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PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF GDYNIA AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

On September 6, 1995 accepted as Gdynia City Council resolution

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic activity of NGOs is an essential characteristic of a democratic society, an element encouraging and activating a local community. NGOs are an incubator for active people, a place of training for leaders. The experience exchange between organizations as well as the cooperation between nongovernmental and public sectors are very important in their everyday work.

The priority of Gdynia authorities is to meet the needs of citizens in the most efficient way within the funds they have at their disposal. We believe that an active policy of cooperation among civic organizations is one of the elements of effective city management. At the base of the cooperation programme with NGOs there is city authorities' belief in its profits:

- strengthening the sense of responsibility for oneself, one's surrounding and local community,
- creating civic society by activating local community,
- carrying out innovative and more effective activities thanks to good recognition of needs,
- supplementing municipal activities with those not covered by its responsibilities,
- assisting public sector in the realization of some tasks.

Within the programme we wish to create clear and eligible, comprehensible solutions introducing NGOs into a real system of local democracy. This programme constitutes a proposition to all NGOs willing to participate in activities for the cities as well as its inhabitants.

We hope that Gdynia experiences and solutions will assist other cities in realizing similar programmes.

1. Institutions realizing the cooperation programme.

Among the responsible for the programme realization (in compliance with the programme assumptions) there are:

- a. City Council with its Commissions – in charge of setting social and financial policies in the city, initiating branch cooperation with various organizations
- b. City Board – responsible for policy realization, decision making in the field of activity priorities for the cooperation with NGOs, managing budget funds, grant allocation and other forms of assistance to particular organizations
- c. District Councils – responsible for consulting of the initiatives planned to occur within their area
- d. City Hall Departments – in charge of co-operation with NGOs
- e. City Hall Spokesperson – in charge of publishing information on NGOs in *Ratusz* (a municipal informative board)

- f. Consulting Commission chaired by the Mayor and consisting of 5 members from City Council and Board and 5 elected by NGOs – responsible for giving opinions about grant applications and proposing new forms of cooperation
- g. Mayor's of Gdynia Plenipotentiary on NGOs – in charge of contacts between local government and nongovernmental sector, giving opinions on NGOs' applications, advising to city authorities in the field of NGOs

A unit which co-ordinates the cooperation with NGOs is the Mayor's Office.

2. Forms of co-operation between NGOs and city authorities

2.1. Tools of cooperation

Apart from the realization of statutory targets, an NGO should take part in the construction of local democracy. Being institutions set up by citizens, NGOs which function to meet their needs should be guaranteed not only the possibility of creating local community but also that of contributing into the work of local government as well as its bodies, such as City Council, City Board and City Hall. In order to realize the above, Mayor's of Gdynia Plenipotentiary on NGOs have been appointed whose role is to facilitate contacts between NGOs and local government. One of the tools supposed to simplify the cooperation will be Gdynia Bank of Information on NGOs, which contains basic data about organizations in Gdynia. The data will serve to assess achievements of organizations as well as their potential and interest in the content-related cooperation with Gdynia authorities.

2.2. City Council

Representatives of NGOs interested in various domains have the opportunity to obtain current information on content-related work of Council Commissions as well as to share their conclusions and opinions with them. City Council Office assists in finding information and making arrangements with Commission representatives.

2.3. City Hall

At least twice a year NGOs will meet with representatives of the following City Hall departments:

- a. Mayor's Office
- b. Culture, Sport and Recreation Department
- c. Education Department
- d. Health and Social Care Department
- e. Environment Protection and Agriculture department
- f. Architecture and Construction Supervision Department
- g. Foreign Relations Department (with regard to international contacts).

The organizations which declared their interests in Gdynia Bank of Information on NGOs will be notified of the meeting arrangements. Within the meetings the organizations will have the opportunity to put forward their ideas, suggestions and information which may improve the functioning of particular City Hall departments. In order to supply City Hall officers with content-related knowledge beforehand, NGOs may submit to the Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs their proposals of issues to be touched upon or answered at the meeting.

2.4. City Board

Organizations may also put forward their proposals directly to the City Board when they are too complex and thus exceed the competences of a particular department or if an organization claims that its ideas have not been given enough consideration. The suggestions should be presented in writing to Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs.

3. Forms of support offered to NGOs by Gdynia authorities

Within the cooperation programme organizations may gain the following forms of support for their activities:

- a. financial support in the form of grants
- b. assistance in obtaining office space on preferential conditions
- c. offering the office space for meetings
- d. cooperation in the fundraising from other sources
- e. consultation, technical assistance and training
- f. promotion of activities in media
- g. assistance in initiating international contacts

3.1. Grants

Twice a year (for date specification see point 5) organizations may apply for grants to realize projects within statutory goals. The applied amount cannot exceed 70% of total costs of the initiative. Organizations applying for the grant should submit in time the following documents:

- a. activity report for the previous year (n/a to newly established organizations)
- b. financial report for the previous year (n/a to newly established organizations)
- c. description of the project to be financed incl. preliminary budget (see the attached pattern)
- d. documents specifying legal status – current register copy and statute (n/a to informal groups)
- e. in the case of informal groups – declaration of an organization with legal personality to take responsibility for the implementation.
- f. a completed questionnaire from Gdynia Bank of Information on NGOs or its actualization.

