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AN ANALYSIS OF THE MECHANISMS FOR ESTABLISHING COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND THE PUBLIC IN DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT IN UKRAINE

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Abstract. *This paper addresses the necessity of research on mechanisms for the establishment of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of solid domestic waste management (hereinafter – SWM) in the conditions of present-day Ukraine. A brief excursus was made on both global and Ukrainian practices of forming partnerships. In order to reinforce the theoretical material, the paper presents the results of*

an expert survey on determining the prospects for improving the state of SWM through the use of mechanisms for establishing cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public. The findings provided information that is useful for identifying the major barriers that prevent the authorities, the private sector, and the public from collaborating in SWM, as well as for setting the criteria for estimating the efficiency of cooperation between these entities. Furthermore, in the course of the study, a hypothesis was formulated: that the crisis determinants of SWM stem from conflicts of interest between the authorities, the private sector, and the general public.

Keywords: *public administration, waste management, mechanism, partnership, sphere of SWM, Ukraine*

Raktiniai žodžiai: *viešasis administravimas, kietųjų buitinių atliekų tvarkymas, mechanizmas, partnerystė, Ukraina*

JEL: *Q56, O44, R58, R50*

Introduction

The current state of world public administration is characterized by a shift in its priorities towards addressing environmental concerns. In this respect, Ukraine, whose state environmental policy is at the point of bifurcation, is no exception. Ukraine tends to degrade its untapped environmental potential, which is manifested in environmental pollution due to solid domestic wastes. It is noteworthy that current financial, economic, and technological problems do not fully reflect the destruction being wrought on the environment, as they mainly refer to communication within the ‘authorities – private sector – public’ triad.

Today’s reality is that the transition in Ukraine towards market conditions is accompanied by an increased shadowing of the private sector, and the unwillingness of the population to accept the new utility tariff policy. The instability and uncertainty in regards to the vectors of national development, and an increasing dependence of the state on external factors, strengthen the influence of destabilizing factors on any progress in environmental protection. The sphere of SWM in Ukraine is at the point of confrontation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public, given both the imbalance in state environmental policy and the deteriorating environment.

In order to stabilize the condition of the environment, it is not the involvement of all stakeholders but rather their consciousness of the urgency of shaping an effective state environmental policy through the consolidation of interests that is needed. However, in practice, it turns out that the essence of the environmental interest remains unclear, since this category is concealed by all sorts of preferences and benefits that are predominantly economic. A striking example of the lack of a balanced environmental policy in Ukraine is the rapid accumulation of solid waste at landfills, and their burial without pre-treatment in almost one hundred percent of cases.

Literature review

In 2015, the international community identified the global priorities for sustainable development by 2030 (G20 2016), according to which developed and developing countries must meet a set of 17 goals. One of the objectives (number 17) aims to use the proven practices of forging different forms of partnership, which requires a considerable administrative capacity, an appropriate legal framework, a high corporate social responsibility, and years of experience (Aizawa 2018, 7; ECA 2018, 11; Smaliukienė 2005, 69).

In Ukraine, studies on the mechanisms for cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public are only starting to gain traction. Scientists are highlighting aspects of establishing cooperation, one of the most common forms of which is public-private partnership (PPP). Despite a comprehensive PPP regulatory framework, this sector in Ukraine faces a number of problems regarding the transparency of government activities, the lack of publicly available project registers and the complexity of their preparation, and a dependence on budget fluctuations (Khodakivska and Mohylnyi 2018, 535; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2010; The EIU 2017, 46). In the 2009 business environment rating, Ukraine ranked 72nd among 82 countries (The EIU 2019).

In today's world, there exist different approaches to determining the best forms of cooperation, in particular the European and Asian methods. The Asian partnership model is dependent on the government coordination of relationships with other actors for a proper implementation of policies and supply of resources, while examples of the European partnership demonstrate the strong role of the private sector in achieving sustainable development (Marx 2019, 2). As noted by Abbott, Levi-faur, and Snidal (2017), the private sector has all the necessary resources, experience, and knowledge sufficient to enforce the law. The result of a partnership is an optimum sharing of risk with the private partner, and keeping the price-quality ratio affordable to both the public sector and consumers (MOVECO 2018, 10; Paresashvili and Abashishvili 2013; Raisiene 2010).

