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Oleg LUKSHA

*Director, the International Institute on Globalization
and the Human Condition “Noosphere”*

Ani MKRTUMYAN

*Aspirant of the Department of Banking and Finance,
Uzhgorod National University*

Oksana STANKEVYCH

*President of the Regional Environmental
Youth Union “Ecosphere”*

Vadym PYLYPENKO

*director of the “Ukrainian- Slovakian
border cooperation Center “Carpathians”*

Natalia NOSA

*President of the International Association
of Institutions for Regional Development*

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “PYRAMID OF ATTRACTION” METHODOLOGY ACCORDING TO STAKEHOLDERS IN THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT OF THE UKRAINIAN-SLOVAK CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The peculiarities of the method of “pyramid of attraction” of stakeholders during the development of the Ukrainian-Slovak trans-border cooperation strategy analysed. Described practical experience to achieve the principle of symmetry of the “pyramid attraction” on both sides of the border.

Keywords: *cross-border cooperation, strategy, stakeholders*

Preliminary remarks

The strategy of Ukrainian-Slovak cross-border cooperation (CBC) 2020 is being developed for the first time and implemented within the framework of the CBB ENPI EU Hungary - Slovakia - Romania -

Ukraine “Slovak-Ukrainian Culture Centre”. Senior partner - Rusyn-Ukrainian Union of the Slovak Republic (Presov), partners - regional Development Agency of Presov region (Slovakia), regional cultural and educational organization “Matica Slovenska in Transcarpathia” (Uzhgorod, Ukraine), NGO “Ukrainian-Slovak Cross-Border Cooperation Centre “Karpaty” (Uzhgorod, Ukraine).

The overall objective of the project is to intensify and deepen economic and humanitarian cooperation between border regions of Slovakia and Ukraine on a sustainable basis. The developed strategy is committed to help reach this goal through concerted and coordinated strategic management of TCS in target border regions, part of which is strategic planning.

Ongoing methodological approaches

In general terms, the logic and essence of strategic planning is thoroughly outlined in monograph of H. Mintzberg [1, p.5-21], which gives its generalized interpretation as a continuous “process”, and “an integrated decision-making.” For what purpose, in fact, do the organizations (the authorities, institutions, enterprises, social organizations) implement strategic planning? The answer is multifaceted - to ensure the future, coordinate efforts, to take into account the interests of all, comply with the principles of expediency and rational use of resources, monitor the achievement of the priorities and objectives, etc., [2, p.4-5, 3, p.10-19, 4, p.16-25]. In the case of joint subregion border between the two countries, situation becomes even more complicated for the parties and stakeholders, goals, interests, resources, and control for the strategic planning process. Especially evident in our view is that strategic planning of common border between two subregion countries needs greater methodological clarity, consistency, feasibility and consolidation of goals and intentions of communities, government, business and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on both sides of the border. Therefore, logical and appropriate seems to be such a scheme of successive steps: “Sociological Research in the joint border region - strategic planning with deep community involvement, expert (including sociological) monitoring of the implementation of

the Strategy.” An example and experience of first such development - “Polish-Ukrainian border cooperation strategy for 2007-2015” [5, p.83-86] - confirms the absence of both the first and the last element of the scheme, as the development strategy in 2007 and 2008 took place only at the expert level, i.e., without the deep involvement of the communities of the Ukrainian-Polish border subregion. These authors have tried to avoid significant methodological flaws at least at the level of relatively deep involvement of different target groups, communities of boundary regions, to development of the Strategy of Ukrainian-Slovak CBC.

It should also be noted that at the initiative of central departments (Ministries) of Ukraine and neighbouring countries from time to time are implemented common spatial planning projects of interstate subregions. Given the need for spatial development of international and interstate border and transport infrastructure, custom transitions, water resources management and protected areas, this is fully justified. However, when it comes to general (non-local) spatial planning of common subregion areas in the border between the two countries, in our opinion, it just should precede strategic planning of joint border area, which is not really happening.

As one of the initial stages of the development of the Strategy of the Slovak-Ukrainian CBC in 2012 - 2013, a poll is being conducted on both sides of the border (Transcarpathian Ukraine and Kosice and Presov self-governing regions of Slovakia). To achieve a deeper involvement of various community stakeholders, survey is conducted in the seven target groups:

1. Representatives of local governments (municipalities, regional centre councils, village councils) and associations of local governments.
2. Representatives of state authorities.
3. Representatives of various NGOs.
4. Representatives of budgetary institutions - education, health, social protection and culture and so on.
5. Representatives of higher education, science and experts.
6. Representatives of small and medium businesses.
7. Young people and students, high school students.

Number of surveyed respondents in terms of the following seven target groups is consistent with both cross-border symmetry and “pyramid attraction” on both sides of the border. Processing of the survey is planned to carry out:

- In the context of each of the seven target groups and integrally - separately for Slovak and Ukrainian border;
- In the context of each of the seven target groups and integrally - in a joint Ukrainian-Slovak border subregion.

Such a methodological approach is aimed at identifying both differences and similarities in the perception of Ukrainians and Slovaks (for various target groups and integrally) issues of common border development strategy and key elements of the Strategy - Vision, Mission and Strategic goals. Listing and contents of 5 questionnaires with the possibilities of amendments for respondents are formed according to:

Questionnaire number 1 - rating of 15 most important problems, obstacles and barriers that prevent, hinder or enable development of Ukrainian-Slovak CBC.

Questionnaire number 2 - the choice of variants of answers to 4 questions on essence and importance of the Strategy for the respondent.

Questionnaire number 3 - the choice of version of vision of the future of Ukrainian-Slovak CBC of border regions in 2020 of the 4 proposed.

Questionnaire number 4 - the choice of option of mission statement of Ukrainian-Slovak CBC in 2020 of the 4 proposed.

Questionnaire number 5 - choice of 5 definitions of priority objectives of the Strategy of the 9 proposed.

It is important that questionnaires to be used in Slovakia received a good quality translation into Slovak language. Questionnaires themselves include the possibility of free choice of anonymous or non-anonymous answers. In addition, for a wider coverage of stakeholders’ involvement in the “pyramid attraction” is provided option for distributing questionnaires by E-mail, posting on websites of NGOs

and “electronic” filling in and forwarding to the expert group on the strategy development.

Essential step in improving the feasibility of the prerequisites for strategic planning is the progress achieved in 2011 -2012 by the project ENPI CBC Programme Hungary - Slovakia - Romania - Ukraine - EU “Borders for people” (Lead Partner - Institute of CBC, Uzhgorod, Ukraine).

Specifically, this project developed indexing methodology and system monitoring of CBC, which would eliminate the discrepancy and inconsistency in assessment systems of economic and social development of the regions in Ukraine and the EU (including in Slovakia). Results of indexing and monitoring are detailed in joint publications [6,7], and their importance has been discussed previously in the work on the monitoring and evaluation of CBC [8, p.10-18], determining the competitiveness of the Transcarpathian region in comparison with similar or analogous regions of EU [9, p. 4-15] and researching preconditions and importance of the experience of Slovakia in the implementation of systemic reforms in Ukraine [10, p. 54-56], particularly at the level of regional public authorities and local governments to decentralize powers and financial resources and democratize all social processes.

Conclusions

Early and thoughtful strategic planning on both sides of the border would probably allow avoiding the main problem of development strategies, which is more in difficulty in achieving interconnectivity and synergy of solutions than in nature and accuracy of decisions themselves.

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