



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Regional Participatory Budgeting (PB) Support System “Cozy Yamal”	
Name of the city/region: Yamal-Nenets autonomous okrug	
Country: Russian Federation	
Institution presenting the candidacy: Regional Ministry of Finance of Yamal-Nenets autonomous okrug	
Start date of the experience: 2018	
End date of the experience: ongoing	
Type of candidacy	New experience
Type of experience	Participatory budgeting
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.
	Poll/referendum
	E-government/open government
	Citizen initiative
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion
	Community empowerment
	To empower non-organised citizens
	To increase citizen’s rights in terms of political participation
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem”
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy
Territorial area	All the territory
Thematic area	Governance
	Education
	Transport
	Urban management



	Health
	Security
	Environment and/or urban agriculture
	New social movements and associationism
	Culture
	Housing
	Local development
	Training/learning
	Social inclusion

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

The main objective of the experience is to improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy in Yamal-Nenets autonomous okrug (hereinafter Yamal or YaNAO).

For us it means creation of a regional level system to support participatory processes that would create incentives for each municipality (regardless of its type and size) to design and implement local PB, and for every citizen (regardless of his/her age and gender, nationality and vulnerability status) to participate in the local decision-making via PB processes. We believe that, in order to benefit from the synergy from provision of the informational, methodology and capacity building support to municipalities in a rather centralized way, this system should be flexible as flexible as possible so as to support the diversity of municipal PB models taken into account economic, financial, cultural and demographic context of each territory.

How have you achieved this objective?

The regional system “Cozy Yamal” aimed to support PB processes in municipalities of the YANAO region was established in 2018 ([video on “Cozy Yamal”](#)). This system has proved to (i) provide effective incentives to municipalities for the design and implementation of local PB without obliging them to do it; (ii) support innovativeness and diversity of the municipal PB models through provision of the systematic methodological support, information and knowledge sharing, and capacity building.

The main elements of the “Cozy Yamal” system are:

- Methodological support to local authorities in the design and implementation of local PB practices. An “alive” methodology and operations package was prepared by the regional PB team with the support of the World Bank experts and based on the best Russian and

international PB experience. The package was prepared in participatory consultations with local authorities, NGOs and Russian and international PB experts. The resulting documents included national level innovations, e.g. detailed mechanisms and procedures for engaging in PB vulnerable/disadvantaged groups of population (primarily, youth, people with disabilities and indigenous people), template “lego” type operational manuals for different types of municipalities (cities, rayons, settlements), operational manual and workbooks for students and teachers for implementing School PB, etc.



- Capacity building to local stakeholders. Customised training courses and consultations have been delivered by the joint team of YaNAO Ministry of Finance and the World Bank to municipal authorities, representatives of NGOs, volunteers, school students and teachers aimed at supporting the launch and development of local PB practices helping municipalities to select their own PB model and customise the developed methodology to the local context ([visual materials](#)).
- Institutional infrastructure, implementation support and offline work with population. The regional government initiated creation of the “Cozy Yamal” project offices in all 13 high-level municipalities. The main objectives of the project office staff are: (i) to increase awareness of citizens regarding their participation in PB; (ii) to assist citizens in the preparation of project applications and promoting the idea through public campaign, (iii) to assist local administrations in the organisation of community meetings and voting; (iv) to provide logistical support for ensuring participation of disabled people with limited mobility in community meetings, etc. Overall, the local project centres play the role of interlocutors between the municipal administration and citizens ([visual materials](#)).
- Digitalisation support and online participation. A unified digital platform “[We All Live in the North](#)” was developed by the regional government to support online PB participation. The system is adjusted for each municipality (each has its own window and can use it in a

customised way) and provides opportunities for citizens to propose and discuss ideas, to vote for shortlisted projects and to monitor implementation of the winning projects.

- Support with public awareness. The regional government provides support to municipalities in promotion of PB practices. Specifically, they provide municipal project offices with “Cozy Yamal” merch (t-shirts, baseball caps, stickers, flags, balloons) developed in accordance to the [brand book](#) and facilitate public awareness campaign by supporting and promoting PB posts at official regional and municipal level websites, newspapers, social media; broadcasts on TV; special PB sites at municipal celebration events.
- Financial support of School PBs. The regional Ministry of Finance provides financial resources to municipalities for implementation of PB in all 125 public schools of the region. Each school receives an equal amount of money (equivalent of approx. 4,200 USD per school) to finance ideas proposed, discussed and voted by students. Such an approach ensures equal opportunities in terms of participation and financial support for all school students regardless of the financial capacity of the municipality in where the school is located.
- Evaluation-based grant support. The regional Ministry of Finance provides, on an annual basis, rewarding grants to municipalities with the best PB practices. The evaluation process is based on a set of formal and transparent criteria, and the amount of the grant is quite significant to motivate municipalities in maintaining high quality.

