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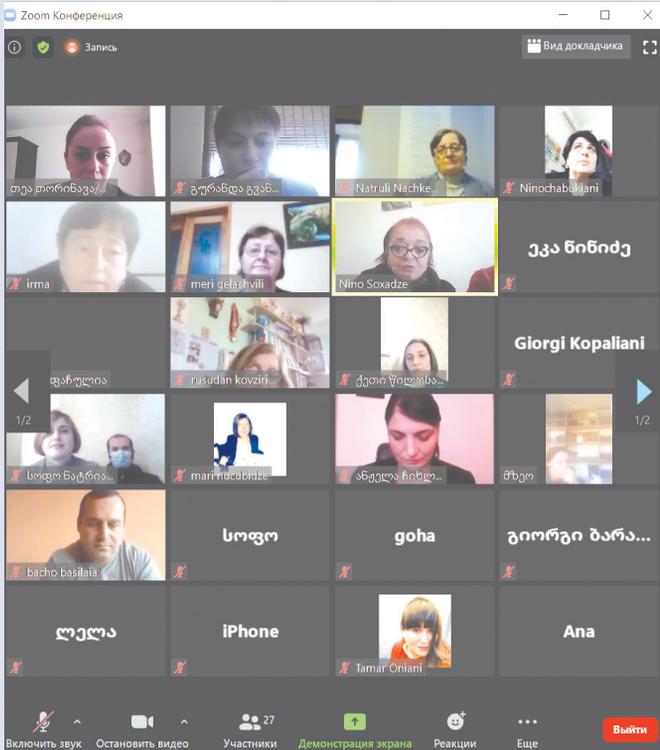


THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR) ROADMAP MONITORING IN 8 MUNICIPALITIES OF WESTERN GEORGIA

REPORT No 3

2021

CSO FORUM MEETINGS AND TRAININGS



რესურსების მოძიების წყარო, სახეები და მეთოდები

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SWOT - ანალიზის გამოყენება.

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SWOT

**THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
IN 8 MUNICIPALITIES
OF WESTERN GEORGIA
REPORT No 3**

**VANI, TERJOLA, BAGDATI, KHONI
AMBROLAURI, TSAGERI, LANCHKHUTI, OZURGETI**

Publication prepared by

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PROGRESS ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR) IMPLEMENTATION IN LOCAL SELF - GOVERNMENTS

THE THIRD MONITORING CONSOLIDATED REPORT

LIZI SOPROMADZE

EXPERT ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
NELE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

1. INTRODUCTION

Proper and effective governance promotes and strengthens the building of a democratic state. The policy documents, strategies and development plans elaborated by the government determine the governance efficiency. According to the democratic and good governance principles, the inclusiveness of civil society and various actors in the decision-making process made by government and regarding public policy is crucial.

The inclusiveness of civil society in policy planning and implementation is considered one of the fundamental elements of democratic governance. Public involvement increases trust in the political system and the government legitimacy.

Civil monitoring is one of the most powerful tools providing civil society participation in public policy implementation. The central part of the activities of non-governmental organizations is either aimed at monitoring a particular field or includes a monitoring component.

Successful implementation of Public Administration Reform (PAR) plays a fundamental role in Georgia's integration into the EU. Under the "Georgia-EU Association Agreement", the country must implement in-depth reforms regarding public administration and public service.

The PAR Plan foresees two main objectives regarding the local government:

- **Strengthening of local governments through increasing their power;**
- **Gradual development and improvement of electronic services in municipalities for improving their accessibility in local self-governments.**

An essential component of strengthening local self-government is the gradual development and improvement of e-services in municipalities. The reform action plan for 2019-2020 responds to this issue.

Civil society must be more actively involved to ensure local governance transparency, accountability and inclusiveness and effectively implement PAR at the local level.

To contribute to the proper implementation of PAR at the local level, as well as transparent, efficient, accountable and inclusive local administration, **Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”** with “Fund of Women Entrepreneurs” and Imereti Scientists` Union “Spectri” is implementing the project - “A common forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap monitoring”.

The project aims at actively involving the civil society organizations (CSO) from eight municipalities of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Guria in the monitoring process of PAR implementation at the local self-governments **through creation and strengthening of CSO Forum (“Forum”)**.

Eight inter-sectoral **“working groups”** have been set up in all the target municipalities to **strengthen the local coordination and cooperation** between CSOs and the structural units of local self-government in the process of PAR and analyse the shortcomings identified as a result of the monitoring and ensure the efficiency of the response. The working group is the first coordination mechanism created to promote the proper implementation of PAR in the target municipalities. It involves the representatives (10-12 people in total) of the local authorities, CSOs (including “Forum” members), media and vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, single women, women victims of violence, IDPs, families with many children, etc.). Its activities and functions have been set forth by the relevant provision and approved by the municipalities. “Working groups” have elaborated the local action plans currently considered, adopted and approved by all the City Councils of target municipalities. It will contribute to improving the e-government system at the local level. Detailed advocacy strategies have been developed to address the existing problems. As a result of the active advocacy campaign conducted by the working groups and their efforts, several gaps and problems identified during the monitoring have been addressed and solved.

2. MONITORING AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The third monitoring aims to assess the progress of recommendations elaborated for addressing the gaps identified through the second monitoring; to identify challenges regarding the transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of the local self-government electronic services and develop new recommendations to improve the deficiencies.

The monitoring was conducted in February 2021 in 8 municipalities of Georgia, including Khoni, Bagdati, Terjola, Vani, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Tsageri and Ambrolauri municipalities, by 16 NGOs consolidated in the “CSO forum”.

The level of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of local government work has been studied according to the monitoring mechanism and the questionnaire elaborated by the project partners. It implied 29 different criteria and assessment indicators. The PAR implementation assessment has been carried out based on the monitoring of the official websites of municipalities and the analysis of the information requested from the local authority representatives, and the observation of the citizens’ participation practices on grounds. Telephone communication, private meetings, and official online sources have been used to retrieve and verify the information.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION METHODS:

- Study of the municipality official website;
- Analysis of legislation regulating monitoring issues, normative acts and regulations of municipalities;
- Requesting public information;
- Sending test e-mails, telephone communication and meetings with the representatives of the municipality relevant services - to verify and fill in the information;
- Observing issues on the local political agenda.

The monitoring has revealed that there is visible progress regarding the implementation of public administration reform in the municipalities. Local political processes have become noticeably transparent and effective, increasing the level of citizen participation.

3. MONITORING FINDINGS - PROGRESS AND GAP ASSESSMENT

3.1. TRANSPARENCY

The local self-government transparency has been assessed based on the following indicators and parameters:

- Transparency of the vacancy announcement process in the municipalities;
- Accessibility of the organizational structure of City Council and City Hall, and CVs or contact information of the public servants on the municipality websites;
- Accessibility of the public information on City Council and City Hall sessions and meetings, reports and minutes of specific departments, normative acts adopted by the City Council, approved budgets on the websites;
- Availability of information on days of reception and consultation with citizens by the public servants;
- Availability of an anti-corruption strategy and plan at the local level and the public servants' ethics code.

