

FORMATION OF THE MECHANISM OF INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC IN THE PUBLIC GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the theoretical, methodological, and practical study of ways to form a mechanism for interaction with the public in the public governance system. It was found that the ways to solve the problems of qualitative transformations in the activities of state authorities, changes in the management system on the basis of the formation and implementation of a

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mechanism for coordinating the interests of administrators and managers should be based both on legislation and on the public consciousness and political culture of civil servants, politicians and all members of the community. Approaches to the interpretation of the definition of the category “public” are summarized. The author's definition of the concept of the “public” is provided taking into account modern methodological and practical achievements on this issue. The content of the concept of interaction with the public in the public governance system was clarified and a generalized definition of it was provided. General requirements for public interaction with public authorities have been defined. A universal and effective mechanism for interaction with the public in the public governance system has been formed. The main elements of the developed mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system were analyzed. Structural and organizational elements of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system, their characteristics, and tasks, as well as the forms by which they interact with society, were identified. It is proved that the most effective type of planning, in this case, is prospective (annual) planning and its main stages are presented. It was concluded that the presented mechanism is a universal mean that provides tools for effective planning, organization, and control of the quality and effectiveness of public interaction measures in the public governance system. The successful implementation of the mechanism is the key to improving both the political and socio-economic course of development of a democratic and transparent state management apparatus in modern crisis conditions.

Keywords: public interaction, civil society, effective planning, collaboration, political course.

AIMS AND BACKGROUND

The emergence of a new type of so-called “information society” creates the prerequisites for establishing stable relations between all participants in the political process, which is not always recognized and reflected both in government bodies and in civil society subjects. Thus, the objective needs and interests of people in the process of their implementation make it necessary to establish a partnership between the state and public, the participation of the public in the development, adoption, and implementation of state decisions. As V. Ladychenko notes, the concept of “information society” is inextricably linked to the openness of activity, the desire for

transparency, and the principle of tolerance¹. He stresses that a democratic state cannot perform its functions without taking into account public opinion in certain vital tasks¹. It should be noted that under those conditions, outdated practices of coercion and dictation in the activities of the public governance system are replaced by modern principles of consistency of interests and coordination of efforts of various population groups and organizations in solving important issues of state development and establishing a single strategic line. That is, it can be argued that the stability and balance of the entire state as a system depends on the effectiveness of interaction between authorities at all levels of government and civil society.

But to date, Ukraine does not have a holistic, organizationally established, and legally enshrined system of interaction between the state and the public, which slows down the implementation of the state's strategic course towards European integration, the formation of a developed economy, and democratic society, etc. Thus, ways to solve the problems of qualitative transformations in the activities of state authorities, changes in the management system based on the formation and implementation of a mechanism for coordinating the interests of administrators and managers should be based both on legislation and on the public consciousness and political culture of civil servants, politicians and all members of the community.

A significant number of scientific works and practical testings of famous domestic and foreign scientists are devoted to the study of problematic issues of interaction with the public in the public governance system, such as V. Ladychenko¹, H.M. Shaulska², I. Bekeshkina, V. Yablonskyi, T. Andriuchenko³, H. Ahafonova, O. Karchevska^{4,5}, L. Lodzynska⁶, T. Shlemkevych⁷, V. Kozakov, O. Rashkovska, V. Rebkalo, Ye. Romanenko, I. Chaplai⁸, O. Korniiievskiy⁹, V. Marchuk¹⁰, A.Yu. Gevorkyan¹¹, O. Nepomnyashchyy, O. Marusheva et al.¹², Ye. Romanenko¹³, O.A. Diegtiar, A.P. Lelechko, N.S. Orlova et al.^{14,15}, N. Bowles¹⁶, N.E. Avanesova, O.S. Mordovtsev¹⁷ and others. However, despite the theoretical, methodological, and practical results highlighted in the scientific works of the above scientists, the issue of forming a unified, universal, and effective mechanism of interaction with the public in the system of public governance in the realities of the development of the political and socio-economic course of the country remains unresolved.

