

GAZDASÁG & TÁRSADALOM

Journal of Economy & Society

A TARTALOMBÓL:

Tino Bensch – Clemens Jäger – Tina Jäger - Henrik Holsiepe
Alternative Approaches of Corporate Valuation Methods
for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Eleonóra Marisová – Zuzana Ilkova – Tomás Malatinec – Eva Lazarova
Ongoing reforms in public administration in Slovakia

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A tőke megtérülés vizsgálata a megtérülési követelményből levezetett
indikátoros-mutatók segítségével

Pataki László – Léglér Nikoletta
A tőkehelyzet és a tőkeszerkezet változása, s annak hatásai
a GYSEV Zrt. gazdálkodására

Molnár Csilla
Női munkavállalás az osztrák-magyar határrégióban

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Ongoing reforms in public administration in Slovakia: How effective is the current one envisaged?⁴⁸

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ABSTRACT The reasons of the continuing reforms in public administration in Slovakia are both political changes after the elections and both aim to reduce the cost of government performance, the number of employees, transfer the responsibilities from the state to self-government, allocation of public funds between government and self-government. All reforms were implemented in the spirit of generally declared attempts “to bring the administration closer to citizen”, which has partly succeeded. However, we can not overlook the negative side of “rotation” of the “general model” and “specialized model” of public administration within the reform process since the citizens did not understand the reasons for these changes. Since 2004 a specialized model of public administration is established. Currently, the Ministry of Interior launched a further reform aimed at restructuring and reducing the state administration. Since January 2013 again a „general model” of public administration is established and regional specialized offices should be cancelled, and from 01.10.2013, the remaining offices of specialized state administration will be cancelled as well. Instead of current offices of specialized state administration, 72 district offices with general scope will be created. However, it does not mean automatically the decrease of the number of employees. The aim of the reform is to change the ratio of service activities that are dedicated to the cancelled offices. The people, who lose their jobs, are envisaged to work in “centres of support”activities. The primary goal is not to lay off people, but to use them effectively.

KEYWORDS reforms of public administration, single contacts points (SCPs), small business, questionnaire survey, regional and district offices

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Introduction

The present structure of Public Administration in Slovakia is composed of state administration, self administration and public corporations. Public administration is a part of executive power in Slovakia. (Škultéty, 2008) State administration is considered to be the most comprehensive form of state activities and is carried out on behalf of the state. State administration is divided into central and local. The state administration bodies are organized hierarchically, i.e. the above superior body has within its competences given by state a right to influence the subordinated bodies. (Marišová, 2010).

It is within local state administration where the significant changes took place in last years. Local state administration is a part of the public administration and its role is to carry out the state functions in 72 territorial units. The local state administration bodies are managed and coordinated by Central Administrative bodies. (Janků et al., 2012) Currently the Slovak government solves the issue of efficiency of state administration performance and movement of competences between administrative models (concepts of state administration and original and transferred competences). The vision is to obtain effective, credible and open state administration which is able to offer all in one and simultaneously the one on each local state authority (model of local state administration with general scope of competences). (ESO document, 2013) Recovering of public finance and reinforcement of state administration performance is necessary but on other hand the reform has to be consistent with an importance and role of public administration within holdback of its fundamental legal principles and societal demands which are conditions of good public administration. (Košičiarová, 2012) Public administration is regulated by administrative law, which is managing societal relations in the field of public administration. Current reform is made through amendments of administrative norms. (Ševčík, 2009)

Background

Since January 2004, when the Act No 515/2003 Coll. about the regional and local offices and the amendment of certain acts, the former system of regional and district offices was canceled. This resulted in a new system of local state administration bodies – district bodies (50) and regional offices (8). Local state administration through regional and district offices functioned until 2007. The new reform abolished the regional offices from 1. October 2007 – Act No 257/2007 Coll. of the abolition of regional offices and about the change and amendment of Act No 515/2003. The power of the cancelled regional offices was delegated to district bodies and relevant ministries, in a meaning that all the rights and obligations