At the same time, to establish a partnership, it is necessary that the efforts of the parties are directed not only at solving problems related to economic growth, but also at gains in welfare for all the population strata and improvement of the living conditions in the country as a whole (Jakunin 2007). Experts indicate the following success criteria for this form of partnership: jointly developed goals and objectives on a 'benefit to everyone – benefit to all' basis; action plan approval by all partners; and a high level of trust between partners (Androniceanu and Tvaronavičienė 2019, 107; Butova et al. 2014; Stasova 2012). In this case, it is advisable to take into account not only the authorities and the private sector, but also the population as an aggregate of inhabitants of a certain territory who are carriers of certain local interests (Dunayev and Ziuz 2019, 109).

It is necessary to implement the principle of socio-cultural inclusion, which presupposes public involvement in joint development programs (Ziuz 2019). Getting the local population involved is largely stipulated by the need to serve the supervisory function, thereby controlling certain political processes (Rong and Yalong 2018, 5–6). Such a comprehensive cooperation enhances communication skills (residents are aware of the urgency of solving problems, while the authorities are trying to take into account their

interests), as the most problematic aspect in the relationship between the authorities and the population is a lack of trust in the state power (Dunayev 2017, 199). Despite the prevalence of bilateral partnership models, it is important to involve all the stakeholders, which is expressed in cooperation and finding an interest common to the authorities, the private sector, and the public.

Research methodology

Aiming to obtain the necessary data, an expert survey was conducted on the theme of ‘The prospects of improving the status of SWM through the use of mechanisms for establishing cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public’ in August–September 2019.

The *purpose of the study* was to analyse the state of the mechanisms for establishing cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM. The main task was to identify the obstacles to cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public, as well as to determine the criteria for assessing the efficiency of cooperation between these entities in the field of solid domestic waste management.

The selected *methods of the study* were: a sociological survey – for interviewing the SWM professionals with the relevant experience and competence; and modelling – for developing a model of relationships between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the SWM sphere. Public administration and local government officials and the staff of executive bodies, representatives of the private sector and NGOs, and researchers and educators acted as respondents. The total number of respondents was $n = 50$, including women (48%) and men (52%), living in cities with a population of more than 50,000 residents (86%), villages/settlements (8%), and cities with a population of less than 50,000 residents (6%). The largest age groups were: 31–35 years (16%); 36–40 years (20%); and 41–45 years (20%). In terms of education, 20% of respondents had a PhD/Doctor of Science degree.

The *hypothesis of this study* is based on the assumption that the main determinants of the crisis state of the SWM sphere lie in a conflict of interests between the authorities, the private sector, and the public. The data obtained provided useful information for identifying the major barriers that prevent the authorities, the private sector, and the public from cooperating in SWM, as well as for setting the criteria to estimate the efficiency of these entities’ cooperation. Along with that, the notion of ‘private sector’ was also specified; during the survey it was interpreted as ‘specialized procurement and processing enterprises of large, medium, and small business located in the territory of Ukraine.’ The main tasks of the private sector are the collection and procurement of recyclables, and the manufacturing of a wide range of products made of recyclable materials obtained from solid domestic waste processing.

Analysis of the research results and main findings

The questions of the poll were divided into specific blocks, the first of which concerned the assessment of the status of SWM in Ukraine in general. According to the respondents, the state of the environment is 'rather unsatisfactory' (50%) or 'unsatisfactory' (20%), which indicates the inefficiency of the state policy that negatively affects the environmental situation in the regions. 92% of the respondents pointed to the problem of contaminated areas in their places of residence. 58% of the respondents termed the state of SWM in Ukraine as 'unsatisfactory', while 36% agreed to an assessment of 'rather unsatisfactory'. Only 4% of the respondents rated the current state of SWM as 'rather satisfactory'. However, none of the experts chose the 'satisfactory' rating for the state of SWM.

The questions in the next block assessed the efficiency of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM (Fig. 1). According to the experts, the level of cooperation between these entities is 'very low' and 'low'. It should be emphasized that the efficiency of cooperation between the private sector and the public is medium, i.e. in some aspects of SWM the private sector and the population manage to maintain a certain level of interaction, as shown below. None of the experts chose the option of 'very high' for the cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the general public.