The purpose of the article is to create a universal and effective mechanism for interaction with the public in the public governance system, taking into account the peculiarities of the political and socio-economic development of Ukrainian civil society. In order to achieve the

purpose, there should be solved the following objectives in the article:

- to summarize scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concept of “public” and provide its author's definition;
- to clarify the definition of the nature of interaction with the public in the public governance system;
- to establish a mechanism for interaction with the public in the public governance system;
- to analyze the main elements and relationships of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An important condition for the sustainable development of the democratic process in Ukraine is, first of all, a developed civil society, whose active position can help solve the permanent political crisis in the country, support the implementation of legal guarantees for the life of members of the community, protect the interests of individuals and legal entities from violations by the authorities at all levels and organize mechanisms for accountability of public administration bodies. Thus, the public will be able to both carry out comprehensive monitoring of the activities of state and municipal authorities, and be involved in all stages of developing a tactical and strategic course that is aimed at solving socially significant problems. Based on the above, in order to increase the theoretical and methodological value of our research, it is appropriate to generalize scientific works to determine the essence of the concept of “public” as a key element of the public governance system and provide the own author's definition of this concept.

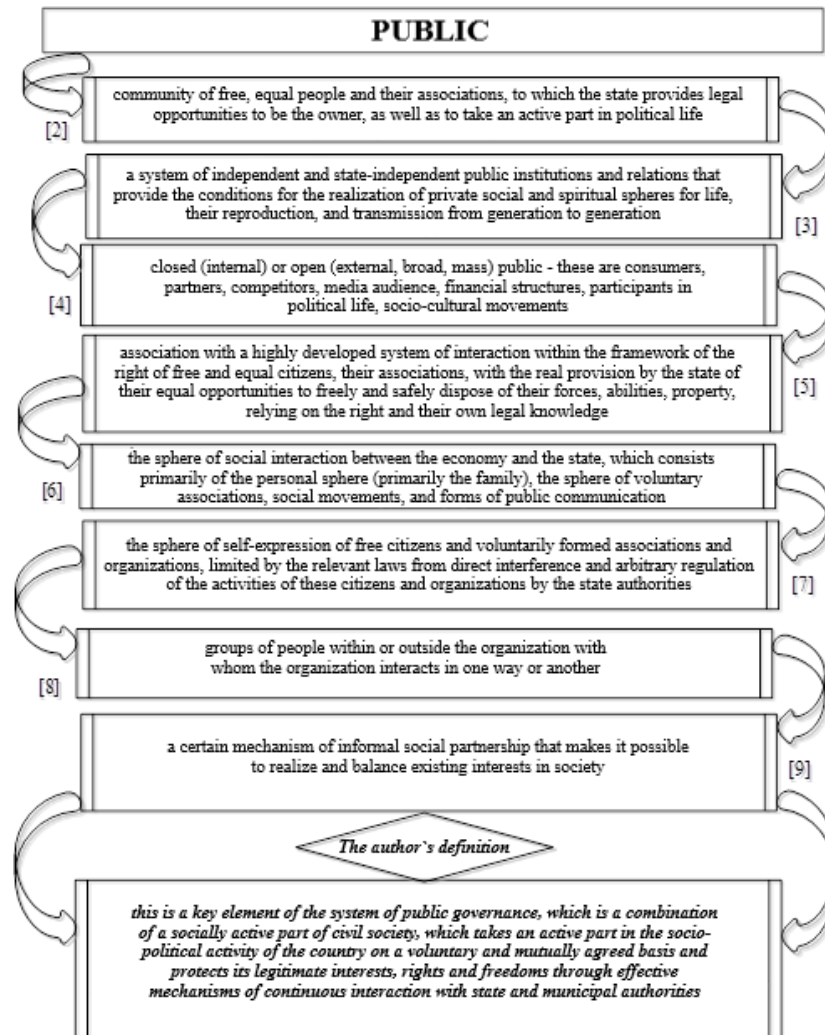


Fig. 1. Definition of the concept of “public”

Source: developed by the author on the basis^{2-8,18}.