During the present monitoring process, the quality of local authorities' responses to the shortcomings identified during the previous monitoring and the changes made have been studied.



PUBLICITY AND TERMS OF VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The third monitoring has revealed that in most municipalities (Lanchkhuti, Tsageri, Bagdati, Vani and Terjola), the terms and conditions for posting vacancies are observed. In the case of Khoni Municipality, the website is being reorganized. Therefore, it could not be viewed empirically. Similarly, during the third monitoring, in Ambrolauri Municipality, this component could not be evaluated. According to the municipality representatives, the announced vacancies will be automatically deleted from the website after the deadline expiration. Ambrolauri Municipality representatives confirm that when there is a vacancy, the deadlines are observed, and publicity is ensured.

Ozurgeti has implemented the recommendation given through the second monitoring and added a function on the official website, where vacancies are announced. This result indicates some progress made by the municipalities.

Due to the pandemic, most municipalities have switched to emergency mode, and finding new staff is not considered expedient during this period. Accordingly, advertisements for vacancies were not posted on the website.



PUBLICITY OF THE CVS AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS

After the second monitoring, apparent progress has been made regarding uploading the information on the website. The municipalities have considered the recommendations, and the websites represent the municipalities' organizational structure, CVs and contact information (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) of officials are available. Documents reflecting their duties are also shared on the website.

The contact information has been revised and updated in Bagdati, Vani and Terjola municipalities.

In the municipalities, electronic communication of citizens with local officials has been established and simplified, and citizens have created question-and-answer panels.

An application, “Lanchkhuti Municipality Electronic Manager”¹ has been created and launched. The population can receive comprehensive information on the City Council activities through the application and ask questions to its members. The websites of Ozurgeti, Ambrolauri and Tsageri municipalities also provide the necessary information. The current information has been further revised and updated. For example, Ozurgeti Municipality has added a graphic diagram of the organizational structure. It is possible to get acquainted with individual structural units. Khoni Municipality website is updated, and the new format will take the monitoring report recommendations into account.

¹ Available at:

https://lcman.ge/?fbclid=IwAR3_gwMn6wqQrtkZVQqqIqUue8e88kw2vgmnr-L4XWjf9z-1KoPZrvaSToyU



CITIZEN RECEPTION/OPEN CONSULTATION DAYS

In general, significant progress has been made regarding citizens' reception and consultation days. However, there are some gaps. For example, in Bagdati municipality, although a specific time has been set for the Mayor and the City Council Chairman, the information about the reception days is unavailable on the web portal.

There is some progress in Vani Municipality. Unlike the previous monitoring, when only the Mayor had officially appointed days of reception, in response to the proposed recommendations, **open consultation days and hours have been set in City Hall and City Council** under the City Council Chair official order. Municipalities that believe that citizens should not be restricted to meet with officials do not have citizen registration mechanisms for the meeting. It would greatly simplify the flow of citizens and reduce their waiting and queuing times. In Khoni Municipality, there are regular citizen reception/open consultation hours (especially at the City Hall). However, the relevant columns on the website are mostly empty. **Work on the introduction of an online registration system has started only in Ambrolauri municipality.** Due to pandemic induced preventive measures in Ozurgeti municipality, citizens have not been admitted to the City Hall since 2020. However, there is a hotline number and e-platforms through which citizens can use municipal services without interruption. According to the obtained information, as soon as the pandemic is over, the reception of citizens will resume.



PUBLISHING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION

Significant progress has been made regarding publishing financial documents. The posting of financial reports, approved budget, 3, 6, 9-month budget implementation reports, annual report, procurement plan, and other reports on the websites has been significantly regulated.

3, 6, 9-month reports had not been uploaded on the website in Vani Municipality. **The last monitoring results have shown that progress in this direction has been maintained.** Interim financial reports and quarterly budget execution reports, procurement plan, and implementation report are uploaded on the website at three-month intervals. **Interim reports had not been uploaded in Bagdati Municipality. However, having followed the relevant recommendations, the shortcoming has been gradually improved.**

There is significant progress in Terjola Municipality as well. 3,6,9-month reports have been uploaded on the website since the second monitoring. This information is available on the web page now. The website contains most of the mandatory public information. Dates and minutes of the City Council sessions are available. The information is shared via the City Council Facebook page and website. The session minutes, normative acts and decrees, hotline number are available on the website as well. Although Vani Municipality has started uploading reports for 3, 6 and 9 months after the second report, **the activity reports of various departments have not been uploaded yet. They say that an old website of inadequate capacity reasons it.** But the positive trend is apparent. With the active inclusiveness of the “working group”, funds have been allocated in the 2021 budget **to update the website** . It will fill this gap, and all types of reports will be uploaded on it. **Due to the rather small memory of the Ambrolauri Municipality web portal, there is a risk of losing/deleting the sent information. Tsageri Municipality is facing a similar challenge.**



ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES OF THE SELF-GOVERNMENT

A code of ethics and an anti-corruption plan are being developed with the active participation of the “working groups”. Bagdati Municipality did not have an anti-corruption plan or a code of ethics. The municipality follows the Law on Conflict of Interest and Corruption as an anti-corruption mechanism. No changes are tracked in this direction yet. However, the “working group” plans to continue consultative meetings on these issues with the relevant authorities.

In Bagdati Municipality, significant progress is evident regarding the Code of Ethics. The “working group” has started intensive work to approve the Code of Ethics. A resolution on the general rules of conduct and ethics of public servants has been drafted. Consultations are underway, and a document is being prepared for approval by the City Council. It should be noted that since most of the target municipalities do not have a code of ethics, working on a code of ethics is an important step forward for the Bagdati Municipality.

Vani Municipality did not have anti-corruption plans and anti-corruption regulations, nor did it have a code of ethics. As a result of the intensive work of the working group, significant progress has been made in this direction. According to the recommendation, work on the Code of Ethics has started, and regulation has been developed. After passing the relevant procedures, a

document - Code of Ethics of the Local Self-Government Public Servants has been approved.²

It should be noted that the adoption of this document is a step forward for the municipality in terms of transparency and openness. At this stage, the working group continues developing an anti-corruption statute and anti-corruption plan. Khoni Municipality has undertaken to develop an anti-corruption plan and included a relevant point in the action plan. **No anti-corruption strategy and action plan are regulating the issue of transparency, accountability in Lanchkhuti Municipality. There is no provision on ethical conduct.** Only financial regulation documents are available. According to previous monitoring materials, **significant progress has been made in Ozurgeti Municipality regarding anti-corruption measures. There is a Strategy for Transparency and Integrity for 2019-2022 and an Action Plan for 2019-2020.** It is a municipality anti-corruption document. The strategy monitoring framework and assessment methodology have been approved for this stage. An indicator of the existing positive dynamics is the corruption risk assessment system introduced in March 2021. Documents related to financial regulations are also available on the website. The rules of conduct for public officials are prescribed in the regulations. However, a separate regulation on ethical conduct has not yet been developed. There is a dialogue on this issue in the municipality.

