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The role of civil society in local development

The paper analyses the collaboration between different stakeholders of local development, but focuses mainly on social aspects of the process. On the one hand, economic growth without improving population's quality of life could not ensure sustainable development of the territory and increase motivation of stakeholders for long-term economic activity. On the other hand, social aspects tend to be necessary conditions for achieving economic agreements and for creating new economic projects. As part of the analysis, following issues will be discussed: the trust as one of social factors; culture of building a dialogue between authorities, business and society; the ability of governmental and non-governmental organizations to perform the role in social resources redistributing and in ending participants of economic process with required social status.

In contrast to numerous studies on social development of territories, this discussion will be more focused on the micro level of the process. The NGOs do not just operate in a region, but are actively involved in dialogue-based collaboration and interpersonal communications, observed by researchers. The discussion in these issues will be based on the situation in Russia and Latvia, the two post-Soviet countries with partly common historical background, but significantly different development of social institutions nowadays. A special aspect of the discussion is the role of civil society in the development of small areas, which is the European Union for Latvia's province and federal state bodies for Russian small towns.