methodological basis.

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### **3. Results**

1. It should be noted that economic and financial performance of agricultural companies got a decisive importance in the industry with extension of market relations in Russia. Their analysis shows that the agricultural sector of the country has a lot of system problems, many of which continue to worsen. Namely, in spite of a multiple growth of budgetary subsidies (17.5 times since 2000 to 2014), one can see a fast increase in accounts payable per one agricultural organization, which within the period under review have reached an impracticable for an average farm value amounting to RUB 105.8 mln.
  2. The analysis of the labour market in the Siberian Federal District and qualified labour requirements showed a growing demand for experts in rural sustainable development management at the labour exchange. Thus, in the forecasted period 2016-2022 the highest labour requirements in Novosibirsk Region (if unskilled workers are excluded) are expected in agriculture and forestry – 18.5 thousand people (11.0%).
  3. The problem of training staff to manage sustainable rural development is rather multifaceted. First of all, rural areas need engineers and workers. The construction industry and the infrastructure complex are extremely sensitive to their shortage. Besides, the demand for qualified personnel is growing in the agriculture, housing-utility sphere.
  4. Taking into account that the government of the Novosibirsk Region has a grand background to organize Novosibirsk agglomeration and rural development strategizing, best practices of agricultural economy municipal management, as well as sufficient academic potential – it is offered to establish a specialized institute training specialists in municipal management to modernize the agricultural economy and to implement the Novosibirsk Region development strategies.
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### **4. Discussion**

#### **4.1. Problems of sustainable rural development in the Russian Federation**

In Russia there are 153.1 thousand rural settlements with population of 37.1 mln people. The number of rural settlements exceeds 80% of total municipal settlements. They are the main form of territorial organization of local government (The Federal Target Program "Sustainable Rural Development 2014-2017 and till 2020", 2013).

Under modern circumstances, solution of problems with regard to meeting crisis and reducing territorial imbalances in development of rural municipal settlements is crucial for sustainable rural development in Russia. The analysis shows that the main reasons for rural crisis continuation are imperfect economic relations between management levels, lack of favourable conditions to develop entrepreneurship, underdevelopment of local government, etc. (Adukova & Kolenchenko 2014).

The problems preventing transition to sustainable rural development are as follows:

- Underdevelopment and low diversification of the agricultural economy;
- High differentiation of people in different territories with regard to employment and earnings;
- Concentration of industrial potential, infrastructure in agglomerations at rather low development of periphery in terms of economic growth;
- Lack of development resources stipulated by low investment attractiveness of rural areas, especially remote territories;

- Insufficient use of the resource and natural potential of the territories with a view to develop economy, to form comfortable living, recreational and recovery environment;
- Lack of experts in production and managerial spheres under modern conditions in agribusiness and other branches of economy;
- In-house disunity in rural management;
- Ad-hoc sectoral agrarian approach to rural economic development;

Insufficient information and analytical support of managerial decisions in the sphere of territorial development management, etc. (Denisov 2013; Papelo & Kovtun 2016; Research Materials of the All-Russian Council of Local Government in "Local government staffing", 2014; Merkulov & Karadzhova 2015; Papelo & Kovtun 2016a; Papelo & Kovtun 2015; Papelo, Kovtun & Akberov 2014; Papelo & Kovtun 2016b; Papelo & Kovtun 2016c).

The rural economy has a detrimental effect on the social sphere of the countryside, where situation in some areas is not stabilized, but, on the contrary, is getting firmly worse. Especially unfavorable situation is in education, medicine, culture and recreation. For example, in 2014 a number of rural state general education institutions amounted to 45.4% as compared to 2000, culture and leisure establishments – 76.7%, public libraries – 79.1%, independent district hospitals – 2.9% (Adukova & Korsun 2016).

Solution of rural problems requires, first of all, a complex, program and goal-oriented approach to form an advanced staffing system for rural sustainable development.

## 4.2. The analysis of human resources in rural local government of Siberia

More than 30% population resides in rural areas of the Siberian Federal District of the Russian Federation. Thus, the efficiency of the rural economy exercises a dominant influence on local well-being.