3.2. EFFICIENCY

The level of efficiency of self-governments was assessed based on the following indicators and parameters: availability of the e-service (i.e. whether a citizen has an opportunity to submit proposals, complaints and petitions, register appointment and frequency of the responses to their written requests); availability of the assessment mechanism of the services provided by the municipality; monitoring of the activities undertaken by the City Hall (whether there are any forms and terms for monitoring); whether needs of the local officials' qualification are assessed and whether the municipality has an appropriate professional development plan elaborated and adopted based on the results of the assessment.

²Available at:

<https://vani.gov.ge/sajaro-mokheleta-etikis-kodeqsi/?fbclid=IwAR1ge4EB-UvavfSDwJ4c-RbUKtvu6qaYGVzNyXCejS6vzd-aZNIM8KE2bdU>



LEVEL OF RESPONSES TO THE COMPLAINTS AND LETTERS OF CITIZENS

The third monitoring report shows that in Terjola Municipality, citizens' letters and complaints are answered within 10 days after registration. The relevant law sets the deadline. Consequently, feedback takes place within this period. This process is programmed electronically, and no letter remains unanswered, or the deadline is violated. Some letters are urgent to respond to, and feedback is provided accordingly. In Terjola Municipality, 8 complaints, 3797 letters have been received, and 1739 letters sent. In addition, the number of letters and complaints is counted regularly at the end of the year and sent to the relevant government agencies. In Vani Municipality, citizens' letters and complaints are answered within the timeframe set by the General Administrative Code. In 2020, 71 letters were received in Vani Municipality via e-Document and 341 letters by MMS. Incoming e-mails are analyzed upon receipt and sent to the appropriate recipient. Response time depends on the complexity of the request made in the letter. If it requires deadlines, citizens are sent interim responses that the fact is being studied. At this stage, in Khoni Municipality, it is possible to submit letters/complaints and receive answers electronically via the City Hall e-mail khonismeria@yahoo.com. Incoming and sent correspondence is sorted, and statistics are generated in the gender dimension. Since January, more than 800 letters have been received in Khoni Municipality (384 women, 420 men), and 694 ones have been sent; more than 20 citizens (9 women and 11 men) have called the hotline.

During the monitoring process in Ozurgeti, Bagdati and Khoni municipalities, it was noted that letters, complaints received from the local authorities were not analyzed, and reports were not prepared. Statistics are produced only in Bagdati. This practice existed in Bagdati municipality during the second monitoring, and there is no change in this direction.

The third monitoring has revealed that in 2020, 11 administrative complaints were submitted to the City Hall in Ambrolauri Municipality and Tsageri Municipality received five complaints. The municipalities answered them within the timeframe set by law.



MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

The lack of a monitoring system remains a significant challenge in the activities of municipalities. **Against this background, there are forms of monitoring in Vani Municipality, although this monitoring is not systematic but fragmented.**

After the second monitoring, there is some progress regarding monitoring the activities of the City Hall services, monitoring deadlines and relevant forms. **The practise of monitoring the services of the City Hall has been introduced in Terjola Municipality.** The work of the City Hall employees is monitored once every three months. A scoring system is used in the evaluation. The monitoring system is not introduced in Bagdati municipality. The municipality uses the audit report and therefore uses the forms and timeframes used in this report. The Audit Office has its work schedule and annual work plan. The Office is guided by its statute, which stipulates the obligation for the City Hall services to conduct periodic monitoring and prepare reports.

There is no practice of assessing the satisfaction with municipal service in Vani Municipality.

Ambrolauri Municipality also lacks particular forms of citizen satisfaction assessment and service evaluation practices. However, citizens can express their opinion through the municipality official Facebook page. Similarly, Tsageri and Lanchkhuti municipalities do not have similar practices. However, representatives of Tsageri Municipality City Council and the City Hall have stated that they are ready to introduce similar practices if they are provided with consultations.

There are no clearly structured forms in Terjola Municipality to assess the population`s satisfaction with municipal services and identify their needs, but progress is increasing. Social network, personal meetings, surveys, and regular visits of the City Council Chairman to study the citizens` problems on the spot had been used before. **In the case of Bagdati Municipality, there is a significant positive precedent. As a result of the second monitoring, a particular form for assessing the population`s satisfaction with social service programs has been created at the Social Service, which citizens can fill out.** The analysis of the information obtained via this form provides an opportunity to identify population satisfaction.

As a result of the recommendations of the second monitoring report, Ozurgeti Municipality has introduced the assessment of population satisfaction with municipal services. It has developed the necessary forms for evaluation.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT PUBLIC OFFICIALS

An article on professional development has been included in the Tsageri Municipality Budget. 1% of the salary in the amount of 7 000 GEL is allocated on it. In Bagdati Municipality, 1% of the salary fund of officials (17 000 GEL) was invested in training last year. 9 000 GEL has already been spent. 1% of the budget (22 000GEL) is allocated for professional development from the Terjola municipal budget. 9 257 GEL was spent in 2020. The number of trainings has been reduced due to the pandemic. In Khoni Municipality, it was revealed that the number of training participants had been significantly reduced because of the Covid-19. Ozurgeti Municipality has not benefited from the allowed 1% this year and, consequently, has not spent the budget on professional development. Due to the pandemic, no training was purchased in 2020. However, the number of training participants within various projects has increased.

In the target municipalities, a survey has been conducted on the training needs of civil servants, and professional development plans have been developed. Several meetings, trainings/workshops, as well as round tables and meetings between self-government representatives and citizens, have been held in Vani, Bagdati and Ambrolauri municipalities.

The municipalities of Bagdati, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Ambrolauri have staff development plans. Based on the civil servants` needs study, the development plan is created annually. The plan is uploaded to the Public Bureau database. A similar survey is conducted once a year.

Self-governments use various tools and methods for the quality management of activities. In the first stage, an online meeting system was set up in the municipalities. Different municipal services started sharing best practice and experience.

Last year, a meeting was held to share best practices of information exchange between self-governments regarding the introduction of e-case management. According to the Human Resources Management Service representative, the practice and experience are constantly shared via telephone and online means.

In Terjola Municipality, the City Council Chairman was actively involved in sharing best practices. Tskaltubo's experience on participatory budgeting was shared, and a local expert was invited. In Khoni Municipality, participatory budgeting remains a challenge regarding transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of self-government activities. Unfortunately, it is not possible to start a political dialogue on the issue yet.

3.3. INCLUSIVENESS/PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation and inclusiveness in the local policy-making process is a cornerstone of self-government. The main principle of open and good governance is a cooperation between citizens and local government, frequency of communication, participation of different segments of society in identifying local policies and programs when all vulnerable groups (women, youth, people with disabilities) have equal opportunities, any vulnerable groups are involved in the process. Their views have a tangible impact on local politics.