As can be seen from the author's definition of “the public” in Figure 1, a key aspect of the success of the existence and development of the public is the formation and implementation of its mechanism of interaction with the public governance system. Research and synthesis of scientific sources^{10,19,20} made it possible to conclude that interaction with the public in the system of public governance is a purposeful interaction of state structures (bodies, organizations, institutions, etc.) with citizens and public institutions, which are implemented through the information and communication functions of public administration, which allows

assessing the attitude of various segments of the population and the public to certain decisions and actions, identify the actual and proclaimed policy, correlate the effectiveness of the implementation of various programs with the public interest, generate mass perceptions from key and actual issues to gain public understanding, support the adoption and execution of relevant activities.

If we consider this problem from the point of view of a general approach, we can determine that the interaction of the public with public authorities requires the following demands: the creation of information openness of the modern “information society” by public authorities; providing opportunities for a public monitoring of legal documents, especially other documents that are under development; forming public monitoring mechanisms to address issues of strategic and priority importance to members of the community by state authorities; feedback, that is, strengthening institutions and organizations of the public to increase the competence and awareness of community members about the possibilities of interaction with state and municipal authorities. But the above conditions are not sufficient to create an effective and efficient mechanism for interaction with the public in the public governance system. Research from U.K., Germany, and United States have shown that the application of tribological principles could lead to savings of 1.0% to 1.4% of an industrial country's economy, which leads to better socio-economic situation overall. Therefore, we propose the author's development of this mechanism, which consists of four blocks (managerial, organizational and methodological, planning and assessment, and control and resulting) in Figure 2, taking into account all aspects and peculiarities of this problem in the modern changing socio-economic and political conditions of Ukraine.

