

SUCCESS STORIES



BELARUS

The Republic of Belarus joined the PEMPAL network in the early years of its establishment, gradually deepening its engagement since 2010.

During 2010-12 Belarus chaired the BCOP proactively contributing to reinvigorating the “life” back into the ownership of BCOP by members in managing the community’s events. Senior management of the Belarus Ministry of Finance views PEMPAL as a useful platform for exchange of experiences between the PFM practitioners of the network. Belarussian officials hold positions on BCOP and TCOP Executive Committees, reflecting high interest and relevancy of the communities’ activities for Belarus Ministry of Finance.

Improvement of PFM practices has been on the agenda of Belarus Government for quite a while.

In 2012, the Ministry of Finance of Belarus requested the World Bank’s assistance to carry out initial diagnostics and provide support in the design and implementation of a comprehensive PFM reform, with implementation of a new Government Financial Management Information System (FMIS) being an important component of the reform. The World Bank provides technical assistance to address these needs but, as noted by Mr. Maxim Yermolovich, First Deputy Minister of Finance:



Maxim Yermolovich
First Deputy Minister of Finance of Belarus

“Exchange of knowledge through communication within PEMPAL enriches the dialogue and provides unique opportunities to learn from successes and lessons of the peers firsthand.”

TCOP events played an important role in informing the development of the FMIS modernization concept by the Belarus Government.

One of the events to be mentioned is the plenary workshop held in the Russian Federation in 2012. It provided the Ministry of Finance of Belarus an opportunity to discuss with the Federal Treasury the case of successful modernization of the Russian treasury system - one of the largest in the world. The visit intensified cooperation between the treasuries of the two countries, followed up with a prompt execution of the cooperation agreement, paving the way for a more frequent exchange of visits.

Visiting Vladimir (Russia) regional treasury, 2012



Andrey Narchuk
Head of Prospective Development Department, Ministry of Finance of Belarus

"It was a very open and productive discussion. We learned a lot about technical aspects of the system, but equally important was the Russian Federal Treasury's advice on project management, methodological and functional changes in the treasury operations that needed to be taken into account."

In early 2014, Belarus Ministry of Finance finalized the work on the Concept for Modernization of FMIS and invited colleagues from the TCOP to Minsk to solicit their views and professional advice on the document. This workshop was held in October 2014 and brought together thirty-seven specialists from the Ministries of Finance of 10 countries - members of the TCOP thematic group on the use of information technologies in treasury

operations. The event was also attended by Mr. Cem Dener, a lead World Bank expert in the use of information technologies for PFM, which allowed officials of the Ministry of Finance and its IT Center to get additional insights for development of the system's design and assessment of customization needs of commercial off-the-shelf solutions.



Tamara Gruzinskaya
Deputy Head of the Main State Treasury, Ministry of Finance of Belarus

"Belarus treasury system is considered to be strong, it supports an efficient budget execution process, but we are aware of the limitations for its future development on the current platform and see the need for its modernization. We shared our vision of the future system with our peers and explained that multiple systems currently in operation were developed in-house, some of them 10-15 years ago, on an outdated technological platform using multiple software packages and databases."

The members of the working group reviewed the concept and found our plans very ambitious. They provided valuable advice focusing on prerequisites to be put in place and coordinated with the stakeholders before launching the design of the system."

At the end of 2015, the Government of Belarus defined the strategy for public finance management reform (PFM), expected to focus, inter alia, on the improvement of accounting and reporting in the public sector.

In 2016, the Ministry of Finance of Belarus invited the TCOP colleagues to come to Minsk again to discuss the practical implications of convergence of the national public accounting and reporting systems with respective international standards. A joint discussion focused on the Belarus reform strategy of the public accounting and

reporting system, including the decisions to be put in place before embarking on the practical implementation of the reform. Such decisions concern the coverage of institutions (spending units), data consolidation methods, structure and contents of financial statements, the level and sequence of standards implementation. A special emphasis was made on the preparation for the accounting and reporting reform, and on the challenges encountered in the articulation of the strategic vision of the reform. The meeting of TCOP working group which took place in Minsk in October 2016 was attended by 45 experts from 13 PEMPAL member countries and international specialists.



Sergey Kachan
Head of the Main State Treasury, Ministry of Finance of Belarus

“The Treasury of the Republic of Belarus is currently making its first and may be the most difficult steps towards accounting and reporting reform. Active exchange of opinions with our peers and the World Bank experts enabled us to develop a clear vision of how to start the reform. It was very useful and informative workshop and I am confident that it will ensure a sound launch of the reform.”



Lyudmila Guryanova
Deputy Head of the Main State Treasury, Ministry of Finance of Belarus; TCOP Executive Committee member

“PEMPAL provides us with an opportunity to influence the agenda of our events, which ensures that all activities respond to our professional needs. Discussions with our peers from the TCOP gave us insights into the actual progress with implementation of reforms in their countries and helped us to make next step in understanding and acceptance of key issues to be addressed. This refers also to evolution of our perception of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and how they relate to relevant national standards and instructions.”



Andrey Narchuk
Head of Prospective Development Department, Ministry of Finance of Belarus

“Lessons shared by our peers during TCOP plenary sessions and study visits helped us enhance the requirements for the complex design of the future FMIS, which was being developed with support from the ECA Regional PFM Trust Fund in 2016-17.”



Elena Pechen
Head of the Main Budget Policy Department, Ministry of Finance of Belarus

“PEMPAL events allow us to step back from our routine work on preparation and execution of the budgets and assess overall performance of our PFM systems compared with best practices and examples from our peers. It is very encouraging to find solutions to address shortcomings, but we are even happier to discover elements of best practices in our own systems. We just need to learn how to present and share our accomplishments with colleagues.”



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