During the present monitoring, inclusiveness was assessed based on the following indicators: provision of standards of inclusiveness in self-governments; active participation of citizens in the elaboration of the municipal budgets and programs, and the existence of the regulations providing participation; implementation of social and gender budgets in municipalities; using the mechanisms of inclusiveness by citizens (submission of petition/complaint, sending letters), the functioning of the local gender equality and civil advisory councils, and the councils of persons with disabilities.



PRESERVING THE STANDARDS OF INCLUSIVENESS

Since the second monitoring, no significant progress has been made to create an adapted environment for people with disabilities in municipal buildings. Most administrative buildings are not adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. **The administrative buildings of Ambrolauri, Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Bagdati municipalities are partially equipped with outdoor ramps, which provide access to the ground floor for people with disabilities.** Progress is being made in Terjola Municipality. **After the second monitoring, the municipality has started arranging a specially adapted space on the ground floor. There has also been a positive change in Khoni Municipality. The City Hall building has been adapted, and people with disabilities can freely apply to the citizens' reception.**

In Vani Municipality, ramps for people with disabilities are arranged at the entrance. However, the building interior is not adapted.

Following the recommendations of the second monitoring report, councils of persons with disabilities have been established in most of the target municipalities. For example, **under Vani Municipality Mayor's order # 20 800 of July 21, 2020, the composition of the Council of Persons with Disabilities was approved. There is a Council of Persons with Disabilities in Bagdati Municipality, which has a statute approved by the City Council.** This regulation is developed based on the

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities.

Knowledge in this direction is deepening over time, which is facilitated by information campaigns organized by NGOs. **Since the second monitoring, positive dynamics has been observed in the activities of the Civil Advisory Council, the Gender Equality Council, the Council of Persons with Disabilities and other councils or working groups in Terjola and Vani municipalities.**

Also, the Tsageri Civil Council, which is responsible for protecting the interests of other vulnerable groups, is more actively working with decision-makers to address the interest of people with disabilities and their needs. This group is also actively involved in the development of the municipal program. The work format of the above councils should ensure effective, transparent and inclusive governance of the municipality.

In most municipalities, there is no specific person responsible for dealing with vulnerable groups (women, the socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, people with hearing, sight and mobility problems), **except in Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Tsageri municipalities. However, those in charge of communicating with citizens assist vulnerable groups to communicate with the authorities.**

Progress has been made in this direction in Lanchkhuti Municipality. Since the previous monitoring, a person in charge of civil society organizations/working groups has been appointed in the City Hall.

In Terjola Municipality, there are no persons responsible for communication with vulnerable groups. However, these issues are supervised by the Social Service. Specialists in the public relations department are also responsible for communicating with vulnerable groups.

The third monitoring reveals that there is no translation service in the municipalities, as there is no need for it. Only one case was reported during this period. Turkish businessman had to be provided with this service in Lanchkhuti municipality.



LEVEL OF USE OF EXISTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

Progress in this direction has been made in Vani Municipality, where the website is being modernized. A new window is being introduced for the use of citizen participation forms. It will gradually facilitate the use of electronic systems

by the population. Besides, during the last monitoring, it was found out that under Vani Municipality Mayor order #20556, a Civil Advisory Council was established at the City Hall.

Recent monitoring has also revealed that a Youth Advisory Council has been added to the existing councils in Bagdati Municipality.

Also, in Bagdati, **following the second monitoring recommendation, a normative, legal act was created. Based on it, persons with disabilities are involved in the issue management process.**

Municipalities show growing interest in implementing the civil budget. For example, Lanchkhuti has a social, participatory and gender budget. The civil budget has not been introduced in Terjola yet. However, to date, it is already planned to introduce a participatory budget in 2021. In Terjola Municipality, since the second monitoring, the participation of vulnerable groups in local processes has increased: stakeholders, citizens, representatives of civil society attended the discussion of social programs at the City Council sessions.

The use of electronic resources to ensure citizen inclusiveness in Khoni Municipality is not sufficiently widespread. It is shown by the fact that no electronic complaint has been registered at the City Hall since August 2020. With the support of Fund “Sukhumi”, it is planned to launch an electronic petition window on the website and introduce a petition system in the spring of 2021.

The amount for the civil budget has increased significantly in Ozurgeti (up to 300 000 GEL). Vani Municipality still does not have a participatory (civil) budget. Therefore, percentage of such budget unavailable.

Most of the municipalities do not have a gender budget. However, working groups created within the project are actively working on its implementation.



GENDER COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPALITY STAFF

The third monitoring reveals that the municipalities do not represent statistics on the gender distribution of employees on the website in most cases. **Such statistics are available only on the websites of Vani and Tsageri municipalities.**

As for the gender distribution of employees in the municipalities, no significant changes are identified.

The monitoring has revealed that the municipalities’ announcements about vacan-

cies do not contain discriminatory signs. However, new vacancies were not announced in most of the municipalities.

There have not been significant changes in the percentage of women employed in municipalities. For example, 35% of employees in Terjola municipality are women. It should be noted that since the second monitoring, some change has taken place in terms of issue openness. The Gender Council field has been added to the website. **Nothing has changed in the percentage of women in leadership positions. Only 20% of women are employed in the City Hall.**

Establishing a gender policy is a priority for the **Vani Municipality**. However, this approach is not reflected in the gender ratio. **The number of employed women comprises 30.5% a year.** Progress is minimal for the last monitoring period. **The number of women employed in local self-government is 31%, while the percentage of women in leadership positions is 18.2%.**

The total percentage of women employed in **Bagdati** is 37.98%, and the percentage of women in leadership positions comprises 46.65%.

In Khoni Municipality, 63% of public sector employees are women, while 52% of those employed in the leadership positions are women.

Gender redistribution in **Ambrolauri** is **50%**. 40% of the employees in Tsageri are women. During the third monitoring, the percentage in the City Council is increased by 2%. It reaches up to 10%, and in the City Hall - 11%.

The percentage of women employed in Lanchkhuti City Hall and City Council is as follows: City Hall - 54% and City Council - 78%. Percentage of women in leadership positions: City Hall - 45%; City Council - 20%. The picture has not changed in this regard. **38% of public servants employed in Ozurgeti City Hall are women, whereas, in City Council, they comprise 45%.** According to previous reports, gender-segregated data was available on the website. Some regression is observed in this regard. According to the provided information, the filling in of the website information fields will continue.



REFLECTING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN MUNICIPAL BUDGET

The third monitoring reveals that the needs assessment of vulnerable groups in Bagdati Municipality is carried out periodically by responsible persons and the social service. The needs survey report is available at the municipality social service.

