

# *Navigation to the Market*

Regulation and Competition  
in Local Utilities  
in Central and Eastern Europe

*Edited by*

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# Foreword

The chapters in this book were prepared under the “Local Government Policy Partnership” Program. This is a joint project of two donor organizations: the British Government’s Department for International Development (DFID), and the Local Government and Public Service Initiative (LGI) of the Open Society Institute, Budapest, which launched this regional program. The “Local Government Policy Partnership” (LGPP) projects intend to contribute to policy development and innovations in Central and Eastern European countries.

LGPP hopes to develop expertise and to support professional cooperation among local government specialists throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Parallel to this, experiences from this region should be made available in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Central Asia. The core partner countries are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. However, other countries have been invited to participate in these regional projects, which would help direct information exchange and comparison of policy efforts. Planned LGPP publications include policy studies and proposals discussed with government officials and experts in the countries involved.

Targeted beneficiaries of LGPP projects are national government ministries, local government associations, research and training institutions, and individual local authorities throughout the CEE region. LGI intends to publish three studies each year. In 2001–2002, (the first year of LGPP operations), the following policy areas were selected:

- a) Education financing and management;
- b) Regulation and competition of local utility services, and
- c) Public perception of local governments.

This book, however, should not be seen as a typical product of the LGPP program. This work offers no specific policy recommendations. Instead, it concentrates on changes in public attitudes towards local governments, and on differences in approaches towards various components of the respective municipal systems. As local governments become increasingly important in citizens’ everyday lives, political institutions and public actors who can demonstrate greater sensitivity towards public opinion are vital for the success of future reforms. The hidden message of this work is that without regular and systematic analysis of public opinion, viable local government policies will become even more difficult to design and implement in the future.

*Ken Davey & Gábor Péteri*

August, 2001