Overall, the regional support system contributes to diffusion and scaling up of PB in YaNAO based on creating “soft” incentives and opportunities for municipalities rather than obliging them. We believe that only communities and citizens can request the local administration to launch and implement PB. However, a higher level support (from the regional or national level) could be extremely helpful in ensuring sustainability and support of innovations.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

Fully achieved. The launch of the “Cozy Yamal” PB support system resulted in a rapid scale-up of diverse PB models in Yamal municipalities. In 2018-2019 the number of municipalities implementing PBs has increased 3 times (from 9 to 26), the number of projects implemented has grown 3.6 times (from 19 to 69), and the total budget PB projects increased 4.3 times (from US\$0.27 mln to US\$1.17 mln).

Examples of selected PB models in YaNAO municipalities:

- Labytnangi city – “classical” PB process (online and offline collection of ideas by individuals, debating them at community meetings, and public voting offline and online) complemented with co-financing from citizens and local business ([visual materials](#)).
- Purovskiy rayon – rayon level PB based on the modified LISP methodology (ideas collected from citizens living in 2 cities and 6 rural settlements of the rayon; project proposals are discussed at community meetings and selected for financing based on a set of formal criteria that include results of online and offline voting, share of co-financing by various stakeholders, and others ([visual materials](#)).

- Noyabrsk city – a unique PB process called “Rhythm” based on the use of a mixed mechanisms / procedures for selection the best projects that balances: 1) citizens’ votes at the online portal; 2) scores resulting from the assessment of the projects according to a set of formal criteria (co-financing and labor contribution by local stakeholders, share of people supported the idea, etc.), and 3) votes of a group of elected delegates resulting from in-depth expert discussions ([visual materials](#)).
- School PB processes functioning in all 125 public schools of YaNAO are also based on various models to be consistent with specific models used for the general PB processes in particular municipalities ([visual materials](#)).



Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

Regional YaNAO PB support system “Cozy Yamal” is innovative in several ways:

1. Systematic capacity building and methodological support to municipalities implementing PB. All training events and materials are designed in a participatory way, based on the best Russian and international experiences and customised to the specificity of municipalities and local audience (municipal authorities, NGOs, volunteers, school students and teachers, etc.).
2. Support of innovations in municipal PBs including (i) promoting “inclusive PB” approach through guiding municipalities in engaging disabled and indigenous people at each stage of the PB project cycle ([visual materials](#)); (ii) promoting School PB through financial

support to all schools in YaNAO municipalities, and support of the brand new Summer PB Camp initiative where school students from various municipalities jointly learn PB fundamentals in a game format, etc. ([visual materials](#)).

3. Experimental site to pilot various PB models based on the best international and Russian practices. YaNAO experience on testing and supporting diversified municipal PB models is particularly important in the current Russian context, amid the rapidly growing demand for developing municipal PBs. Currently, the majority of PB practices in Russia are based on the standardized methodology of the Local Initiatives Support Program (LISP) which works perfectly well for the regional PBs, but is not 100% applicable for outstanding municipal practices. In this context YaNAO has become a knowledge-generating site of national importance where various approaches, mechanisms of participation and models are being tested and piloted for future scale-up.
4. Regional level monitoring and evaluation system. All PB processes in municipalities are evaluated by the regional Ministry of Finance based on the formal criteria (e.g. PB budget, level of citizens’ participation and co-financing); the best municipal practices are rewarded with cash grants.



To what extent is the procedure transferable?

In our view, the regional YaNAO PB support system can be replicated in any country as a system of support local PBs at sub-national or national levels. YaNAO’s experience is of particular interest for other Russian regions that are currently actively exploring the possibility of introducing its elements in their territories.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

Yamal is one out of 80+ regions in the Russian Federation, populated by 544,008 citizens. It is rather unique compared to the majority of Russia regions. Specifically, the following specificities of the region were considered in the design of the regional PB support system:

- Diversity of municipalities. The YaNAO region comprises 55 municipalities of different size and administrative status, including 13 higher level municipalities (6 urban districts (cities) and 7 municipal rayons) and 42 settlements within their borders.

Measures: design of template PB models for different types of municipalities with a variety of options for mechanisms and forms of citizen engagement (participation and voting online and offline; direct participation and using elected delegates, etc.) and in a participatory way with representatives of different municipalities.