were delegated to district offices with changed terms and conditions. The agenda of small business has been administered by Single Contact Points (SCPs) as a unit within district offices. EU requires establishment of SCPs with the purpose to support entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs can get help with practical issue and find out the rules, regulations and formalities. SCPs are providing a complete administrative procedure relating to the issuing of business license. (EUGO network, 2013) The aim of SCPs is to establish efficient assistance to entrepreneurs in dealing with business license, but also streamline the procedure of district individual administrative offices at the center. So the local state administration from 2007 was composed of district offices (so called general) and district specialized offices at the local level (districts) and regional specialized offices at the regional level. Prior to the establishment of SCP, entrepreneurs had to go to register to the competent tax office, health insurance, business register but at present all the documents are delivered to SCP, which is linked to the all these institution. Also, criminal record is already requested directly from SCP of competent offices of EU Member State. The whole procedure for issuing licenses is very fast and much less difficult for an entrepreneur mainly due to links with these institutions. However interaction with the social insurance agency and customs offices is lagging behind due to absent stipulation of the legal regulations.

This step meant better interconnection of political responsibility of ministers and ministries. The number of offices and employees of public administration was decreased what contributed to the desired goal – to make the entire state administration at the regional, local and municipal level more effective.

All reforms were implemented in the spirit of generally declared attempts „to bring the administration closer to citizen”, which has partly succeeded.

Methodology

Assumption of more efficient performance of local state administration based on its centralization comes out from research on effectiveness of Trade offices in Slovak Republic and Single Contact Points established within them, realized by Department of Law, Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development, Slovak University of Agriculture. This model of state administration was a subject of the reform realized in the previous period, when Slovak republic had to take into account the requirements of the EU. According to the research results we conclude that the showed model is applicable in the new, reformed structure of local state administration.

The methodological approach is based on assessment of SPCs by entrepreneurs in Slovakia through questionnaire survey. In the questionnaire the following questions were formulated:

- (1) How do you rate the quality level of services provided by SCPs
- (2) Evaluate the degree of complexity of services provided in SCP
- (3) Evaluate the match of the services provided and available at the SCPs to the needs of entrepreneurs
- (4) How do you assess the standard of professional competence of SCPs?
- (5) How do you assess the speed of administrative procedure at SCPs?
- (6) Evaluate the overall quality status of the business environment in Slovakia.

Entrepreneurs answered all the questions by five grades Likert scales.

Data and variables

The data used for this study stem from two resources. (1) Questionnaires were distributed among entrepreneurs using SCP's services. Within Nitra region, the return rate was 614 questionnaires. Distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents in Nitra region

Entrepreneurs	%
Origin - Domestic	95,93
- Foreign	1,95
- N/A	2,12
Gender - Male	60,10
- Female	39,09
- N/A	0,81
Education - primary	3,91
- secondary	59,94
- tertiary	30,62
- N/A	5,53
Total number of questionnaires	614

Source: own processing

The aim of this analysis was to identify perception of “reformed” district offices and their units - SCP by entrepreneurs in terms of quality expressed in various questions and state the variable intensity of their evaluation.

(2) Questionnaires were distributed among employees of SCP's. Within Nitra region, questionnaire to all (5) SCPs were distributed, the return rate was 85,3% questionnaires. Distribution of respondents is presented in table 3.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents in Nitra region

Employees of SCPs (total in Nitra region 34)	%
Gender - Male	10,35%
- Female	86,21%
- N/A	3,44%
Education - secondary	10,35%
- tertiary	89,65%
Total number of questionnaires used	29

Source: own processing

The aim of this analysis was to identify perception of "reformed" district offices and their units - SCP by employees themselves in terms of the functionality of the SCPs in complex view and expressed in various questions and state the variable intensity of their evaluation.

Results and discussion

Results of the questionnaire survey - entrepreneurs

According to the results of a survey of entrepreneurs, which was focused on the evaluation of the degree of the quality of services provided by on SCP (Question 1), the degree of complexity of services provided by on SCP (question 2), the conformity of the services provided on SCP with the needs of entrepreneurs (Question 3), the evaluation of standard of professional competence of SCP staff (Question 4), we can say, that SCPs fulfill their purpose, entrepreneurs receive quality services, since the vast majority (48.12%) respondents state rather high quality. The degree of complexity of services provided by SCPs was also evaluated positively, since most respondents (47,71%) evaluated the complexity of services as rather high level. The degree of conformity with the needs of entrepreneur services was reported in 37,23% as rather high. Standard of professional competence of SCP staff was evaluated by entrepreneurs in 44,30% as high.