The Siberian Federal District contains 4,191 municipalities. The average number of municipalities in the federal subject of the District: 262. The number of villages per 1 region: 11. The number of residents per 1 municipality: 4,720. The number of municipal officers in the District: 54,170 persons. And only 60% of them have higher education. 32% attended professional development courses (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Qualifications of municipal officers in the Siberian Federal District

Denomination	Siberian Federal District
Number of municipal officers, persons Including:	54,170
Higher education, %	65.8
Specialized secondary education, %	26.5
Secondary education, %	7.7
Record of work at the state and municipal service exceeding 5 years, %	56.1
Number of municipal officers per 1 municipality	12.93
	17,204

Number of municipal officers, who attended professional development courses, persons %	31.8
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For the last five years, 6,688 persons holding public offices and offices of the municipal service have got additional specialized education, including 132 persons (1.9%), who have got the professional retraining, 6,556 persons (98.1%) have attended professional development courses in the Novosibirsk Region. Obviously, under this approach prospects for solving a strategic mission on staff training to ensure advanced rural development are rather problematic as formal professional development does not solve a staff problem in rural areas (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Number of persons holding public offices and offices of the municipal service, who have got additional specialized education in the Novosibirsk Region

Denomination	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015, % to 2011
Number of employees	7,140	7,169	7,011	7,078	7,038	98.6
Among them persons, who got additional specialized education	1,045	1,173	1,343	1,715	1,412	135.1
including additional professional programs						
professional retraining	49	12	15	33	23	46.9
professional development	996	1,161	1,328	1,682	1,389	139.5

Thus, the implementation of the strategy of sustainable rural development requires a dynamic breakthrough both in the production and social sphere, and in the personnel policy. We think that rural staff training is to be one of priorities in the socio-economic development of most federal subjects in Siberia, and it should be implemented based on establishment of the system of advanced staffing for rural sustainable development.

### 4.3. Problems of staff training for rural local government

Not only economy, but also state bodies, municipalities are in desperate need of qualified specialists, particularly due to relevant reforms on a municipal level. In terms of professionalism, fewer than 15% of current municipal officers have specialized education in State and Municipal Management. The need in state and municipal officers' professional development is driven by the administrative reform, local government and state service reforms.

The analysis and monitoring of the social research, conducted by the All-Russian Council of Local Government on staff potential of local government, prove that municipalities of the Russian Federation suffer from a scarcity of professional local government. And while quantitative indices are more or less satisfactory – local government authorities are almost completely staffed in municipalities, quantitative indices give rise to unfavorable criticism. That's why it is appropriate to tell that local government is understaffed with skilled personnel. Staffing problems are urgent in villages. Here officers of local government demonstrate both a lower level of knowledge and lower sensitivity to legislative, socio-economic and political changes. They have a lower level of education, "elder" age composition with lower record of

work (employee turnover); fewer employees are trained, personnel reserve is formed not so active as in the other municipalities, and there are less legal grounds for that. The lack of people, constituting the personnel reserve, stipulates a deficit of succession candidates, who will be involved in work in the municipality in future (Research Materials of the All-Russian Council of Local Government in "Local government staffing", 2014).

Current problems in the sphere of local government:

- Low financial capacity of municipalities,
- Weak income basis of local budgets, disarray in local powers and their partial incompliance with local issues,
- Difficulties in cooperation with state regulatory bodies and in coordination with regional authorities,
- Unsatisfactory conditions for rendering municipal services to population, including access to interactive technologies that prevents effectiveness even of qualified and competent employees, and repels the youth from the municipal service (Adukova & Korsun 2016).

The existing training and career development system for public and municipal officers is rather formalized. Once per three years public officers are obliged to pass professional development courses, after which they get a relevant document. But very often officers come to education establishments not so much to get knowledge as to get a certificate.

Personnel departments send officers to education establishments and they come only "to close" a formal necessity for work. The majority of municipal officers are over 45 years old. They studied long time ago based on out-of-date education programs and methods. Besides, the groups are formed from officers from different spheres of activity.

Advanced training, re-training and career development methods for municipal officers are distributed inefficiently. The education system has no firm legislative grounds. Municipalities have no sufficient teaching staff and finances to train, re-train and improve skills of specialists (Research Materials of the All-Russian Council of Local Government in "Local government staffing", 2014).

So far the regions have no efficient staffing system for sustainable rural development. The results are as follows: the natural-resources and economic potential of rural territories is rather uncommitted due to many reasons, including the lack of professional personnel in local government and the drift of qualified workers from the land.

#### **4.4. The mechanism to improve efficiency of the state and municipal management of socio-economic rural development**

French experience has been used to improve the rural management system. The Interministerial Delegation of Land Planning and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR) plays an important role in developing and implementing the rural development policy. This is a permanent body of the Ministry of Territorial Development and Environmental Protection. It is at the intersection of branch ministerial policies and responsible for preparing decisions in territorial development state policy.

The National Rural Territorial Development Center (CNASEA) is established at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing of France and the Ministry of Professional Education and Employment of France. In fact, CNASEA is a large agency with the following main functions: elaboration of territorial development programs, management of budgetary funds and other facilities (regional, private, European) to finance development programs, land-use structuring, consultancies, technologies and microeconomic models, expertise. This agency has a network of branches in all administrative territories of the country (Rukin 2008).

The Siberian Federal District takes up 30% of the territory of Russia with the population of 19.312 mln persons as of January 1, 2015. The number of municipalities in the Siberian Federal District totals to 4,082, including: 319 municipal districts, 78 urban districts, 242 urban settlements, 3,444 rural settlements.