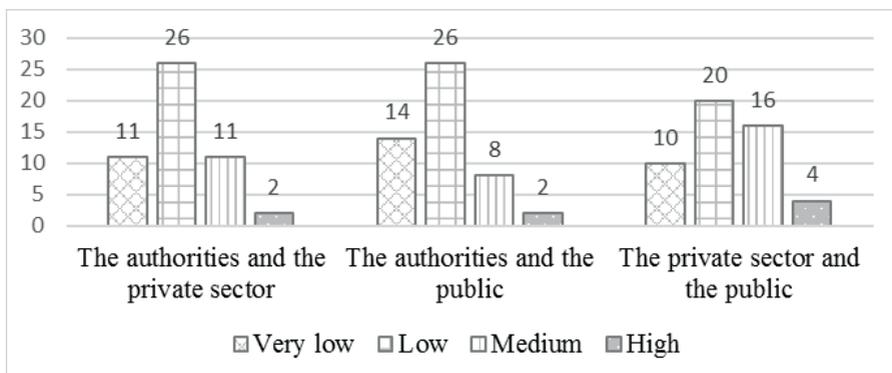


Fig. 1. How do you assess the efficiency of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM in Ukraine?

When identifying the major obstacles to cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM, the experts were to choose no more than five options. The main obstacles noted by the experts were: 'ineffective legal regulation' (37), 'corruption' (25), 'low public awareness of governance mechanisms' (23), and 'lack of transparency in management decision-making' (21). Besides this, a significant number of respondents noted that there exist 'conflicts of interests and mutual distrust'

(24). Some of the experts also gave their own answers, specifically noting the ‘absence of an effective, economically sound model of SWM’.

The survey provided questions about PPP and suggested assessing the extent to which this mechanism promotes synergies between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM in Ukraine (Fig. 2). The majority of the respondents agreed with the view that the mechanism is ‘unlikely to contribute’ (15) to achieving cooperation. On the contrary, some experts believe that this mechanism ‘definitely contributes’ (8) or ‘rather contributes’ (6) to the achievement of cooperation between these entities. However, a significant number of experts were ‘not able to answer the question unequivocally’ (10), indicating insufficient legal regulation of the functioning of the PPP mechanism.

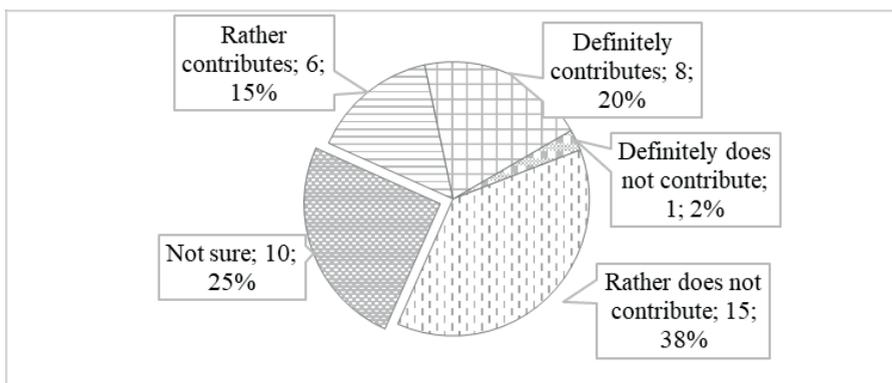


Fig. 2. To what extent does the PPP mechanism contribute to cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the sphere of SWM in Ukraine?

Concerning the definition of the basic principles of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in SWM (Fig. 3), the experts noted the important role of local public authorities, responding that ‘the authorities should stimulate the private sector to solve the SWM problem’ (19), and ‘the authorities should take care of solving the problem of SWM, but the private sector should help, too’ (15). A similar principle works in relations between the authorities and the population, hence approval of: ‘the authorities should take care of the problem of SWM, but the citizens should also help’ (27). In the opinion of some experts (9), ‘the authorities should encourage citizens to solve SWM problems’. None of the respondents chose to select the option ‘citizens should take initiative in solving the problem of SWM’.

The experts also proposed their own options for answers, in particular: ‘executive authorities, together with the public, should understand what they deal with (what SWM is)’; ‘the business sector should provide for the functioning of the SWM system’; ‘executive authorities should support the initiative of the said entities by writing clear rules,

performing a control function, and collecting statistics'; and 'the authorities must create the framework conditions for the SWM system'. Additionally, 'the authorities should get the private sector and the population involved in cooperation' was frequently (25) noted. Some respondents also supported the view that 'the private sector and the public should interact through the authorities' (11).