Although the recent amendments to the Small business act considerable shortened the legal deadline for issuing the business license and simplified the

reporting procedure - „making the necessary formalities in one place”, the degree of the speed of administrative procedure at SCPs- questions 5 and the overall qualitative state of the business environment in Slovakia- question. 6), results show that the views of entrepreneurs on the business environment in Slovakia have not changed. It is documented by the results of the survey, - with the overall qualitative condition of the business environment of the participating entrepreneurs only 3,76% (high level) are satisfied and 11,76% of entrepreneurs evaluate the overall level of business environment with level rather high. 36,27% of entrepreneurs evaluate a low level, and 10,78% of entrepreneurs classified the overall business environment with very low degree. The most common reason for dissatisfaction with the overall business environment of entrepreneurs is a high levy burden on entrepreneurs themselves and levy burden on businesses - employers.

Evaluation of questions in percentages and graphical representation of the evaluation SCPs at all district offices in Nitra region is shown in Table 3 and in Graph 1 and Graph 2.

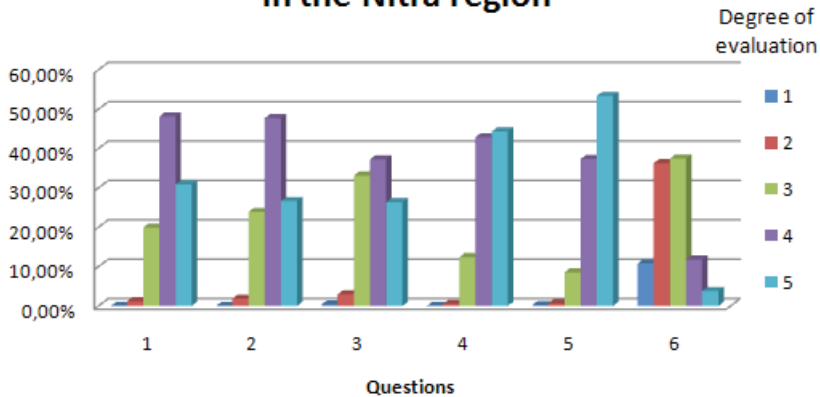
Table 3 Results of survey of entrepreneurs – small business entrepreneurs in Nitra region

Degree of evaluation	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Very low 1	0,00%	0,00%	0,33%	0,00%	0,16%	10,78%
Low 2	1,14%	1,80%	2,97%	0,49%	0,65%	36,27%
Medium 3	19,90%	23,86%	33,11%	12,38%	8,51%	37,42%
Rather high 4	48,12%	47,71%	37,23%	42,83%	37,32%	11,76%
High 5	30,83%	26,63%	26,36%	44,30%	53,36%	3,76%
Sum	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Average (mean values)	4,08646	3,99183	3,863262	4,309446	4,430442	2,614379

Source: own processing

Graph 1 Comparison of responses of entrepreneurs in the Nitra region

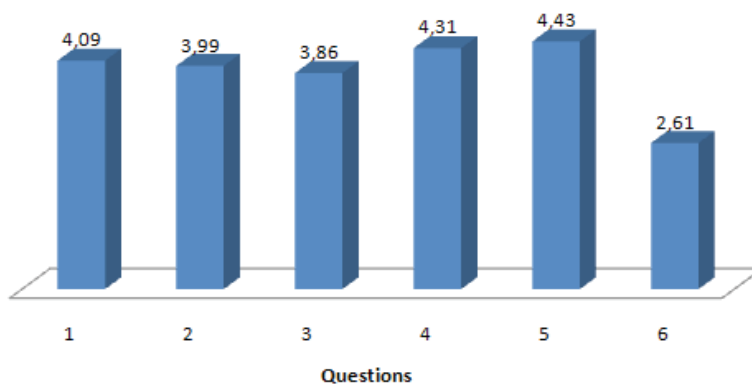
**Comparison of responses of entrepreneurs
in the Nitra region**



Source: own processing

Graph 2 Comparison of mean values of responses of entrepreneurs in the Nitra region

**Comparison of mean values of responses
of entrepreneurs in the Nitra region**



Source: own processing

The reform that abolished the regional offices from 1. October 2007 and the power of the cancelled regional offices delegated to district bodies and relevant ministries, shows positive results. Also the questionnaire survey shows

the positive evaluation of the services provided by “reformed” district offices to entrepreneurs.