The completed application forms should be submitted to Gdynia NGO Centre.

As regards funds to finance summer and winter holidays for children and youth, organizations may use a simplified procedure, as specified by Gdynia City Board with reference to education institutions. Dates and mode of application assessing are the same like to other grant applications.

In emergency organizations may request City Board to allocate extra grants beyond the dates specified in point 5. Such possibility is however limited to situations when the applied amount does not exceed 800 PLN (\$200) and only supplements the total budget (up to 20 %), not

being one of the main factors. In the a/m situation grants are allocated by City Board and are consulted with a representative of a department in charge of this issue as well as Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs. The applications along with project description and preliminary budget should be submitted to Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs with 60-day notice.

3.2. Office space

Organizations which need space for their activity may apply to rent it from the city at preferential rates. The space will be distributed according to the possibilities. The space may be offered for programme activity, there is no possibility of using the space only for administrative purposes. Only organizations with legal personality may apply for the space. Within the application form an organization determines its general requirements regarding the space as well as the scope of its use. It is also possible to suggest its location. Organizations applying for the office space should submit the following documents:

- a. activity report for the previous year (n/a to newly established organizations)
- b. financial report for the previous year (n/a to newly established organizations)
- c. description of projects to be implemented in the office space
- d. documents specifying legal status – current register copy and statute (n/a to informal groups)
- e. personal data of a person in charge of the office space
- f. a completed questionnaire from Gdynia Bank of Information on NGOs or its actualization

The application forms should be submitted to Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs.

3.3. Meeting space

Gdynia Authorities enable NGOs which have not their own space to use the premises of Gdynia NGO Centre, in 3 Maja 27/31. The conditions of using the Centre have been specified in the *Regulations* accepted by City Board.

3.4. Fundraising form other sources

Difficulties resulting from the municipality's new responsibilities makes the city budget unable to ensure financial support to all valuable projects and organizations. Thus, the City Authorities rely on organizations' efficiency in obtaining funds from other sources. Thanks to this co-operation, Gdynia may receive funds for the realization of projects which are important and useful for its inhabitants. The support of the authorities in this domain comprises:

- a. assessing grant and donation applications
- b. promoting interesting projects which may be financed from other sources
- c. financing consultations and trainings on fundraising

Organizations willing to profit from this possibility should contact Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs.

3.5. Consultation, technical assistance and training

In order to increase the professionalism of activities carried out by NGOs, the City Authorities will introduce the financing of consultation and training for them. The benefit budget may be

included into the application for project financing or may constitute a separate application. It is necessary that programme of training/scope of consultation as well as objective description and specification of institution offering its services should be attached to the preliminary budget. It is expected that twice a year general trainings (financed from city budget) addressed to all organizations are held. Information on dates and conditions of participation may be obtained at the latest one month before the training.

3.6. Media

The publication which easily accessible to all NGOs is “Ratusz” (“City Hall”) - City Council and Board Bulletin. Organizations willing to publish their information or announcements should address the City Hall Spokesperson. If organizations are interested in extending the cooperation, it is possible to introduce to the bulletin a separate section or an insert giving information on NGOs in Gdynia.

3.7. International contacts

Organizations may address Foreign Relations Department to assist them in initiating contacts with similar partners abroad. In the future a special data base will be created, being available to NGOs interested in international cooperation. The funds to continue the cooperation may be gained within grant procedure.

4. Description of the programme’s unit

4.1 Territorial range

Co-operation programme is financed from the budget of the City of Gdynia, programme’s costs are covered by taxpayers – city inhabitants. In this connection the activity for the city and its inhabitants is the basic criterion deciding if the municipal authorities support the organisation. Only the organisations whose activity (or part of the activity that is subsidised) is realised for the Gdynia residents can apply for the funds within the programme.

4.2 Legal status

The following organisations can participate in the co-operation programme:

- a. foundations or their local branches
- b. associations or their local branches
- c. student organisation
- d. church organisations
- e. parents’ councils at the schools
- f. informal groups

Units with no legal personality can receive financial assistance from the municipality on condition that they obtain the patronage of the institution with legal personality.

4.3. Formal and organisational conditions

Organisation applying for a grant within the co-operation programme has to fulfil the following conditions:

- a. assignment of a person responsible for the implementation and financial issues of the the program.
- b. possession of the bank account (own one or, if the given organisation has no legal personality, account made available to this organisation by other institution)
- c. registration of the organisation at the Gdynia Data Bank on NGOs.

4.4. Content-related categories

Within the co-operation programme, the organisations can apply for financial support of activities in the all fields, which local government is responsible for, this include:

- a. education, upbringing,
- b. recreation, tourism,
- c. sustainable development, environment protection,
- d. healthcare, rehabilitation,
- e. social welfare, self-help,
- f. art, culture
- g. regional and local development, maritime issues,
- h. territorial self-government, local democracy,
- i. civil society empowerment.