There are Civil Advisory and Gender Councils in all the target municipalities. However, the gender budget is still a novelty for municipalities. **According to the third monitoring, the gender budget is found only in Lanchkhuti and Ozurgeti municipalities.**

According to the officials involved in monitoring the gender budget in Terjola Municipality, the work has been further improved after the second monitoring. Although there is no separate gender program in the municipal budget, gender aspects are considered in separate events and activities. **In 2021, 1 340 000 GEL was allocated for the social budget. It is 8.3% of the total budget.**

In 2021, funds have been reserved for participatory budgeting, and an awareness-raising campaign has been conducted. Since the second monitoring, the participation of vulnerable groups in local processes has increased. Stakeholders, citizens, and civil society representatives attended the discussion of social programs at the City Council sessions.

Promoting inclusiveness in Vani Municipality activities and encouraging community inclusiveness is an essential element. The municipality has a social program, which assists persons with disabilities. However, **Vani Municipality still does not have a gender budget, nor does it have a participatory (civil) budget. The municipality's share of the social budget is 9.2% of the total budget.**

The second monitoring in Bagdati Municipality showed that the municipality has gender programs broken down into various sub-programs. However, it does not have a gender budget. The municipality also does not have a participatory (civil) budget. **No changes in this direction are observed from the first to the last monitoring.** The share of the social budget comprises 7.3% of the total budget of 2021.

There is a Civil Advisory Council, a Gender Council and a Social Advisory Council in Khoni Municipality. The statute of the Council of Persons with Disabilities has been updated, and selecting the Council members is underway. The working group created within the project is also actively working. At this stage, the municipality does not have a gender and participatory budget. The social budget is quite large and accounts for 15% of the total budget. **There is some progress regarding introducing gender aspects in the budget as well. Positive dynamics are observed in the council activities to implement gender budgeting in the municipality fully.**

There is neither gender nor civil budget in Ambrolauri municipality. Therefore, raising the awareness of the relevant responsible persons in this direction remains on the agenda.

There is no participatory budget in Tsageri municipality either. But there is a social budget, and 385 000 GEL is invested in it.

Lanchkhuti municipality has a social, participatory and gender budget (share of gender budget - 0.049% (5000 GEL), participatory budget - 0.569% (69900 GEL), social programs - 5.49% (625500 GEL)). Progress in this regard is indicated by the successful introduction of a participatory budget. Lanchkhuti Municipality participatory budgeting portal has been created: <https://idealanchkhuti.ge/>

The social and health budget of Ozurgeti Municipality in 2021 comprises 1 670 000 GEL and represents 6.7% of the total municipal budget. The gender budget is divided into 30 000 GEL for developing a gender strategy and 5 000 GEL for implementing gender-oriented activities of the relevant department.

In 2019, in Ozurgeti, the participatory budget was 150 000 GEL. In 2020 it comprised 300 000 GEL, and in 2021 it has not changed. However, it might increase. The participatory budget accounts for about 4% of the total budget.

Although inclusiveness is a priority for Vani and Lanchkhuti municipalities, there is no normative act that would confirm involving vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level.

An online survey (“What would you like to do in the place of residence?”) conducted in **Lanchkhuti Municipality can be considered an interesting incentive for citizen involvement/participation.**

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring carried out by the CSO Forum can be summarized as follows:

TRANSPARENCY

The publicity and deadlines for announcing the vacancy are maintained in all municipalities, and improvements have been made in Ozurgeti during this period. Biographies and contact information of local government officials have been made public in all municipalities. A new online application, “Lanchkhuti Municipality Electronic Manager”, has been launched in Lanchkhuti Municipality.

Also, through the CSO work, under the Vani Municipality City Council Chairman order, open consultation days and hours for citizens have been set in City Hall and City Council. Work has begun on the introduction of an online registration system in the Ambrolauri Municipality.

Progress regarding uploading public documents is maintained everywhere. However, due to the website reorganization in Khoni and Ambrolauri municipalities, it is impossible to inspect all components thoroughly.

The lack of anti-corruption documents in the self-government was particularly problematic, although strengthening this direction with the active participation of working groups needs particular emphasis. At this stage, the “Code of Ethics for the Local Self-Government Public Servants” has been developed and approved in Vani Municipality. A code of ethics and an anti-corruption plan are being developed in Bagdati and Khoni municipalities. It is tangible progress. However, plans are not enough, and relevant practices will be evaluated during the follow-up monitoring process.

EFFICIENCY

In all municipalities, complaints and letters from citizens are responded to promptly. The analysis of incoming letters and complaints is also carried out in most municipalities. Khoni Municipality also segregates letters by gender. The challenge in this regard remains in the municipalities of Ozurgeti, Bagdati and Khoni, where letters and complaints are not analyzed and local authorities do not prepare reports.

The lack of a monitoring system remains a significant challenge in the activities of municipalities. There is some progress in this regard in Vani Municipality. There are monitoring forms, although this monitoring is fragmented and not systematic.

A significant positive precedent is identified in Bagdati Municipality. As a result of the second monitoring, a special form to assess population satisfaction with social service programs has been created at the social service, and citizens can fill it out. The analysis of the information obtained through this form provides an opportunity to identify the level of population satisfaction.

The representatives of Tsageri Municipality City Hall and City Council have stated that they are ready to introduce similar practices in case of consultations.

As a result of the second monitoring recommendations, assessing the population's satisfaction with municipal services has been introduced in Ozurgeti Municipality, and the necessary forms for evaluation have been developed.

The budgets of all municipalities provide for the training of officials. However, due to the pandemic, the number of conducted trainings has decreased.

An online meeting system was set up in the municipalities. Best practice and experience sharing between different services and municipalities has been introduced. However, this direction needs particular attention since public officials in municipalities still face many challenges regarding professional development and raising qualifications.

INCLUSIVENESS

No significant progress has been made since the second monitoring to create an adapted environment for people with disabilities in municipal buildings. The interior space of most administrative buildings is not adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. **Building entrances are partially adapted, and ramps are arranged. It provides people with disabilities access to the ground floor.**

Progress is observed in Terjola and Khoni municipalities. Since the second monitoring, work on arranging a specially adapted space on the ground floor has started.

Following the second monitoring recommendations, councils of persons with disabilities have been established in most target municipalities.

In most municipalities, there is no specific person responsible for dealing with vulnerable groups (women, the socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, people with hearing, sight and mobility problems), **except in Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Tsageri municipalities. However, those in charge of communicating with citizens assist vulnerable groups to communicate with the authorities.**

Through the active work of the CSO forum organizations, the use of the existing participatory mechanisms in the municipalities is being popularized, and new mechanisms are being introduced.

For example, advisory councils set up in municipalities have been activated, and participatory, gender, and social budgeting has been introduced. Persons in charge of people with disabilities are identified.

However, there are challenges in this direction as well. For example, in Vani, Khoni, and Bagdati municipalities, neither participatory nor gender budgeting has been introduced yet.

The third monitoring reveals that most municipalities do not have statistics on the gender distribution of employees represented on the website. Such statistics are searched only available on the websites of Vani and Tsageri municipalities. As for the gender distribution of employees in the municipalities, no significant changes are observed in this regard.

The monitoring reveals that the announcements about vacancies do not contain discriminatory approaches, and no significant changes have been made in the percentage of employed women.

