

BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTER: HAVE A QUESTION*N. DUBKO*

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The relevance of small business development is considered, some results of the questionnaire survey of small businesses in the Vitebsk region are presented, the problem of small business is highlighted and an action is proposed to solve it.

One of the main conditions for sustainable growth of the national economy is the development of small and medium-sized businesses, which creates a kind of Foundation for the well-being of the nation. The historical practice of functioning of any society clearly demonstrates that the most effective development of the country's infrastructure, economy and social sphere is carried out through consistent qualitative changes in goods and services created, resources and technologies used for this purpose, on the basis of intellectual management technologies implemented in the public administration system. At the same time, it should be taken into account that the main Creator of innovative ideas, generating solutions to non-standard tasks, and having appropriate value orientations, is an entrepreneur who is interested in successful activities.

Problems of small and medium-sized businesses are widely studied in foreign and domestic scientific economic literature. His views on commercial activity, as well as the very concept of "entrepreneur" was revealed by R. Cantillon, who argued that "entrepreneurship is a matter of foresight and the desire to take risks, which is not necessarily associated with the involvement of labor in a certain production process" [1]. A. Smith in his work noted that the desire of the entrepreneur to achieve their interests, leads to the achievement of economic benefits and benefits for the whole society. At the same time, the main condition for achieving such results is the requirement that all economic entities are guaranteed the basic economic freedoms: freedom of choice of the sphere of activity, freedom of decision-making, freedom of competition and freedom of trade [3, p.51]. The essence of entrepreneurship, its nature and factors that affect its development, is revealed by J.-B. Say, D. Raccardo, W. Petty, A. Turgo, G. von Mangoldt, J. von Thunen [1]. Foreign scientists such as F. Brodel, A. Marshall, and J. J. have made a great contribution to the modern understanding, theory, and practice of entrepreneurship as a special economic and social phenomenon. Robinson, P. Samuelson, J. Hicks, R. Hirsch [2, p. 183]. K. Marx identified the terms "entrepreneur" and "capitalist" [1].

Among domestic scientists, the trends of SME development and its role in the economy were studied by N. G. Agurbash and E. Kalinkina; the specifics of modern international entrepreneurship and industrial cooperation were studied by A. O. Blinov and A. S. Belorusev. Actual problems of development of the national economy of Belarus, processes of internationalization of business are described in the works of Belarusian scientists A.V. Bondar, L. N. Davydenko, A. E. Daineko, A.V. Danilchenko, A. A. Pranevich, V. Rudenkov, G. G. Sanko, G. V. Turban, V. N. Shimov, G. A. Shmarlovskaya, Yu. m.Yasinsky, and others [2, p. 183].

The theoretical foundations of small business and the development of this sector in Belarus are considered in the works of M. I. Balashevich, O. S. Balashkov, T. P. Bykova, I. M. Vashko, S. V. Dadalko, L. N. Nekhorosheva, G. I. Olekhnovich, V. L. Simanovich, A. N. Senko, and others [2, p. 184].

Problems of small business development in the regional aspect were dealt with by M. A. Shekhova [4], A. I. Shamanovich [5], and O. V. Sholokhov, who assessed the impact of small business on the regional economy [6]. In foreign studies, we can highlight the work of a group of scientists in the framework of a Program partially funded by the European Fund for regional development [9]. B. Shoe, Erich Calamari other researchers have investigated the factors affecting small business development in the regions of Europe. S. Bruyat and P.-A. Julien define the main prospects in the development of entrepreneurship [8]. F. Roundly considers the importance of developing entrepreneurship in small towns [9].

A questionnaire survey among representatives of small and medium business in Vitebsk region to study the problems and necessary directions of development of regional entrepreneurship, held in the framework of the international technical assistance project "Development "Kastychnickaja Economia forum" in April-June 2019 with the participation of the author identified a need to develop measures aimed at support and development of business activity. In particular, more than 60 % of the total number of respondents who answered the question agreed that there is not enough effective work of business support infrastructure entities in the region (figure 1). This is despite the fact that the functions of the business support centers are consulting on organizational and

legal issues; conducting training seminars; developing business plans for development; informing entrepreneurs about real estate objects offered for rent, etc. According to the respondents' answers, entrepreneurs do not want to contact the business support centers, as they often do not receive sufficient information and support from them. Thus, small business representatives have to find answers to their questions on their own and use paid legal advice.

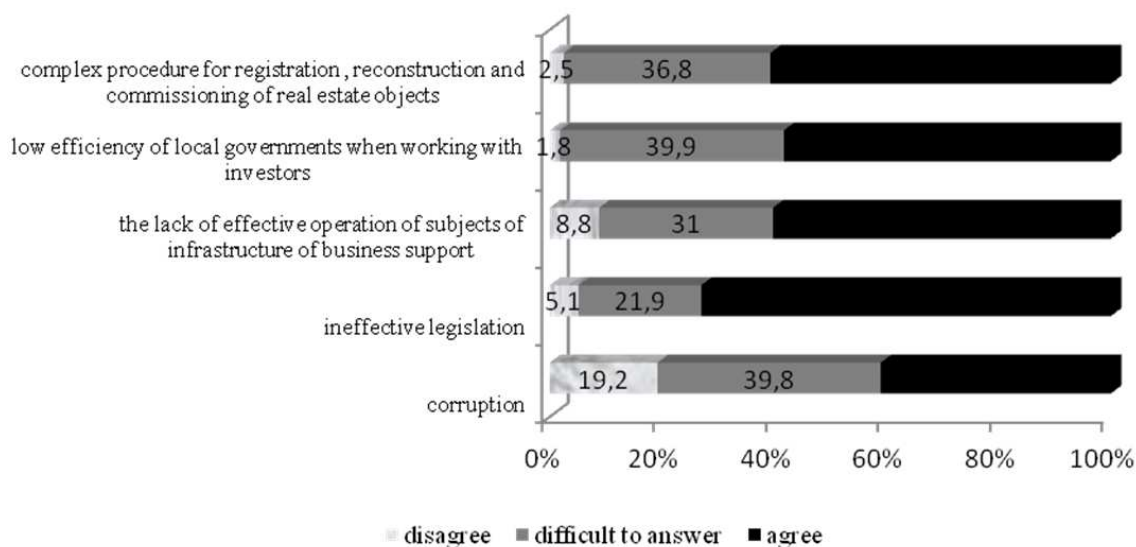


Figure 1-factors that hinder business development in the Vitebsk region, according to respondents, in % of the total number of respondents who answered the question

Source: in-house development based on [10]

Having studied the experience of supporting entrepreneurship in foreign countries, it is advisable to adopt the experience of the UK, where there is a national hotline for supporting small businesses. This is a key element of government support for business. It provides guidance on business improvement for start-UPS and existing businesses. The service provides consulting information, and there is also a callback service that offers more comprehensive support for businesses. Consulting is carried out by a team of experienced business support staff. It offers up to 60 minutes of free telephone support, taking into account the individual needs of entrepreneurs. A similar service also exists in Russia.

Thus, it is possible to create a "hotline" on small business issues of a reference and consulting nature in the Vitebsk region on the basis of business support centers to ensure transparency and openness of activities aimed at supporting small businesses in the region, and providing feedback to small businesses, helping small businesses to overcome administrative barriers. In addition, the "hotline" is a tool for supporting small businesses, aimed at identifying violations of legislation, attempts to hinder the activities of small businesses, and providing real assistance to small businesses.

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