



STRATEGIC UNANIMITY

On Dec. 24 and 25, 2009, the Radas of Crimea's raion of Bakhchysaray and city of Saky unanimously adopted their economic development strategies drafted with assistance from the USAID Local Investment and National Competitiveness project (LINC)

The unanimous voting, a routine thirty years ago and a rarity nowadays, came as no surprise to officers involved in the strategic planning efforts in Bakhchysaray and Saky.



"The Economic Block of the [Bakhchysaray Raion and City Sustainable Development] Strategy was adopted unanimously because, first, there was wide-spread discussion of this material. And second, Rada members – representatives from absolutely different parties and blocs – themselves participated in the plan development. That is, there was no matter of dispute because it was a jointly worked out action plan," said Elmira Ablyalimova, Head of the Bakhchysaray Raion State Administration Economy Department.

Development Strategic Plan]. The strategic planning process was well covered by the local newspaper and at meetings of Rada members. We quarreled, debated, argued with each other at the committee meetings, so when the draft strategy was introduced to the City Rada after those hot discussions, there was nothing left to discuss."

LINC uses so-called "community-based approach" to strategic planning. This means that LINC advisors and consultants plan and guide the process, provide consulting and other technical assistance, but all decisions are made by Expert Committee for Economic Development – a task force of representatives from local government, businesses, NGO's, scientific and educational institutions, etc.



Valeriy Kuzin, Saky City Rada Secretary: "The strategic plan allowed us to look at certain things in our city from another angle"

Saky City Rada Secretary Valeriy Kuzin holds a similar opinion: "We had nearly half of our Rada members on the Expert Committee [which was drafting the Economic



The Saky Expert Committee is doing SWOT analysis. Standing on the left is LINC Advisor Anatoliy Solovyov

The strategic planning process consists of several steps. It includes a Business Attitude Survey, production of a Community Profile, a SWOT analysis and formulation of a strategic vision, the development of Action Plans, and finally implementation of the strategy and monitoring of the implementation.

In Saky the Economic Development Strategic Plan is a separate document drafted with solo assistance from LINC. In Bakhchysaray, the economic development strategy – the Economic Block – was hammered out under the guidance of LINC in collaboration with the UNDP Crimea Integration and Development Program (CIDP) as part of the Bakhchysaray Raion and City Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Bakhchysaray economic strategy focuses on three critical development directions, including creation of conditions for investment attraction, improvement in the quality of raion development management, and hard infrastructure development, and two priority sectors: tourism and agriculture/processing. The strategy of Saky addresses three critical issues: resort and tourism, business development and investment attraction, and upgrade of municipal infrastructure.

According to Ms. Ablyalimova, it was for the first time in the Bakhchysaray Raion that representatives from the three pillars – general public, businesses, and authorities – drafted a joint document, which is "not just a nicely written paper but a real action plan that came into force on January 1." She said the Economic Block is a high-quality document, well-thought-out, elaborated to smallest details, and realistic. "The most important thing is that I believe it can be put into life," she added.

Both Ms. Ablyalimova and Mr. Kuzin praise the LINC experts who helped develop the strategies – Petro Koshukov and Volodymyr Proskurnin in Bakhchysaray and Anatoliy Solovyov and Iryna Kovra in Saky – and both say the experts have become their friends. Mr. Kuzin called them "great guys and tolerant professionals," and Ms. Ablyalimova said she can hardly find words to "express the overwhelming gratitude we feel."

The Bakhchysaray and Saky strategies are the first two developed and approved under the LINC project. In Crimea, LINC-guided strategic planning is also underway in Bilohirsk, Feodosia, Kerch, and Scholkine.