E-learning for *e*-governance development in Ukraine

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Abstract: - Some results of the research "*E*-governance in Ukraine: analysis and recommendations" concerning the matter of professional training of the civil servants and officials are described. The investigation was carried out in April – June 2007 with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Statistics obtained from the questioning of 10732 civil servants in 229 administrative bodies and 145 local government bodies of all levels in 15 regions of Ukraine are cited. Analysis of needs in the professional qualification improvement is done and corresponding recommendations are formulated.

Key-Words: - e-governance, professional training system, *e*-learning, competence level, qualification improvement, questioning

1 Introduction

The need for implementation of e-governance technologies in the executive power bodies' and local authorities' public activities in Ukraine is becoming more and more obvious. At the same time, either civil servants, or citizens are still not prepared for wide and effective use of the e-governance technologies available at present and in the nearest future. This is due to the several problems:

- insufficient level of state support for researches on development of new knowledge and decisions in *e*-governance field, on studying positive experience accumulated in the successful countries and several regions (branches) in Ukraine and its dissemination;
- low level of e-governance technologies popularization and low awareness among population on the benefits of its application to every-day activities for improvement of administrative services provided by the state and local authorities to citizens, businesses and civic organizations;

- insufficient effectiveness of the civil servants and government executives professional training system in the part concerning their computer competence, knowledge and skills in e-governance technologies, objective assessments of their professional competency level;

- absence of a state-level institution for problem-solving coordination and conceptual fundamentals development for decision-making in the field of the public administration reforming and functioning.

2 Project tasks formulation

The research "E-governance in Ukraine: analysis and recommendations" supported by the International Renaissance Foundation has become the first step in solving the specified problems. Several data sources have been chosen to analyze the current situation with the e-governance implementation: executive power offices' and local authorities' web-sites; these bodies' heads, public officers and functionaries; national experts on the matter of the information society development.

Such variety of the informational sources necessitated use of three different data collection methods.

The first method – content analysis of the web-sites of the different level executive power offices and local authorities.

The second method – a questioning of the heads of these bodies with the object of obtaining integrated data about respective body and their servants; a questioning of the civil servants, public officers and functionaries of different categories and ranks to obtain data on their immediate participation in the ICT and e-governance technologies implementation into their every day activities.

The third method – an expert interviewing which gives the possibility to clearly recognize existing problems and to build up a vision of the ways to solve them.

Further in this article, the questioning performance, its results and ensuing conclusions are described.

Within the framework of the project a questioning of the civil servants and local municipalities representatives has been carried out to clear up the following:

- executive power bodies and local authorities readiness degree for effective application of e-governance technologies;
- real state of affairs in *e*-governance technologies application in the civil servant daily activity;
- civil servants needs for their professional training in implementation and application of *e*-governance technologies;
- desired forms of training for the administrative staff qualification improvement.

3 Project results

229 administrative bodies have been covered included executive bodies: central - 24 and regional of different levels – 64; local government bodies: 145 in 15 (from 25) regions of Ukraine. In all, 10732 civil servants have been questioned.

Different aspects of *e*-governance development have been analysed in the course of the researches. In this work we will consider only the questions relating to the civil servants' professional training in the field of ICT and specifically of *e*-governance technologies:

- How many civil servants and public officers upgrade their professional skills?
- What are the civil servants' and public officers' needs in professional training, especially in the field of *e*-governance and computer competence?
- What form of training is preferably chosen by the civil servants and their chiefs?

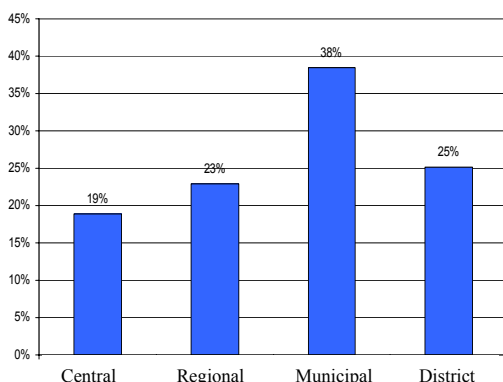The answer on the first question is illustrated by Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. Rates of the civil servants upgraded their professional qualification during last 3 years

The rate of the civil servants upgraded their professional skills during last 3 years ranges in the

rather close limits – between 19 and 25% depending on administrative level of an executive power or local authority body. Central executive power bodies and municipal councils have the lowest rates in the period of time mentioned above.