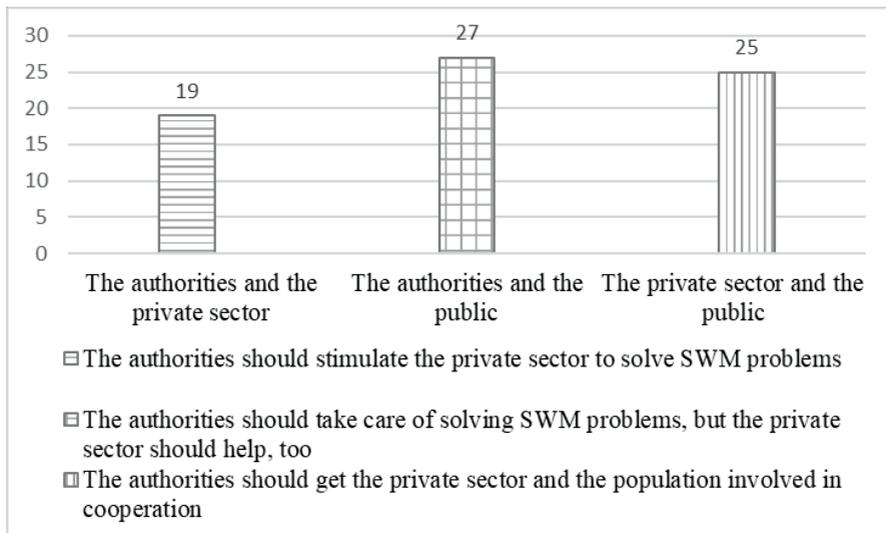


Fig. 3. The major principles of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM

With regard to identifying the most effective forms of cooperation between the authorities and the general public in the field of SWM (Fig. 4), selecting no more than five options, the answers were distributed as follows: 'joint program development' (30), 'participation in joint events' (27), and 'creation of a joint advisory body' (20). This confirmed a widespread belief that in order to tackle a particular problem, a separate authority should be created to deal solely with its resolution. In some respondents' view, the most effective forms of cooperation between the authorities and the private sector in SWM are: 'joint program development' (37), 'joint measures to solve urgent problems' (26), and 'public-private partnership' (20).

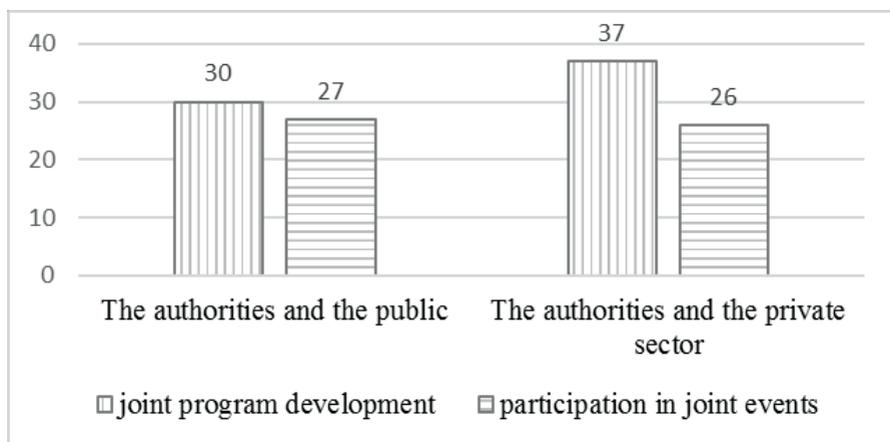


Fig. 4. The most effective forms of cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in SWM

The next three questions touched upon the possibilities of strengthening cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM on the initiative of each of these entities (the answers to these questions, with a maximum of five options, are given in Table 1). The experts stressed the importance of legal regulation, specifically: the authorities' initiative is to enforce cooperation by improving the legislation, while the private sector and the public must comply with the legal requirements. The authorities should act in a transparent manner, create favourable conditions for the activities of all the entities, and take into account the interests of all actors when making management decisions aimed at improving the state of the environment. The private sector should focus its efforts on: minimizing waste generation, increasing the volume of recyclable materials in production, and the share of expenditures for environmental measures. The population should: seriously consider their choice of products, minimizing the use of non-recyclables; pay timely and in full for waste management services; and take part in waste sorting. By jointly implementing programs with the authorities, the private sector and the public get actively involved in management decision-making.