Funds allocated for the co-operation programme cannot be used for:

- a. construction, purchase and renovations of the buildings, purchase of land,
- b. economic activity,
- c. covering the maintenance costs of the organisation's office (unless it is the essential element of the project's realisation)
- d. programmes co-financed from other municipal target funds,
- e. political and religious activity

5. Time-limits

Within the year two sessions of allocating the grants are held. The first session: the deadline of submitting the applications: 1st of April, date of making a decision: 1st of June, the second session: the deadline of submitting the applications: 1st of October, date of making a decision: 1st of December.

Organisations can apply for other forms of aid in any other dates according to procedures described in the point 3.

6. Criteria of decision-making

City Board makes decisions concerning the support of the particular programmes or organisations basing on the following criteria:

- a. costs of the programme,
- b. prospects of the programme's follow-up and potential resources of its financing,
- c. character and practical aspect of the organisation's activity,
- d. achievements of the organisation,
- e. previous co-operation with the local government and its branches,
- f. co-operation with other public institutions,

It is necessary to stress that any of the above mentioned criteria will not be used separately as a deciding one. While making a decision, the City Board will take into account all the above mentioned factors. These criteria allow to assess comprehensively the submitted applications and to choose the ones that meet current needs in the best way.

6.1. Costs of the programme

Criterion of grant making is the minimisation of the city budget costs and ensure efficient usage of the funds. While allocating the financial support, these programmes will be preferred that apply for smaller grants but at the same time guarantee the broadest scope of services or the biggest effect. The own contribution of the organisation and involvement of other funding sources will constitute the element of the assessment. The organisation's finances management and structure of the expenses will also be taken into account as one of the factors influencing the decisions.

6.2. Prospects of the programme's follow-up and sources of its financing

Far-reaching programmes will be treated as particularly interesting ones. While referring to far-reaching programmes there are meant here the programmes that will be continued after the period of their co-financing by the city authorities although the involvement of the budget means will be reduced. Finally these programmes will become independent and function on basis of own funds.

6.3 Character and practical aspect of the organisation's activity

The idea of the functioning of the co-operation programme is to support the civil society activities. This is why the criteria used by the city authorities cannot be limited only to the economic categories and the organisational aspects of the provided services. The character of the organisation and practical aspect of its daily activity will also influence the decisions. The organisations basing on the work of volunteers, acting at the local community level (housing estates, schools, neighbourly groups) will be preferred.

6.4 Achievements of the organisation

While making a decision it is very helpful to receive the information on previous organisation's achievements, successes and long-term effects of work. This information will be taken from the Gdynia Data Bank on NGOs as well as from the people co-operating with the organisations - City Council representatives, departments of the City Hall and members of the Consultative Committee.

6.5. Previous co-operation with the local government and its branches

The previous experiences in work with the organisations constitute a significant category from the City Board's point of view. Bearing in mind the priority of expanding the list of co-operation units, the previous co-operation of the organisations with the City Council, District Councils, City Board and departments of the City Hall will also be taken into consideration.

6.6. Co-operation with other public institutions

Co-operation of the organisations with the regional public institutions (hospitals, schools, universities) will be taken into account while assessing the programmes applying for support within the co-operation programme.

7. Decision-making process

City Board makes a decision on allocating grants. Before the decision is taken, the Consultative Committee gives an opinion concerning each programme applying for a grant. The Consultative Committee consists of the representatives of the City Council, City Board and Non-governmental Organisations. Decisions are made on consensus basis. The decision is announced to the organisations by mail. Apart from it the complete list of the approved and rejected applications is displayed in the City Hall and the Gdynia Centre of the Non-governmental Organisations. This list comprises also amounts of the allocated grants and the content-related, formal and financial reasons of rejecting particular programmes.

On the end of the each year the complete list of supported NGOs and projects granted is published with the city annual budget report.

8. Financial issues

Forms and dates of transferring funds to the organisations will be determined in the grant agreement signed between the organisation and the City Board.

9. Reports

Organisations that received financial support within the co-operation programme are obliged to submit the following documents after finishing the programme:

- a. the complete clearing of accounts (it concerns not only the funds obtained from the City Hall)
- b. content-related report, evaluation of the project's effects and description of the possibilities of the project's follow-up.

Current financial and content-related reports should be submitted at least every 6 months. Organisations that use the municipal premises by the preferential rules have to submit the half-yearly reports informing the city authorities about the usage of the premises.

10. Information flow

Information concerning the conditions, dead-lines and procedures of allocating grants by City Board is made available to all interested organisations:

- a. by mail – sending of information on possibilities of obtaining the support to the organisation registered in the Gdynia Data Bank on NGOs
- b. through the “City Hall” – Bulletin of the City Council and City Board,
- c. through the Mayor's Plenipotentiary on NGOs,
- d. through the Office of the Gdynia Centre of NGOs.

11. Evaluation

Every year the co-operation programme will be evaluated in the content-related, organisational and financial respect. Conclusions resulted from the evaluation will be used by the authorities of Gdynia to analyse the programme's effects. Organisations will use these conclusions to improve their activity, especially in the field of relations with the local

government. Conclusions will also constitute the basis for making necessary changes in the co-operation programme in order to increase its effectiveness.