There is neither gender nor civil budget in Ambrolauri municipality. Therefore, raising the awareness of the relevant responsible persons in this direction remains on the agenda.

In conclusion, through the active advocacy campaign and efforts of CSO Forum member organizations and working groups, significant progress has been made in transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness in self-governments.

However, at the same time, there are still some challenges that require a proper, active response and improvement.

For addressing the identified gaps and challenges, it is vital to implement the following recommendations:

TO MUNICIPALITIES

TRANSPARENCY

- It is necessary to use the website resources and appoint the persons in charge of monitoring the proactive publication of information to improve the municipality transparency. It is necessary to post all the necessary information on time, analyze the quality and volume of e-services periodically and hear the report on the work of the website in the City Hall and the City Council;
- It is desirable to systematically report on the ongoing processes in the municipality and post the relevant reports on the municipality websites;
- It is necessary to introduce a unified electronic case management system, which will improve internal communication and the communication of the municipality with external actors;

MONITORING - RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is desirable to allocate adequate financial and human resources and introduce a monitoring system to improve the website's functioning in response to the identified needs. It is necessary to ensure compliance with standards of proactive disclosure of information and maintain an interactive communication system with customers;
- It is crucial to promote e-petition and motivate citizens for local initiatives;
- It is advisable to strengthen the practice of sharing experiences between internal structures;
- It is essential to develop an anti-corruption plan, provision and financial regulations in the municipality, which provide for the self-government obligations defined by law regarding transparency and accountability.

EFFICIENCY

- It is desirable to introduce a flexible system of population satisfaction assessment and strengthen the existing progress, as well as to train specialists with relevant qualifications;
- It is crucial to maintain the positive dynamics in terms of gender policy implementation. It is recommended to increase the competence of public servants on gender budgeting, which is possible by using internal resources. Specialized trainings on this issue will increase the motivation, competence of the authorized persons and will create a precondition for creating a gender budget;
- It is essential to realize the course taken regarding the introduction of participatory budgeting in municipalities and the positive perspective of constructive cooperation with civic groups, which leads to modern standards of citizen participation/involvement, efficient and needs-based management, and will contribute to the mobilization of new and topical issues, new civic leaders in the local social agenda;
- It is recommended to introduce a civil budgeting system in the municipalities, which will significantly increase the transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness indicator in the municipality activities;

- It is recommended to have a monitoring system in the municipality. It is also essential for the municipality to establish a municipal service assessment mechanism that will simplify the process of measuring the municipality effectiveness;
- It is desirable to increase inclusiveness and introduce/popularize successful practices.

INCLUSIVENESS

- It is desirable to continue the ongoing dialogue on creating appropriate space on the ground and preparing projects for the adaptation of administrative buildings. It is desirable to find resources for creating an adapted environment for people with disabilities to provide appropriate services to them;
- It is desirable to introduce “civil budget” programs in addition to the citizen participation forms in local self-government;
- It is desirable to prepare the ground for civil budgeting, which means cooperation with the civil sector and provision of the staff with training. It is desirable to find the resources to initiate a civil budgeting program and to work with municipalities with relevant experience;
- It is desirable to separate the participatory budget component from the infrastructure program and include it in the budget as a separate program. It will make it much more diverse and flexible to address citizens needs;
- The relevant structures of the municipality must separate the participatory budget, the social budget, include the gender component in the total budget and upload it on the website;
- It is recommended to create a normative act in the municipality, which will officially confirm the possibility of involving vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level;
- It is desirable to revise the rules of citizen inclusiveness (rules of convening Civil Advisory Council, Gender Equality Council and Council of Persons with Disabilities). It is essential to make the work of these mechanisms proactive and timely inform the citizens about meetings;

- The tendency to reorganize the Council of Persons with Disabilities and activate the Gender Council gives the ground for optimism. However, reporting on their activities should be improved.

TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

TRANSPARENCY

- It is desirable to implement relevant legislative initiatives to increase the transparency of municipalities in the decentralization strategy implementation;
- It is desirable to popularize the transparency index of municipalities and to assess and encourage municipalities through it.

EFFICIENCY

- It is desirable to set a minimum standard for municipal services and prescribe it by law;
- It is desirable to encourage the production of local statistics in municipalities and introduce municipal service monitoring and evaluation systems.

INCLUSIVENESS

- It is desirable to introduce a standard of inclusiveness in municipalities and systematically implement it;
- It is desirable to prescribe participatory budgeting by legislation, which will be an incentive for municipalities to adopt this practice.

VANI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

This report represents the results of the third monitoring carried out within the framework of the project “A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring”. The report highlights the dynamics of ongoing changes in Vani Municipality in improving e-governance practices from the first to the last monitoring and emphasizes the planning of the activities necessary to neutralize the existing challenges.

The third monitoring was conducted in Vani Municipality in February 2021 by two organizations: the non-profit (non-commercial) legal entity “Tanadgoma” and the organization “Citizens’ Activity for Effective Governance and Justice”.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The third monitoring aims to assess the changes made in addressing the shortcomings identified in terms of **efficiency**, **transparency** and **inclusiveness** in the municipality and develop new recommendations to increase the dynamics indicators.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The monitoring of the reform process was carried out based on the monitoring of the municipalities’ official websites, as well as the analysis of public information requested from the representatives of the local authorities. Additional means of finding and verifying information were telephone communication with municipal officials. The monitoring was planned in the same areas: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

The high standard of transparency implies openness of the municipality activities and access to all types of information. Besides, the municipality is accountable to provide its citizens with information on all current activities or news.

Transparency requires **compliance with the relevant standards for vacancies posted on the website**. According to the previous monitoring materials, no shortcomings were observed in Vani municipality. It should be noted that all the rules regarding the vacancy deadlines are observed, which is confirmed by the relevant indicator.

As for the last monitoring, during the reporting period, closed competition for four vacancies based on the Mayor's order N20 1052 of September 15 was found on the website. The vacancy is announced based on an administrative, legal act issued by the municipality Mayor observing all standards.

Against the background of the lack of gaps, **positive progress is observed in this direction in the municipality: for more visibility, in case of internal, open and closed competitions, the order is also posted on the City Hall information board, which improves the quality of citizens' access. This initiative was introduced on the recommendation of the working group.**

The municipality website's organizational structure has been thoroughly improved following the recommendation elaborated after the first monitoring. It involves data of contact persons, telephone numbers, e-mails and an indication of their duties.

The progress is maintained to date. Working group is actively involved in the website updating. Work continues to maintain positive trends.

The reporting process is an essential feature for Vani Municipality. The second interim monitoring revealed that only the approved budget was uploaded on the website. There was no practice of uploading 3, 6, 9-month budget implementation reports. The procurement plan and procurement report were not also available on the website.

The previous monitoring results have shown that **progress in this direction has been maintained**. With the working group's involvement and considering the relevant recommendations, interim financial reports, budget implementation quarterly reports,

and procurement plan with relevant reports are uploaded on the website every three months.