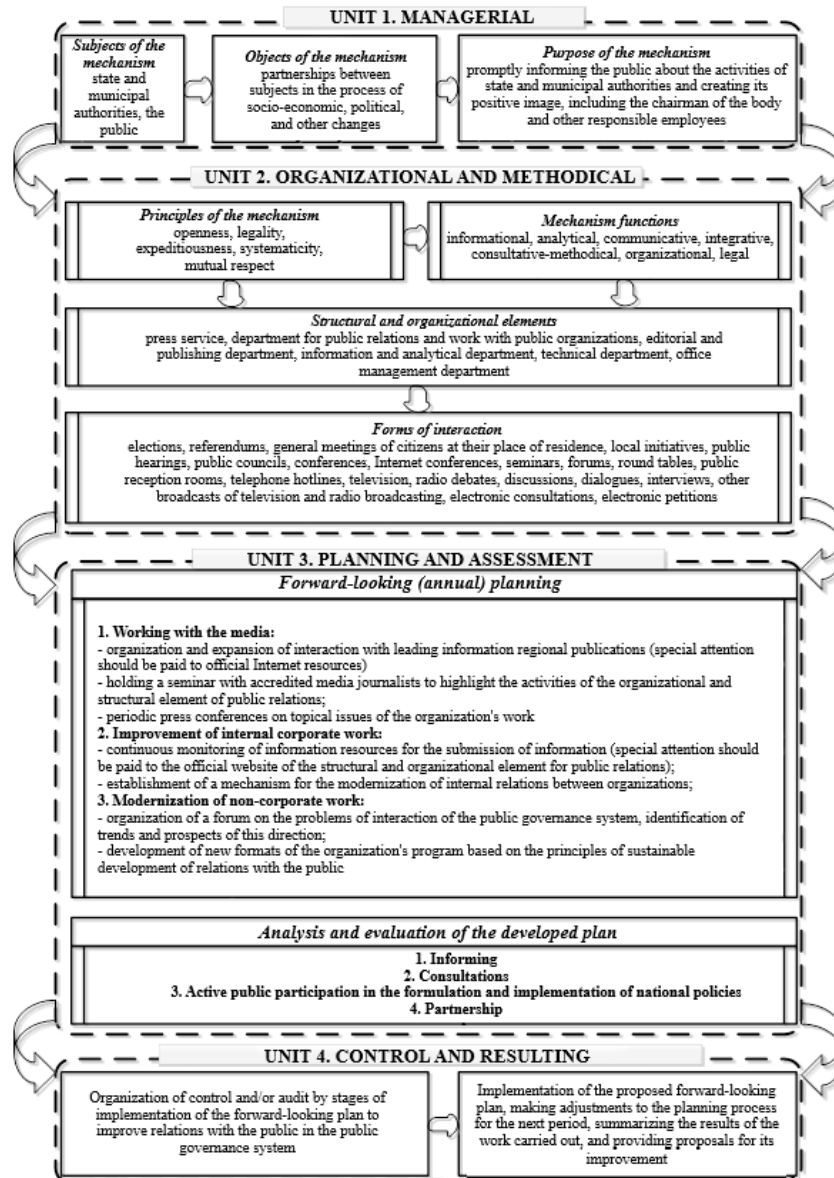


Fig. 2. Mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system

Source: developed by the author on the basis^{9-13,17}.

In order to increase the theoretical, methodological, and practical value of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system developed in Figure 2, it is useful to provide a detailed description of its individual elements. The organizational and methodological unit of the mechanism (Figure 2) is characterized by the presence of specific

principles, functions, and structural and organizational elements, which together create the given forms of interaction with the public of state and local authorities. Effective introducing and implementation of the mechanism is not possible without taking into account certain special principles on which it is based.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principle of openness is the basic principle of the functioning of the system of public democratic governance. In recent years, publicity in Ukraine has become an inviolable attribute of governance at all levels, and therefore, public relations are the guide and coordinator of the policy of openness and accessibility between the authorities and civil society. The degree of openness determines the degree of transparency of the public governance system, which is the most important indicator of public credibility in the state as a whole. The principle of legality – determines that the rule of law in all spheres of life of the state and civil society should be inviolable. Effective interaction with the public is impossible without taking into account and observing this principle. It is implemented by providing the necessary information in accordance with the procedure established by law or providing open access to it. The refusal to provide information, withholding of information, and unilateral interpretation of information is unacceptable for the modern “information society”.

The principle of expeditiousness – establishes the need for timely notification to the public about the decision, actions of state authorities and institutions. It should be noted that here, reporting significant incidents rate, social conflicts, resonant changes in the public governance system becomes of particular importance. Under the dynamic development of information and communication technologies, the delay or silence in the transfer of socially significant information to civil society (this will be presented and discussed on various information platforms, in particular, on social networks) often negatively affects the professionalism of public relations activities and contributes to a decrease in the image of the authorities¹³.

The principle of constructiveness – establishes the possibility of continuous well-functioning activities to implement the information and image policy of the public governance system. That is, public relations should be characterized by the completeness and diversity of structural and organizational elements and forms of interaction, as well as provide for the

flexible use of communication channels, a combination of traditional and innovative methods in their work. The principle of systemacity is a generally accepted principle, which in this context is understood as a focused planned work based on feedback information and relevant sociological studies that will analyze the state of public opinion on current issues of public governance. This principle aims to streamline public relations by focusing on the main areas and aspects of the process.

The principle of mutual respect means the existence of equal, trusting relations and proper interaction with all subjects in the orbit of public relations interests in state authorities. Neglect, irresponsibility, non-requirement and other destructive features of the activities of a public servant should be excluded in interaction with the public. Public relations functions in public governance relate to the nature and characteristics of the latter¹⁴. Information function – aimed at the formation and implementation of information policy, as one of the goals of the interaction of authorities with the public, is carried out in specific areas of state activity and public governance. It includes a comprehensive study of external and internal sources of information, an analysis of specific events, facts and situations that arise during the public policy, as well as an assessment of public opinion, tendencies, public reactions to the activities of state structures and the effectiveness of public governance.