Table 1. In what way can cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public be enhanced in the field of SWM?

on the initiative of the authorities				
consideration of stakeholder' interests in management decision-making	ensuring transparency of the authorities' activities	improvement of legal regulation	creating favourable conditions for the activity of all entities	improvement of the state of the environment
29	28	24	19	19
on the initiative of the private sector				
compliance with legal requirements	minimizing waste generation	increasing the volume of recyclables in production	participation in the joint programs implementation	increasing financing of environmental measures
30	29	27	24	21
on the initiative of the public				
minimizing the use of non-recyclable products	compliance with legal requirements	timely and full payment for waste management services	participation in solid waste sorting	participation in the joint programs implementation
32	27	27	26	20

Answering the questions about the criteria for assessing the cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM, the experts were again to choose no more than five options (Fig. 5). According to the majority of the respondents, it is necessary to consider 'the state of the environment' (38), 'the environmental implications of implementing partnership agreements' (26), 'the number of population involved in solid waste sorting' (26), 'an increased volume of production made from recyclable materials' (21), and 'the state of public health' (21). Some experts have also added their own variants of answers, in particular: 'reducing the negative impact on the environment'; 'timely delivered services'; 'neatness of container platforms'; and 'clear and transparent information on services rendered and composition of solid waste (to analyse the range of valuable resource materials for collection)'.

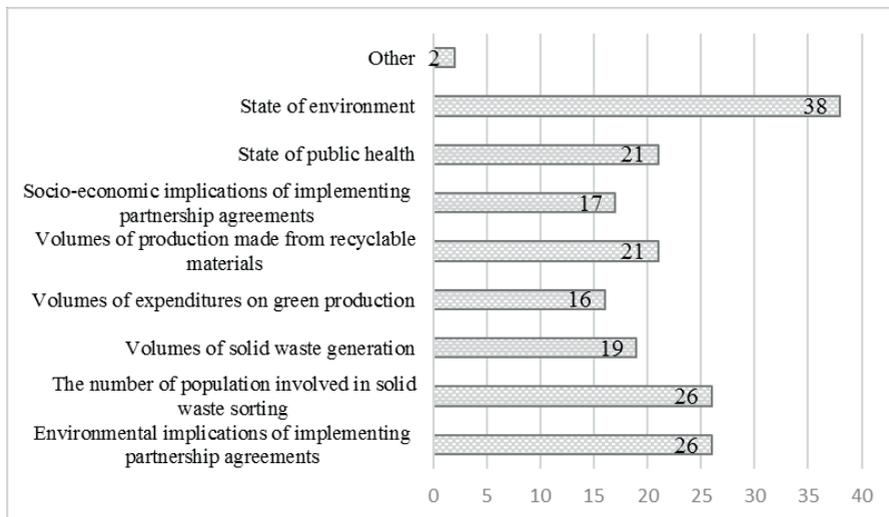


Fig. 5. What, in your opinion, can serve as a criterion for the assessment of cooperation between the authorities, the public sector, and the public in SWM?

Given the expert survey results, the level of efficiency of the cooperation between the authorities and the private sector in the field of SWM in Ukraine is low. Along with this, there exist conflicts of interests and mutual distrust between the entities, which causes SWM problems. Thus, taking into account the above data, it can be asserted that the hypothesis of the study about the determinants of the crisis state of SWM being dependent on the conflict of interests between the authorities, the private sector, and the public has been proved correct. It follows that the problem of SWM depends on the state of relations between the authorities, the private sector, and the public, i.e. a specific feature of the current stage in the development of SWM is that the problem of waste is the result of a poor interaction in the ‘authorities – private sector – population’ chain. There has been a direct correlation observed between solid domestic waste generation (entailing environmental deterioration) and the intensification of the conflict of interests between the authorities, the private sector, and the public (Fig. 6).

In order to minimize the amount of solid domestic waste and accomplish the jointly developed targets, it is necessary to neutralize the conflict of interests and to enhance cooperation between the authorities, the private sector, and the public.