These data indicate that during a year 6-8% of the civil servants from the administrative bodies of all levels improve their professional knowledge and skills attending special training programmes. Fig. 2 shows that 8−23% of the civil servants receive on-the-job training, 3−9% of them receive training at ICT centres, 30−40% - in the public service system, 33−51% - at other educational institutions on their own initiative.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to renew professional knowledge and skills in the field of ICT, *e*-governance technologies, some of professional competences (e. g., relating to the regulatory and legal framework) not more rarely that every three years, other professional knowledge - not more rarely that every five years. Thus, during a year 20−30% of the civil servants of each state or local authority body have to improve their professional qualification.
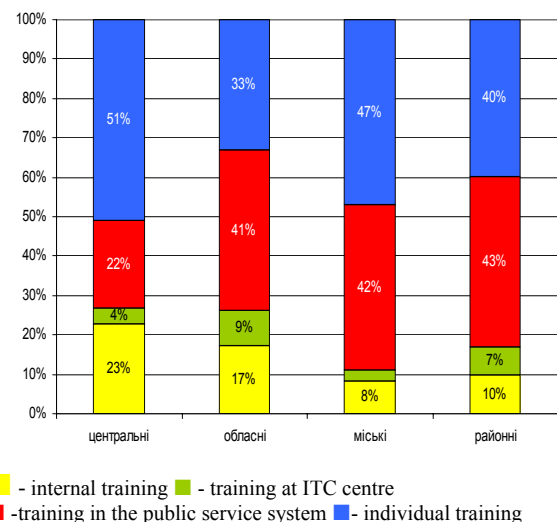

Fig. 2. Rates of the civil servants according to the forms of training

As mentioned above (Fig.1), the rate of the civil servants who upgrade their professional qualification does not surpass 8% (per year). Because of that it is necessary to considerably enlarge the number of civil servants who raise their professional level.

In the judgement of the heads of the authority bodies, the rate of the civil servants who have to upgrade their qualification by all the courses should be 31−25% per year for the central and regional (oblast level) executive power bodies and 31−61% per year for other authority bodies (Fig. 3).
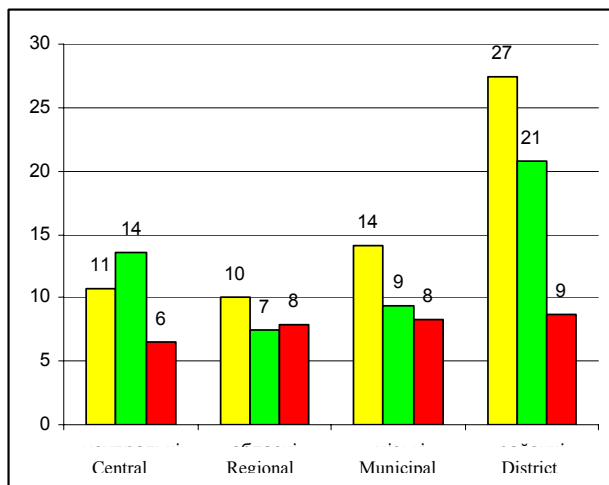
▢ - computer competence, ▢ - general professional competence, ▢ - *e*-governance technologies