Analytical function – includes the determination of the need for a specific type of analytical study, which should contain levels of social adaptation in various spheres of life of civil society, if there are elements of public governance in these areas. It thereby contributes to the convergence of the interests of the public and the authorities by combining and harmonizing their interests. Communicative function - consists in the dissemination of various information (both in the form of information products and in the form of image projects) in the implementation of communication relations with the population, as well as target audiences. As the leading communicative link of the state body, public relations build the forms and levels of relations between the structure of power and society, in many ways form and implement the principles of such relations and are responsible for the optimality of such relation¹⁵. Therefore, this function determines literacy and professionalism in the formation and implementation of information and image policies of a specific state structure, as well as is designed to create and maintain an appropriate socio-psychological climate within the state institution, compliance with the professional ethics, etc.

Integrative function – the importance of state and local authorities taking into account all

aspects of public opinion on a specific decision or action in order to build the necessary argumentation (or rebuttal) and common position to strengthen the positive perception and adoption of this decision. The advisory and methodological function is the need to advise on the issues and problems of organizing and establishing relations with the public in general and various social groups (pensioners, state employees, opposition forces, etc.) by developing conceptual models of cooperation and social partnership, organizing and conducting relevant programs, actions and PR campaigns, etc.

Organizational function involves the necessary administrative and creative integration of the efforts of the leadership of the state structure and its relations with the public in the process of implementing various forms of their interaction (Figure 2). Legal function defines the legal support for the activities of structural and organizational elements for public relations. It must be noted that the legal training of a public relations officer should include both knowledge of laws, instructions, and other regulations and their reasonable use in the direct activities. It is possible to implement this function in cooperation between the public and the authorities only in this case. The main characteristic of the structural and organizational elements of the developed mechanism (Figure 2), the work of which is based on the above principles and performs the specified functions, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Structural and organizational elements of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system

No.	Public relations departments	General characteristic	Tasks solved by departments
1	Press Service	One of the most important public relations units, which is aimed at solving the organization's information policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishment and maintenance of continuous effective interaction with the media with a public explanation of decisions and actions of power structures; – popularization in image aspect; – organization and holding of press conferences and briefings, dissemination of problem analysis materials on topical issues of activity; – organization of public speeches of management; – maintenance of corporate and official sites

			<p>(possibility of joint work in this area together with Information and Analytical Department)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – media monitoring; – counteracting negative information.
2	Department of Public Relations and Work with Public Organizations	The main work of the department is aimed at solving the tasks of the image policy of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organization of contacts, communications, and proper interaction in the public governance system; – organization of contacts, communications, and proper interaction with the public, public organizations, creative and trade unions, etc., – organization and holding of presentations, conferences, round tables, symposia, exhibitions, and other special events; – maintenance of targeted programs concerning partners; – performance of the intra-corporate function.
3	Printing and Publication Department	Its activities extend to both the external and internal environment, contributing to the implementation of information and image policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organizing the production of all printed public products (books, brochures, booklets, almanacs, postcards, etc.); – publication of a corporate newspaper (with its publication on the Internet)
4	Information and Analytical Department	The department is the headquarters of the public relations service, it brainstorms all activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – advanced planning of public relations work; – work planning for the relevant periods of the forward-looking plan; – monitoring the implementation of previously planned activities and tasks; – project programming and analytical activities; – monitoring of public information (independently or jointly with the press service) – development of the public relations service database.
5	Technical Department	The department is responsible for material and technical	– technical support of all activities and tasks carried out by the public relations service using modern means of communication

		equipment	
6	Office Management Department	The department is intended for creating documentation and information base on various media	– organization and maintenance of documents related to the activities of the public relations service

Thus, the organizational and methodological unit is central to the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system. On the one hand, it is entrusted with the authority of the management unit, and on the other, it must not only organize the work of civil society but also carry out planning, analysis, evaluation and monitoring activities. The planning of public relations activities is proposed to be carried out according to the stages, which are presented in Figure 2. Note that the most effective planning type, in this case, is perspective planning. This is due to the variability of the socio-economic and political environment of Ukraine, constant force majeure, and other factors that make it impossible to create effective mechanisms for long-term strategic planning. As indicated in Table 1, the planning and monitoring of plans is the responsibility of the Information and Analytical Department, which evaluates the results in four areas:

1. Information – so-called unilateral relations, which are characterized by the provision by the executive authorities of information (both at the initiative of the authority and at the request of the public) to the public about their decisions, initiatives, and actions²⁰.