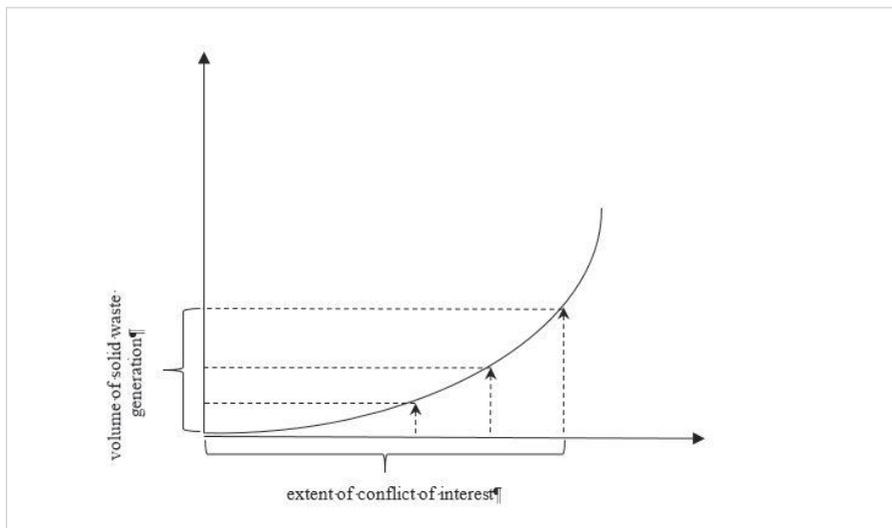


Fig. 6. Correlation between the volumes of solid domestic waste generation and the extent of conflict of interests

Conclusions

1. The results of the study showed that in Ukraine there is a 'rather unsatisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' state of SWM, which is caused by an ineffective state policy in the sphere, with 92% of respondents saying that in their settlement there is a problem of contamination of the territory with solid domestic wastes.
2. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of interaction between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the area of SWM is low. The main obstacles to achieving effective interaction between these entities are: inadequate legislative regulation, corruption, low public awareness of governance mechanisms, lack of transparency in management decision-making, and mutual mistrust.
3. The mechanism of public-private partnership is rather non-conducive to achieving interaction between the authorities, the private sector, and the population, which indicates the urgency of further legislative regulation of the functioning of this mechanism.
4. Regarding the definition of the basic principles of interaction between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM, the role of government representatives is significant, since they should stimulate the private sector and the population to cooperate and solve the SWM problem through the development of joint programs, participation in joint events, and the creation of a joint consultative and advisory body.
5. The criteria for assessing the interaction between the authorities, the private sector, and the public in the field of SWM may be as follows: environmental status; environmental

consequences of the implementation of partnership agreements; the number of people engaged in the sorting of SWM; volumes of recyclable products; and the condition of public health.

6. A direct dependence is observed between solid domestic waste production (and environmental degradation as its consequence) and the intensification of conflicts of interests between the public authorities, the private sector, and the general public. In order to counteract this conflict of interests, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between these entities through the development of joint programs and participation in joint activities towards the achievement of the goal of public administration in the field of SWM. Efforts should be made to improve the legal regulation, to ensure transparency of the authorities' activity, to create favourable conditions for the activities of all actors, and to take into account the interests of stakeholders when making management decisions.

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Valdžios institucijų, privačiojo sektoriaus ir gyventojų sąveikos mechanizmų analizė kietųjų atliekų tvarkymo srityje Ukrainoje

Anotacija

Straipsnyje aptariama būtinybė ištirti valdžios institucijų, privačiojo sektoriaus ir visuomenės bendradarbiavimo kietųjų buitinių atliekų tvarkymo (toliau – KBA) srityje kūrimo mechanizmus dabartinėmis sąlygomis Ukrainoje. Trumpai apžvelgta tokios partnerystės formavimo praktika Ukrainoje ir pasaulyje. Siekiant nustatyti KBA būklės pagerėjimo perspektyvas naudojant valdžios, privačiojo sektoriaus ir visuomenės bendradarbiavimo užmezgimo mechanizmus, darbe kartu su teorine medžiaga pateikiami ekspertų apklausos rezultatai. Gauti rezultatai suteikė naudingos informacijos nustatant pagrindines kliūtis, trukdančias valdžios institucijoms, privačiajam sektoriui ir visuomenei bendradarbiauti KBA srityje, taip pat nustatant šių subjektų bendradarbiavimo veiksmingumo vertinimo kriterijus. Tyrimo metu buvo suformuluota hipotezė, kad KBA krizę lemiantys veiksniai kyla iš valdžios, privačiojo sektoriaus ir visuomenės interesų konflikto.

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