The normative acts and resolutions adopted by the City Council have been uploaded on the municipality website. The shortcoming was revealed by the first monitoring results and was soon improved with the working group involvement.

Reports of activities carried out by various departments have not been uploaded yet. They say that it is reasoned by the inadequate capacity of the website. However, a positive trend is noticeable. With the active participation of the working group **in the 2021 budget, funds have been allocated for updating the website. It will fill the gap, and all kinds of reports will be uploaded.**

Progress has been made in setting open office hours and consultation days for citizens, which was identified as a shortcoming during the previous monitoring. In the City Hall and City Council, open office hours were set only for the Mayor. According to the recommendation and based on the administrative-legal acts, open consultation hours and days were defined for citizens to meet the City Council Chairman, Deputy, the Commission Chairmen and Deputy Mayors. The adopted resolutions are uploaded on the website.

For any municipality, the existence of an anti-corruption plan and the provision on financial regulations and ethical conduct raises the transparency index. It should be noted that **according to the results of the second monitoring**, the municipality did not have anti-corruption plans and anti-corruption regulations, nor did it have a code of ethics. As a result of the working group's intensive work, significant progress is being made in this direction. According to the recommendation, work on the Code of Ethics started, and regulation was developed. After passing the relevant procedures, the document **"Code of Ethics of the Municipality Local Self-Government Professional Public Servants"** was approved by the Decree of Vani Municipal Council, #27 3 of February 10, 2021.

It should be noted that the adoption of this document is a step forward for the municipality in terms of transparency and openness. At this stage, the working group continues to work on developing an anti-corruption regulation and an anti-corruption plan.

➤ EFFICIENCY

-What changes are observed in Vani Municipality? How dynamic are the positive trends regarding accountability to citizens, establishing a high standard of publicity? To what extent the activities carried out are based on pre-designed plans? - the third monitoring provides essential information on these issues.

The second monitoring revealed that the municipal council had developed quarterly and annual work plans. However, these plans were not uploaded on the website. This shortcoming has been addressed, and consequently, the progress is visible. **The work plan for the first quarter of 2021 has been approved by order of the City Council Chairman. The annual work plans of the City Council commissions were also approved at the City Council bureau session. This information is uploaded on the website.**

The lack of a monitoring system remains a significant challenge in the activities of municipalities. Even though there are monitoring forms in Vani Municipality, monitoring is not systematic and is fragmented. **There is a practice of City Hall service activity monitoring**, which the City Hall Internal Audit Service carries out on time. Besides, the work done by each service is heard and analyzed at the City Council sessions. Monitoring is carried out with relevant conclusions, which is done according to the City Council work plan.

The evaluation of professional public servants in the municipality is carried out under the rule approved by the order #20 67 of the Mayor of the Municipality of February 2, 2021, "On the Approval of the Rule of Evaluation of Professional Public Servant of Vani Municipality".

No changes have been identified yet. However, the working group is involved in the processes so that the municipality develops an appropriate form for monitoring the City Hall services' activities to evaluate specific service performance in terms of efficiency.

The monitoring results show assessing the population's satisfaction with the municipal services has not been introduced, and the necessary forms for assessment have not been developed. The level of public satisfaction with municipal services and their effectiveness following the required forms is not identified.

Despite the lack of progress, an interview with an authorized person has revealed that the website is updated. The update will be multifunctional, including innovations in terms of service evaluation.

The previous monitoring revealed that the number of open consultation days during a month at the City Hall and the City Council was not set. After the second monitoring, this shortcoming has been eliminated, and open consultation days were set by administrative-legal acts for all officials: one day a week, four days a month.

During the last monitoring period, only the municipality Mayor had the days of reception. However, there are some positive dynamics, and open consultation days are set for the Deputy Mayors, the City Council Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the City Council Commission Chairman.

The second monitoring confirmed that citizens' letters and complaints were answered within the General Administrative Code's timeframe. **In 2020, 71 letters were received in the municipality via e-Document, and 341 letters through the MMS program.** Incoming emails are analyzed upon receipt and sent to the appropriate recipient. The response usually depends on the complexity of the issue. If it requires deadlines, interim answers are sent to citizens to let them know that the issue is considered.

No significant changes are observed in this direction. On the working group's recommendation, **the letters are analyzed following the requirements and problems.**

Staff professional training is a direct duty of the self-government. Vani Municipality City Hall and City Council have a staff development plan. No gaps have been identified in this regard, and therefore no change is planned. The Employee Development Plan is uploaded to the Public Bureau database. Professional training for self-government representatives is based on the development plan. During the last year, eight public servants of the City Hall and three City Council employees underwent training funded by the City Hall. The municipality actively uses external resources as well.

The trend is maintained. The last monitoring has shown that, despite the pandemic, online training sessions have continued, and heads of all primary and secondary structural units in the municipality have participated in them.

The percentage of local self-government representatives participating in the training sessions during the year was 17%, and during the last monitoring period, it increased up to 28%. The indicator is increasing, and it shows positive dynamics.

The practice of submitting reports and exchanging information between different departments remains a priority for the municipality. The recent monitoring confirms that **this practice has been maintained.**

The monitoring results show that local self-governments, including Vani Municipality, share experiences with other municipalities to improve the quality of activities and deepen their knowledge. Meetings of a similar format were mainly held in the Governor's Office. Only two such meetings have been recorded this year due to pandemic-induced changes. For this reason, no meetings were held with other local self-governments to exchange information. Unfortunately, **it is observed that the practice has not continued in an online format, which lowers the rate of dynamics.**

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

This report confirms that the challenges in terms of inclusiveness are still relevant, and it is necessary to continue working in this direction. Although **ramps for people with disabilities are arranged at the entrance, the first monitoring results also showed that the interior of the building is not adapted. There are no changes in this regard.**

The second interim monitoring revealed that public servants in Vani Municipality are aware of inclusiveness and act following the state-adopted legislation. There was no council working on the issues of persons with disabilities in the municipality during the interim reporting period. A significant change has taken place in this regard. **The composition of the Council for Persons with Disabilities was approved by the Vani Municipality Mayor's order #20 800 of July 21, 2020.**

The website's monitoring has revealed that there are no discriminatory restrictions on the bidders mentioned in the announcements. **Trends are maintained, and no negative precedent was observed during the monitoring period.**

Establishing a gender policy is a priority for the municipality, although this approach is not reflected in the gender indicator. No rules have been introduced to identify the number of women employed in local self-government. **Gender statistics can be found on the website, from which we learn that the number of employed women comprises 30.5% per year.** Progress is minimal for the last monitoring period: **the number of women employed in local self-government is 31%.**

Broken down gender data in the executive and legislative organs is as follows: the percentage of women employed in senior positions in the City Hall is 18.2% - 2 (11). The percentage of women employed in leadership positions in the City Council - 11.7% - 2 (17). Statistics are available on the website <http://www.vani.gov.ge>.