Fig.3. Needs in training

Let us clear up what place in the professional improvement needs the *e*-government technologies and computer competence occupy. From the point of view of the heads of the authority bodies, 15-26% of the civil servants who are in need of their qualification improvement have to be trained in e-governance technologies and noticeably more - 35−58% - in computer competence. In the civil servants' opinion, the rate of those who aim to learn e-governance technologies is 19−30% (a little more than their chiefs consider) and the rate of those who want to raise their computer competence level is 36−50% (Fig. 4).
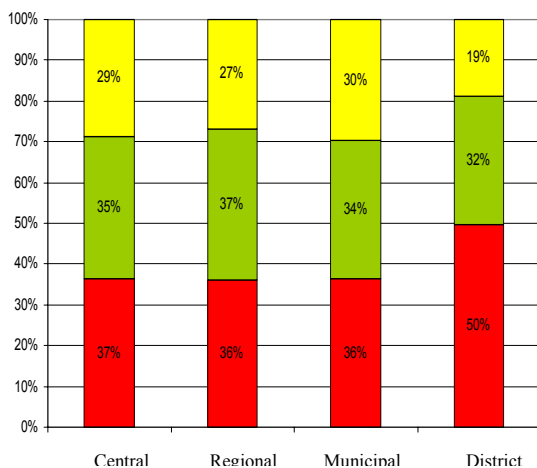

▢ - computer competence, ▢ - general professional competence, ▢ - *e*-governance technologies

Fig.4. The civil servants' choice of training course

The annual number of the civil servants who need training is 24 000 persons for the course "*e*-governance" and 48 000 persons for the course "Computer competence".

Data concerning choice of form of professional training are shown in the Fig. 5. It was found that the heads of the authority bodies of all levels want the same officials to be trained by different forms. Thus, they are of opinion that 40−60% of the civil servants have to improve their qualification by distance form, 50−76% - to combine distance and internal trainings, 33−62% - to be taught by internal form.
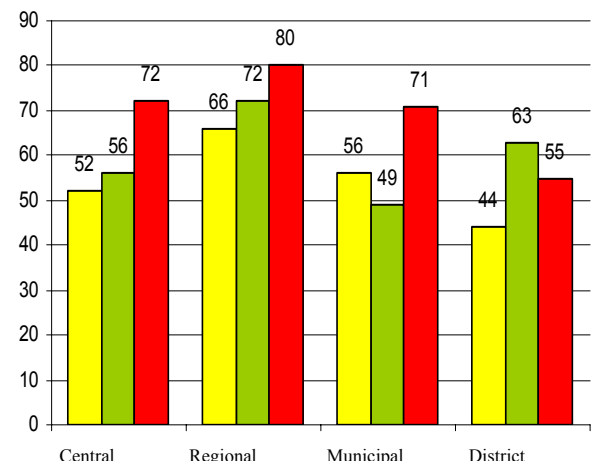
▢ - distance learning ▢ - internal learning, ▢ - distance and internal learning

Fig.5. The civil servants' choice of training form

The civil servants themselves show following preferences for the forms of training: 21−39% of them prefer distance learning, 32−53% - combination of distance and internal forms, 32−53% - internal training. I.e., 50−68% of the civil servants choose forms of training based on the distance learning technologies – learning in their convenient time and at convenient place.

From the data mentioned above we can see that most of heads of the authority bodies also prefer distance and distance-internal forms of training. It is naturally as they are interested in their subordinates' training without the temporary suspension of their official duties performance.

4 Conclusion

It is important to note that the level of the civil servants' knowledge and skills in *e*-governance technologies and their motivation for its application are determinative factors of success in these technologies implementation. The questioning of the heads and officials of 328 executive power and local authority bodies of different levels in all regions of Ukraine showed that not all of them understand what it means to provide on-line administrative services, many of them have no computer skills (6–25%). The number of the officials who improve their professional

qualification is not enough - 20−30% of required quantity.

But there are some positive results. Considerable part of the questioned persons understands the necessity of wider application of ICT and specifically of e-governance technologies, of raising the level of knowledge and skills in it. It is apparent from the striving to improve professional qualification in computer competence (35–58%) and *e*-governance technologies (15–26%). At that, most of the questioned persons (50–68%) choose the forms of training based on the distance (network) learning technologies.

It is necessary to raise level of readiness to use *e*-government technologies not only among the civil servants and public officers but also among the business representatives, civic organizations and citizens including teachers and students.

As for general results of this research we suppose that proposed methods of data collection and of their analysis can serve as a base of monitoring system for estimation of the e-governance state in Ukraine taking into consideration that monitoring always calls for comparative analysis of new and previous data.