Results of the questionnaire survey – employees of SCPs in Nitra region

According to the results of a survey of employees of all 7 SCPs distributed to all employees in Nitra region, which was focused on the the availability of information on legislative changes (Question 1), the flexibility of the legislative changes in relation to EU regulations (Question 2), the adaptability of SCPs employees to legislative changes (Question 3), the demands of legislative changes (Question 4), the collaboration with health insurance companies (Question 5), the interaction with the social security (Question 6), the collaboration with the Commercial Registry (Question 7), the cooperation with the Labor Offices (Question 8), the cooperation with the Tax Offices (Question 9), we can say, that the employees of SCPs are well adapted to new legislation in the field of small business, since the vast majority of respondents state medium or rather high quality. The functionality of the system of state administration related to small business shows more negative evaluation since the collaboration with other offices of state administration are evaluated in average as low - Social insurance (2,22 mean value) and Labor offices (2,64 mean value). The collaboration with Tax offices is more functional (58,62% evaluation as rather high) as well as the collaboration with health insurance companies (44,83% of employees reported as rather high). Table 4 and 5 show the results of the questionnaire survey among SCPs employees.

Table 4 Results of survey of employees of SCPs in Nitra region

Degree of evaluation	<i>Question 1</i>	<i>Question 2</i>	<i>Question 3</i>	<i>Question 4</i>	<i>Question 5</i>	<i>Question 6</i>	<i>Question 7</i>	<i>Question 8</i>	<i>Question 9</i>
Very low 1	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	25,93%	0,00%	14,29%	0,00%
Low 2	0,00%	3,45%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	29,63%	17,24%	25,00%	0,00%
Medium 3	68,97%	72,41%	6,90%	10,34%	31,03%	40,74%	44,83%	42,86%	24,14%
Rather high 4	24,14%	17,24%	72,41%	62,07%	44,83%	3,70%	31,03%	17,86%	58,62%
High 5	6,90%	6,90%	20,69%	27,59%	24,14%	0,00%	6,90%	0,00%	17,24%
Sum	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

Source: own processing

**Table 5 The mean values of response in questionnaire survey
by employees of SCPs in the Nitra region**

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mean values	3,38	3,28	4,14	4,17	3,93	2,22	3,28	2,64	3,93

Source: own processing

The prospective sample of entrepreneurs and employees in Nitra region evaluate the performance of state administration in the field of small business in the actual structure in a positive way, what can be understood as a reasonable expectation of improvement of local state administration performance as well as of other specialized areas after the reform, that is being introduced by governmental ESO program.

Results of the ongoing reform analysis

In spite of the change of the government in 2011, the new government decided to go on in improving merging the powers of the state offices and cancelling regional offices. In the Governmental program, the ESO Program (Effective, Just and Open public administration) for years 2012-2016 was adopted and approved by Governmental Resolution No 164 from 27th of April 2012. The ESO Program was prepared by Ministry of Interior and focuses on efficiency, reliability and openness of the state administration. The aim of the government is to create a new structure of local state administration bodies, based on competences integration of bodies of specialized local state administration into one state office at the local level with general competence. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to implement the required legislative measures. The ESO Program will be implemented in several stages resulting in more effective state administration meeting the citizen's needs and last but not least it should cause the savings of public finances. The idea is to simplify the amount of bureaucratic processes to citizens. As the Procedural Report of the Ministry of Interior stated, the intention of the whole project is as follows:

“The citizen and entrepreneur will be able to sort out all the specialized transactions provided by the state simply and at the minimal costs. In dealings with the state, they can use the electronic methods at the maximum level and at the personal dealings they do not have to attend any other specialized offices at the different places. State administration is from the citizen's and entrepreneur's point of view simple, clear and accessible. State administration is lean, flexible, works sustainable, transparently and at the minimal costs.”

The first stage aims at changing the structure of local state administration bodies. Since the abolition of the regional offices brought the required results, the

government has decided to continue in this sense. A number of regional structures of local state administration bodies have been cancelled. The new structure should simplify the contact between the citizens and state administration bodies, transparency, efficiency of the use of the financial funds and ensure more effective control. The competences of the abolished bodies are delegated to existing district offices placed in regions since 1. of January 2013.

