

Description for the general public

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(State the objective of the project, describe the basic research to be carried out, and present reasons for choosing the research topic - max. 2 standard type-written pages)

Some researchers of organizations use the comparison of organization to a living organism, e.g. a human. The human body is composed of a many systems, including the respiratory system, nervous system or cardiovascular system. When any part of such a system does not work properly, man becomes ill. One of the most important systems is the cardiovascular system, in which blood throughout the body distributes oxygen and other substances necessary for the proper functioning of the human being. One of the serious problems that can occur are blood diseases. Referring to the comparison of an organization to a human body, it can be assumed that in the organization the role of cardiovascular system is played by the system of information circulation. Proper functioning of the organization requires performance information, an information that tells managers whether an organization performs its tasks well (whether the body is healthy and thrives). Managers need to know, if, for instance, the tasks are delivered on time and bring the expected results, or costs of the activities are not too large, or recipients of services are satisfied, or that the requirements of the law are respected. Analysing the quality of such information is like a complete blood count. In case of a man it allows to diagnose the disease and to find an appropriate treatment. In case of an organization it allows to diagnose the problem and to apply an appropriate solution.

Unfortunately, local governments in Poland do not perform such tests often enough. Furthermore, management theory ("medicine"), and in turn public managers ("doctors"), do not have adequate knowledge to diagnose problems well enough ("disease"). This situation is analogous to that in which the doctor tells the patient that is ill, but is not able to say for what, and that can cure him/her "randomly for everything". Therefore, as in the case of medical knowledge it is very important to know the symptoms and sources of cardiovascular disease, as in the case of local government management theory it is very important to know the symptoms and sources of problems with performance management system, in which performance information plays a main role. This research project is intended precisely to gain knowledge about these problems and their sources, so that managers can choose the right solutions, and not to "randomly cure for all".

The project involves the diagnosis of quality of performance information in Polish local governments and assessment how much they ready to implement and use performance management systems. It will be conducted to find and explain how organizational readiness influences the quality of performance information. Such a knowledge can be compared to the knowledge related with the impact of the body condition on blood quality. On the basis of this knowledge blood count as an instrument can be created, and used to prevent from diseases or for proper treatment. It is hardly possible to imagine medicine these days without blood count. Thus, it is important to gain knowledge which would enhance creating a similar instrument for the quality of performance information in local governments. It has important consequences for citizens, like increased satisfaction with public services, better quality of life etc.