2. Consultations – the following level of interaction with the public which is characterized by bilateral communication at which authorized divisions publish drafts of decisions of the power or reports about the course of implementation of policy for the purpose of obtaining comments, remarks, suggestions for improvement and consistency of this process^{20,21}.

3. Active public participation in the development and implementation of the country's policy is aimed at involving members of the public as full accomplices of the process in working groups, expert councils, etc., in the process of developing projects, decisions, and policies^{20,22}.

4. Partnership – the highest level of interaction, which is characterized by the implementation of mutual exchange of resources (for example, involving public associations in the provision of a certain type of services at the request of executive authorities, providing public associations with assistance in the preparation and conduct of activities by executive

authorities, providing executive authorities with grants to introduce public initiatives, etc.)^{20,23,24,25}.

Assessment and monitoring of the above areas should be carried out both at the local level and at the state level. After that, the forward-looking plan can be adjusted for the following periods taking into account the problems and prospects of interaction with the public (Figure 2). Thus, it can be concluded that the mechanism presented is a universal mean that provides tools for effective planning, organization, and control of the quality and effectiveness of public relations measures in the public governance system. The successful implementation of the mechanism is the key to improving both the political and socio-economic course of development of a democratic and transparent state management apparatus in modern crisis conditions.

Structural and organizational elements of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system, their characteristics, and tasks, as well as the forms by which they interact with society, are identified. It is proved that the most effective type of planning, in this case, is prospective (annual) planning and its main stages are presented. The task of planning and monitoring the implementation of plans is entrusted to the information and analytical department, which evaluates the results in four specific areas: information, consultation, active public participation in the development and implementation of country policies, partnership. It was concluded that the successful implementation of the formed mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system is the key to improving both the political and socio-economic course of development of a democratic and transparent state management apparatus in modern crisis conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

The article is devoted to solving the modern problem of finding the optimal mechanism of interaction with the public in the system of public governance in the modern changing political and socio-economic realities of the country. The studies made it possible to obtain the following theoretical, methodological, and practical results. Scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concept of “public” are summarized, on the basis of which the author's definition of this category was made – this is a key element of the system of public governance, which is a combination of a socially active part of civil society, which on a voluntary and mutually agreed

basis takes an active part in the socio-political activity of the country and protects its legitimate interests, rights and freedoms through effective mechanisms of constant interaction with state and municipal authorities.

The definition of the essence of interaction with the public in the public governance system is clarified, which means targeted interaction of state structures (bodies, organizations, institutions, etc.) with citizens and public institutions, which are implemented through the information and communication functions of public administration, which allows assessing the attitude of various segments of the population and the public to certain decisions and actions, identify the actual and proclaimed policy, correlate the effectiveness of the implementation of various programs with the public interest, generate mass perceptions from key and topical issues to gain public understanding, support the adoption and execution of relevant activities. An effective and efficient mechanism of interaction with the public in the system of public governance has been established, which consists of four blocks (managerial, organizational and methodological, planning and assessment, and control and resulting), taking into account all aspects and peculiarities of this problem in the modern changing socio-economic and political conditions of Ukraine. The main elements and relationships of the mechanism of interaction with the public in the public governance system were analyzed and it was found that:

- effective introducing and implementing of the mechanism is not possible without taking into account certain special principles on which it is based;
- public relations functions in public governance system relate to the nature and characteristics of the latter.

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