The next step of the reform is creation of a group of general offices (under the district offices level) where citizens will be able to solve all the agenda when dealing with the public institutions. Act No 180/2013 Coll. on organization of local state administration and on changes and amendments of certain acts introduced the development of district offices with departments following the structure of former specialized local state administration. Since 01.10.2013, 72 district offices will be established; although within the individual departments can these district offices be categorized into *the two groups*. The first group is composed of all 72 regional offices where the following departments will be established:

- civil defense and governing in the crises and outside the time of wars and hostilities
- economic mobilization
- land registry
- state's defence
- environmental treatment

The second group consists of 49 offices out of them, where besides the above mentioned departments will also be presented:

- road transportation and local roads
- agriculture, forestry, hunting and landscaping
- general internal administration
- trade business

Territorial scope of district offices belonging to the second group is developed in more districts. Territorial scope is shown in the Annex 2 to the Act No 180/2013 Coll. State administration at the second stage is delegated to the district offices in the seat of regions, where the territorial scope is in the district of relevant region. District offices can establish a department of district office and determine its territorial district.

According to the §8 Law No 180/2013 Coll., the following offices of local state administration are being abolished: environmental offices, land offices, forest offices, offices for road transportation and local roads, land registry offices and district office Sturovo (acting as a part of general state administration in the area of

interior and small business). According to the §9 of the above mentioned act, the offices established by regulations valid till 30.09.2013 are actually changed into the district offices. State administration performed by district offices is controlled and managed by respective ministry (central body of state administration) having competences in the certain area of state administration.

The reform should have a positive impact at the state budget as more than 248 local state authorities (40 with status of budgetary organizations) are being abolished.

By the abolishment of these offices, it comes to the situation that the competences of the new established district offices in the seat of regions are realized by decisions in administrative proceeding which are being issued on the 1st and 2nd stage by the same “district office”. For administrative proceeding in the matters that are legally delegated to the district office in the seat of region (to its relevant department), the regional office in the seat of county shall establish a specific organizational unit. This way, the second instance proceeding at the district offices in the seat of region that are performing the decision making in matters on the first and second stage, remain retained.

The new structure of state administration is not a subject to inambiguous criticism on public administration even though the public sources savings introduced by minister of Interior, R. Kaliňák, are not proved by a serious analysis. The abolishment of regional stage of state administration and drafting of scope of district offices in the seat of regions as a coordinating, controlling, managing and examining body is impugnable. In the administrative proceeding, the basic principle applied according to § 58, article 1 of Administrative order is, that the appellate body deciding on the remedy against the regional office is regional office in the seat of region. At the same time and according to the introduced provisions of Administrative order, it is allowed to establish by a special Act in which the appellate body deciding on remedy against the district office in the seat of region as a first stage body, will be the district office in the seat of region again.

In the frame of applicable legal order, there are only exception cases justified with content of administrative agenda in some matters in the area of state administration of road transportation and land roads, where the performance of appeal proceeding can not be provided otherwise. Although, according to Kišičiarová S. (2004) the provision of such a horizontal two instance proceeding states that the appeal body can be other organizational unit of the same body and is in accordance with §59 of Administrative order. We cannot overlook the fact that the act stresses maximal independency and objectivity of proceeding and decision making process in the second level established by separate organizational unit within the organizational structure of district office in the seat of region, is clear that the decision on remedy will be made by the same state administration body subordinated to the same principal. Although it will be a different department of

regional office in the seat of region, but we just can not overlook the fact that all the heads of the departments, according to law, are appointed by principal. This way, the horizontal two instance of administrative proceeding is impugnable and will be most likely a reason of more common doubts of citizens on impartiality of the relevant employee of district office so far and it can be assumed that the proposals on exclusion of employees of relevant administrative body from the proceeding, according to §9 of Administrative order will be used more by citizens. Administrative agenda will grow and it can lead to unreasonable hold-outs in administrative proceeding.

Reducing the expenses from the state budget is one of the key objectives of the new legislation. On the other hand, no assumption of employees reducing in 2013 is expected. The operational costs will be decreased due to the new placement of integrated district offices into common premises. Thus the costs of lease of many of non-stated own premises will be decreased. Following table informs about the influences on priority fields.