- Large territory and northern climate. YaNAO is located in the Far North and has a territory of 769 sq.km (equal to one Spain and a half) mainly located beyond the Arctic Circle. The area consists of arctic tundra and taiga, with three large peninsulas, including the Yamal Peninsula which is the northernmost continental point of the region.

Measures: envisaging online participation using a digital platform “We All Live in the North” for citizens living in remote far north territories.

- Vulnerable people. Yamal is one of the regions in Russia populated by northern indigenous people - one third of them are residents of the tundra who lead a traditional, nomadic way of life and graze the world's largest herd of reindeers. Additionally, Yamal is in the top-five Russian regions with the youngest population (measured by the average population age).

Measures: all methodological documents and training modules are designed with highlighting a special focus on engaging vulnerable/ disadvantaged groups of population; financial and methodological support is provided to municipalities and schools for implementing PB for children and youth.

- The region is unique in Russian context, as most of its municipalities are self-sufficient in terms of economic and financial situation.

Measures: all YaNAO municipalities design and finance general PB practices on their own with the technical support of the region received on a voluntary basis.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

Prior to launching the Yamal PB system of support, a few Yamal municipalities had their own PB experiences, but these were mainly weak in terms of methodology and amount of funds debated. In 2016 the joint Ministry of Finance-World Bank project on strengthening participatory budgeting in Russia was launched; in 2017 it was joined by YaNAO region. The participation in the project provided opportunities for the region in learning and absorbing the best Russian and international PB experience and, based on this, allowed us to build the unique regional PB support system of support. In parallel, participating in this project helps us to disseminate the results of YaNAO PB experience at the regional, national and international levels.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

The implementation of Yamal PB procedures is a joint work of regional and municipal authorities and communities (citizens and local business). This is a list of actors participating in Yamal PB and having a shared responsibility:

A) Regional level – inter-agency cooperation between:

- The Ministry of Finance (supported by World Bank experts) is responsible for the overall PB implementation in municipalities, including providing methodological and capacity building support, monitoring and providing of rewarding grants and overall coordination of regional level agencies.
- The Ministry of Internal Policy responsible for public awareness campaign, communications support, coordination of the “We All Live in the North” portal and the operation of the project offices in municipalities of YaNAO.
- The Ministry of Education supports the conduction of informational and capacity building events for school students and teachers within the School PB initiatives.

- The Ministry of Youth Policy contributing to organisation of the children PB Summer Camp.
- The Ministry of North Indigenous People is supporting engagement of indigenous people to PB.
- The Ministry of Social Protection contributes to the engagement of vulnerable people (including people with disabilities).

B) Municipal level – strong cooperation between the municipal divisions of the above-mentioned ministries with regard to PB organizational support, as well as providing support to citizens in preparation of the project proposal, its refinement based on the feedback from the sector-specific agency (housing, communal services, culture, sport, etc.)

C) Community level – ideas are proposed by individuals, groups of citizens or local entrepreneurs; project proposals are co-designed by initiators; projects (in most cases) are co-financed in cash and in-kind by local community (citizens and local business); projects are publicly controlled by initiator and other members of the community.



Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

1. The regional Ministry of finance runs an ongoing monitoring of PB initiatives in municipalities of YaNAO and, based on its results, provides rewarding grants to the best municipalities in terms of PB implementation (regulated by the [YaNAO Government Decree № 631-П on the project “Budget initiative of citizens” dated 21 June, 2018](#)). This evaluation and rating of municipalities is based on three sets of formal criteria (PB budget allocations,



co-financing by community, and citizens' participation and awareness). The best three municipal practices per year are rewarded with grants amounted to US \$75,000 in total. The process looks as follows: first, all municipalities provide information on PB to the regional Ministry of Finance (MoF) online with the use of a specially developed software. Second, the MoF staff review the report and return it for revision (if needed). Third, the rating of municipalities is produced in an automatic way; based on which the Decree for providing rewarding PB grants is processed.

2. The World Bank is invited to participate in YaNAO PB as a strategic advisor responsible for ensuring transparency and quality control as well as bringing in the best international PB practices.

3. By the end of each PB edition, Yamal's MoF organises final events with presentations and discussions of the results achieved and lessons learnt ([visual materials](#)).

Annexes:

[Main video](#)

[Capacity Building to Local Stakeholders](#)

["Cozy Yamal" Project Offices](#)

[PB in Labytnangi city](#)

[PB in Purovskiy rayon](#)

[PB Process "Rhythm"](#)

[School PB](#)

["Cozy Yamal" - Focus on inclusion](#)

[PB Summer Camp](#)

[YANA O PB Final Event](#)