The advanced staffing model is worked through in order to ensure sustainable rural development in federal subjects of Siberian Federal District.

Specialists from the administration of Maslyaninsky District in Novosibirsk Region and scientists have developed a pilot project Municipal Management of Sustainable Development of Maslyaninsky District in Novosibirsk Region to increase the efficiency of municipal management, to strengthen cooperation of state authorities, local government authorities and business communities in terms of complex rural development. It has been implemented since 2006 with support from the regional government as a promising model of cooperation between state authorities and local government, institutes of business, science and education, public organizations and population based on public-private partnership with regard to implementation of sustainable rural development priorities on innovative basis and elaboration of mechanisms for attracting investments into the municipal economy (Papelo, & Kovtun, 2016; Papelo, Kovtun, & Akberov, 2014).

On the first stage, it is reasonable to form a system of target contract training of qualified specialists for municipal administration, who will participate both in elaboration of long-term strategies of sustainable socio-economic development of Novosibirsk agglomeration, rural areas and settlements, and in their implementation as municipal officers using innovative technologies and mechanisms of project management (program and goal-oriented planning, state and private partnership, etc.).

The target practice-oriented training is to be effected on the basis of Master's programs: Regional and Municipal Management of Economic Development, Project and Program Management and State and Municipal Financial Management (training period is 2-2.5 years based on Bachelor's degree or higher education).

It is offered to establish a specialized department Territorial Development Management at the government of the Novosibirsk Region.

Key goals of this department are as follows:

- To provide public sector of the economy with qualified personnel in state and municipal management of sustainable economic development of territories;
- To implement in education activities the latest achievements in the sphere of state management of advanced development territories and their investment attractiveness;
- To ensure professional orientation of students towards specialties that are in actual demand by a real economic sector in order to improve business climate;
- To develop and strengthen the scientific basis for generalizing and systematizing the best practices of state management and formation of investment environment.

These are the main activities of the specialized department:

- To conduct training events, master classes by governmental officials from the Novosibirsk Region in cooperation with teachers from the specialized department in terms of different activities in the frames of Master's program;
- To conduct joint scientific and applied researches, experience sharing events with regard to implementation of road maps for improving business environment, training of officials in terms of best practices of investment climate state management;
- To organize and conduct scientific, scientific and practical and professional-oriented events (conferences, seminars, symposiums, fairs) with regard to cooperation issues;
- To provide the Masters with possibilities to do all kinds of practices (training, production, predegree, organization-managerial, scientific-research, etc.) on the basis of the government of the Novosibirsk Region;
- To render consulting and practical assistance to the Masters in writing the graduation thesis (Master's thesis);
- To inform and to consult state and municipal officers on the order and terms of training on the main and additional education programs, realized at the specialized department.

To begin with, each district of the region can send two municipal officers for training. The

forecast says that app. 5.5 thousand municipal officers in the Novosibirsk Region need to be trained in State and Municipal Management.

Master's students are to be admitted and trained on the basis of the order of organizing the target contract training of specialists in federal state high education institutions out of the regional budgetary funds.

For this purpose, it is necessary to establish organizational, educational, material conditions to implement training programs on: technologies of project management taking into account local peculiarities; mechanisms of social and state-private partnership; business skills; elaboration and implementation of sustainable rural development programs.

The stages of the education program for sustainable rural development:

1. Competitive selection of potential participants of the education program.
2. Implementation of the professional development process, assistance to trainees at preparation of investment projects for the development of an organization, a farm or an individual business plan.
3. Selection of the most economic business projects, their inclusion into complex programs of sustainable rural development of the municipality and promotion of their financing from different source.
4. Elaboration of sustainable rural development programs.
5. Implementation of sustainable rural development programs of the subject of the Russian Federation.

With establishment of the qualified personnel training system in sustainable rural development, it is offered to form a research academic complex. Its key goal is to be of practical assistance to the state and municipal administration bodies in elaboration and implementation of strategies, programs and projects of socio-economic development of regional municipalities.

In the course of training, it is planned to use international education programs involving specialists from China, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, France and the USA. Each Master's student will have the right to choose the individual training program and to have methodical support of scientific researches and real projects in the frames of Master's thesis.

#### **4.5. Measures to train new rural development specialists**

At the moment, the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany, implements the educational project Erasmus Plus SARUD. It is aimed at the development of a new Master's program in sustainable agriculture and rural land development. This project unites 33 education organizations, including Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Russian State Agrarian University – Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy, Omsk State Agrarian University, Michurinsk State Agrarian University, Buryat State Academy of Agriculture, Novosibirsk State Agrarian University, three higher education institutions from Kazakhstan, Russian university-partners in Tempus RUDECO project.