Table 6 Influences of reform process on priority fields

	Positive	Without	Negative
1. Influence on public administration budgetary	x		
2. Influences on business environment		X	
3, Social influences - impacts on citizens economy - impact on social exclusion - equal opportunities and gender equality and impact on employment		X	
4. Influences on environment		X	
5. influences on informatization of society		X	

Source: ESO explanatory report, 2013

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Table 7 Proposal of savings within reform of state administration:

Impacts on the budget of public administration	Impact on budget of public administration (in euro)			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Incomers of public administration in total	0	0	0	0
In it:				
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR	-575 613	-2 670 653	-2 670 653	-2 670 653
Ministry of Environment of SR	-16 250	-65 000	-65 000	-65 000
Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of SR	-63 750	-255 000	-255 000	-255 000
Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Regional Development of SR	0	0	0	0
Ministry of Interior	655 613	2 990 653	2 990 653	2 990 653
<i>Out of it:</i>				
<i>- impact on SB</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>- impact on territorial self-government</i>	0	0	0	0
Expenditures of public administration in total	0	-2 241 886	-2 241 886	-2 241 886
In it:				
MARD SR District land offices	-1 698 726	-6 717 391	-6 717 391	-6 717 391
MARD SR District forestry offices	-796 072	-3 152 226	-3 152 226	-3 152 226
Ministry of Environment of SR	-2 989 755	-11 959 017	-11 959 017	-11 959 017
Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of SR	-6 170 086	-23 143 582	-22 823 582	-22 823 582
Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Regional Development of SR	-1 449 966	-5 799 864	-5 799 871	-5 799 871
Ministry of Interior	13 104 605	50 772 080	50 452 087	50 452 087
<i>- impact on SB(local and state administration)</i>	0	-2 241 889	-2 241 889	-2 241 889
Regional offices (Land offices)	0	-320 238	-320 238	-320 238
Regional offices (Forestry offices)	0	-142 011	-142 011	-142 011
Regional offices (Environment)	0	-570 244	-570 244	-570 244
Regional offices (Cadastre administration)	0	-914 625	-914 625	-914 625
Regional offices (Offices for road transportation and land roads)	0	-294 771	-294 771	-294 771
<i>- impact on territorial self-government</i>	0	0	0	0
Employability in Total	0	0	0	0
<i>- out of it an impact on SB</i>	0	0	0	0
Financing ensured in the budget	0	0	0	0
In it: for each subject in public administration / program separately	0	0	0	0

Source: ESO explanatory report, 2013

As stated in the financial analysis included in the explanatory report for the ongoing reform, the centralization of local state administration will not have bon-dous impact on state budget. The reduced expenditures of specialized resorts will be visible in increasing expenditures of Ministry of Interior of Slovakia, while there comes to the decrease of incomes for specialized resorts, flowing from activities of specialized local state administration. These, also are delegated to the Ministry of Interior of Slovakia. Analysis of impacts assumes positive impacts on public finances and neutral impact of reform on increased prioritized areas (business environment, social environment, and environment, etc.)

Conclusions

The survey conducted by evaluation of questionnaires answered by 614 entrepreneurs registered in 7 SCPs in Nitra region, shows that entrepreneurs evaluate Single contact points (SCPs) as units of “reformed” district offices predominantly positive. As for the survey among employees of SCPs in Nitra region, focused on the functionality of the public administration in terms of the complex collaboration in the field of small business, the results show that reform is needed.

The aim of the present government is to establish a structure of state administration that is high quality, efficient, open and closer to the citizens. Since 2007, so called general regional offices, including units of small business administration (8), have been annulled and SCPs were established. Since this partial reform proved an effective step, the government intends in the next programming period continue to further interference of regional offices of so called specialized government and their subsequent transition of responsibilities to their district offices and centres.

Thus the government expects to create within this reform a more effective public administration, as well as savings in government budget. In the next step, the government plans to create centers at local level to facilitate the access of citizens to public authorities. SCPs, established in 2007, operate on a similar principle, with the aim to facilitate entrepreneurs to access the necessary services and information in one center (point). SCPs, with hindsight proved to be effective. Based on the questionnaire method survey, we came to the same conclusion that the current structure of the state administration in the field of small business is effective, SCPs improved their functionality, and therefore we consider this model is also suitable for creation of new structure of state administration in Slovakia.

Nowadays, according to above analyzed impacts of reform on state budget, we assume that the reform will be more effective and will lead to the savings in the state administration. This proves also the fact that the savings are expected while keeping the number of employees of state administration. We suppose, that the assurance of the tasks of state administration in relation to the citizen will be more effective.

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Documents

- Explanatory report to the reform of state administration, especially to the Act No 180/2013 Coll. on organization of local state administration
- Act No. 345/2012 Coll. on
- Act No. 180/2013 Coll. on organization of local state administration
- Act No. 455/1991 Coll on small trade business as amendment
- Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market