Goals of the project:

- To elaborate a professional Master's program in sustainable agriculture and rural land development taking into account regional demands for specialists of public services, local and regional authorities and private service providers.
- To establish a platform of knowledge on sustainable agriculture and rural land development challenges with international and regional practical examples.
- To strengthen the interregional university network on implementing education programs in sustainable rural development.

Professional activity of the graduates from the Master's degree course 38.04.04. State and Municipal Management (project activity) is to be focused on:



- Forecasting development of organizations, establishments, branches and companies, regions and municipalities (taking into account current social and ecological problems, compliance with the safety requirements).
- Elaboration of federal, regional and local socio-economic development programs.
- Justification and analysis of social and economic programs execution by means of project analysis methods.
- Development of a feasibility study and evaluation of probable efficiency of investment projects, social sphere inclusive, etc.

The program is targeted at:

- State and municipal officers, company managers, representatives of non-profit organizations, practicing managers focused on solution of territorial development tasks involving strategic thinking;
- Business representatives tending to get practical skills for managerial career in modern labour markets.

The program aims at training new generation lead specialists in agrarian business and complex rural development management. Such specialists are to generate ideas, to meet the challenge creatively applying a wide range of socio-cultural technologies and instruments for the state-private partnership.

The program is elaborated on the basis of real territorial development cases, provided by program partners. Master's students are offered to work out and to prove the rural development concept or the business development project taking into account social, ecological and economic stability factors, as well as modern approaches to the territorial management and strategic development.

The goal of the Principal Educational Program of Higher Professional Education at the Master's course is to provide the methodological support for implementing FSES HE +3 (Federal state educational standards of higher education) and to develop soft competences of Master's students, as well as to form cultural and professional competences in compliance with FSES HE, to improve principal educational knowledge of students (On Education in the Russian Federation", 2012; The Federal State Higher Education Standard in 38.04.04 State and Municipal Management, 2014).

Professional activities of Master's students include:

- State management, municipal management and local government;
- Management at state and municipal establishments;
- Management in social sphere, non-profit organizations;
- Management in other organizations on state bodies and public affairs positions;
- Research and analysis of agricultural markets, assessment of efficiency of agricultural, raw materials and food markets state control;
- Elaboration of organizational-managerial models, investment and marketing strategies of agricultural organizations;
- Agricultural consulting, land and agribusiness evaluations;
- Elaboration of forecasts, programs and strategic plans for agriculture and rural development;
- Methodological support and teaching of economics at agricultural higher and professional education institutes.

Objects of Masters' professional activity:

- Agricultural production, economic, organization, financial, management and information systems and processes; mechanics of the agrifood market, rural development and land regulation.
- Federal state bodies;
- State bodies of subjects of the Russian Federation;
- Local government;
- State and municipal establishments, budget organizations;
- Civil society institutions; public organizations; non-profit organizations;
- International organizations and governance bodies; other organizations, state bodies and public

affairs units (The Federal State Higher Education Standard in 38.04.04 State and Municipal Management, 2014).

#### *Priority competences of the Master's program:*

- Sustainable rural development: regional and municipal program approaches.
  - Eco-labeling and marketing of eco- and regional products from rural areas.
  - Development of rural and eco-tourism.
  - Greening of agriculture.
  - Environmental regulations and laws in rural areas.
  - Ecological problems due to intensive farming.
  - Involvement of population in rural development.
  - Abatement of rural pollution with agricultural, industrial and solid domestic wastes.
  - Sustainable use of rural water resources.
  - Food safety and quality control.
  - Rural bio-resources management.
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## **5. Conclusion**

1. Development of local government is extremely important for any society as local authorities are the closest to the population. If the population understands practicability and efficiency of local authorities, it becomes more active. Otherwise, economic and territorial development is almost impossible (Adukova, & Korsun, 2016).

2. In the existing state personnel policy, in terms of sustainable rural development there is much concern about provision of local government with qualified staff.

3. In order to provide rural local government with qualified personnel, it is needed to:

- form a system of target contract training of qualified specialists for municipal administrations by establishing specialized departments at the state bodies of subjects of the Russian Federation.
- effect the target practice-oriented training on the basis of Master's programs by generalizing the best municipal practices of improving investment attractiveness of rural areas in the Russian Federation using international education programs.

4. The offered system of measures makes it possible to form a research academic complex in federal subjects of the Siberian Federal District on the basis of the Presidential Academy and Novosibirsk State Agrarian University. The key goal of the complex is to be both training of new rural development specialists and practical assistance to the state and municipal administration bodies in elaboration and implementation of strategies, programs and investment projects of socio-economic development of municipalities.

Thus, the successful solution of a staffing problem with regard to sustainable rural development will promote establishment of the efficient local government institute in Russia.

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[Index]

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