Inclusiveness and involvement are essential elements in Vani Municipality activities. Consequently, there is an absolute readiness on the municipality's part to eliminate the shortcomings in this direction. The municipality has a social program that assists people with disabilities, which only applies to the under-18 age category. There is also a one-time financial assistance program for people with severe disabilities; social programs include providing monthly financial assistance to children with phenylketonuria. However, the monitoring has revealed that **there are no assistance programs for other vulnerable groups, and their specific needs are not being addressed.** The person in charge of communication with vulnerable groups has not been formally appointed at the City Hall.

How accessible are the e-services ensuring citizens' participation and inclusiveness? Do citizens have the opportunity to register petitions, complaints, letters and receive relevant responses? The monitoring results provide information on these issues. As the website is being modernized, **a new window to use citizens' participation forms is now being introduced there.** It will significantly balance the gap in this regard. The changes have already started and, consequently, the results on the service usage statistics will be available next year.

The municipality does not have an interpreter service. The socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons (IDPs), people with disabilities, enjoy standard services to all citizens. **Changes in this direction are not planned. The need for translator services is not observed in the municipality.**

The first monitoring results confirmed the existence of a Gender Council and a Council for Persons with Disabilities in the City Hall and the City Council. Based on relevant orders, a working group was set up. Recent monitoring shows that positive dynamics are progressive. During the last monitoring, **based on order #20 556, the consultative body of Vani Municipality - the Civil Advisory Council was established.**

The format of these councils' work should guarantee effective, transparent and inclusive governance of the municipality.

Vani Municipality does not have a gender budget, nor does it have a participatory (civil) budget; therefore, there is no percentage of these budgets. The

municipality has a social budget, the percentage of which is 9.2% of the total budget.

The third monitoring has revealed that, although inclusiveness is a priority for the municipality, there is no normative act that would formally confirm the possibility of involving vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level. Positive changes are observed in this direction. The working group is operating to eliminate this shortcoming.

Work is underway with the mayor`s representatives to actively involve vulnerable groups in the decision-making process regarding priority issues in their current rural support programs in their administrative units.

The monitoring reveals that a contact person has been appointed in the municipality for relations with civil society organizations and working groups: Sophiko Gvinianidze from the City Council (Senior Specialist of Human Resources Management and Case Management of the first category third rank of Vani Municipality City Council) and Kristina Putkaradze from the City Hall (a person employed under a labour contract, a PR assistant).

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The positive changes in the recent monitoring conducted in Vani Municipality are essentially the result of the systematic work of a working group established in the municipality. They are based on cooperation and coordination with the self-government representatives.

It should be noted that most of the shortcomings indicated in the recommendation have been eliminated on the website. The most important achievement for Vani Municipality is developing a code of ethics, which the City Council approved during the monitoring period. Approval of this document significantly improves the efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness component in the municipality.

New recommendations have been developed for the municipality to address the existing shortcomings, including the improvement of a monitoring system, introduction of gender, participatory budgeting and the establishment of other components to form effective municipal governance.

Recommendations for Vani Municipality

- *The municipality should introduce a monitoring system, develop an appropriate form to monitor the activities of the City Hall services, and the necessary forms for evaluation to identify the degree of population`s satisfaction with the municipal services;*
- *The municipality should develop an anti-corruption plan to improve transparency and openness;*
- *The municipality should take specific steps regarding gender budgeting. Further training and raising the qualification of public servants will accelerate change in this direction;*
- *It is desirable to prepare the ground in terms of introducing civil budgeting, which means staff training and cooperation with the civil sector;*
- *It is recommended to elaborate a normative act in the municipality, which will officially confirm the possibility of involving vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level;*
- *It is advisable to introduce translation services for non-Georgian speakers based on the needs assessment.*

TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the results of the third interim monitoring conducted in Terjola Municipality by local civil society organizations - the Union for the Protection of Children's Rights and Civic Education "Children for the Future of Georgia" and "Women for the Future of Georgia", under the leadership of women NGO - Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi". The monitoring was conducted within the framework of the project "A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring".

Up to this stage, two monitorings have been conducted within the project. Their results with relevant recommendations, have been submitted to the municipality for response.

AIM OF MONITORING

To evaluate the progress made in the municipality after the previous monitoring according to separate indicators; to identify the achieved results, the positive trends and existing challenges.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

A monitoring plan was developed before the monitoring; a monitoring tool was agreed upon; on the research expert's recommendation, adjustments have been made in the formulating and sequencing of indicators to identify existing progress and challenges. Monitoring was planned in the same areas: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness. The project implementation team has been instructed.

METHODS OF MONITORING: Study of the municipality official website; analysis of legislation regulating monitoring issues, normative acts and regulations of municipalities; public information request; sending test e-mails, telephone communication and meetings with representatives of the municipality relevant services - to verify and fill in the information; observation on local political agenda topics.

The work was planned according to the project, a previous monitoring report was provided and a number of issues were agreed with the relevant officials of the municipality.

Preconditions and Restriction: The monitoring was conducted in February 2021. The monitoring was transparent and high awareness of the monitoring objectives, methods, tools was achieved. Obstacles arising during the planned monitoring period are related to Covid-19 restrictions, but this has not had a significant impact on the monitoring process. There was business communication with the municipality representatives and timely response and cooperation to all questions or requests.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

Terjola Municipality has introduced online announcements of vacancies under the legislation following the deadlines. In the case of vacancies, access and openness are maintained. The information is spread on all official pages and the City Hall information board. It is also printed in the press. However, no new vacancy has been announced in the City Hall since the previous monitoring.

Vacancy terms are being observed. Relevant documents such as tender application, commission protocols, made decisions, and orders are available on the ground.

The municipality website contains information that reflects **the organizational structure, officials, CVs, rights and responsibilities, and contact information (telephone numbers, e-mails)**. Most of the shortcomings identified during the previous monitoring in this regard have been eliminated. Specifically, the City Council (MPs) members completed the contact details, set the open consultation days for citizens. In the field - "Government" - information about the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, the City Council members, bureau, factions, commissions, staff of the staff is displayed.

Significant progress has also been made regarding uploading financial reports, approved budget, 3, 6, 9-month budget implementation reports, annual report, procurement plan and report on the website: since the second monitoring, quarterly reports for the last 3, 6, 9 months has been uploaded. No such information was shared via the website before. Now, this information is posted and available on the site. The data can be found on the website in the field - "Database", "News" and any interested person can get acquainted. **The procurement plan is also searched on the website.**

The plan includes changes that are reflected on the website. The procurement plan registration number is P200003266.

The municipality website contains **most of the mandatory public information. Dates of Sakrebulo sessions and minutes are available.** The information is spread on the Facebook page and the City Council website. However, sometimes it is not possible to share the City Council session agenda online in advance. Sudden, necessity-induced changes in issues mainly reason it. There is always information regarding the meeting agenda on the City Council information board.

Session minutes are searched on the website. **Normative acts and resolutions adopted by the City Council are available. A hotline number is provided through which citizens can contact on various relevant issues.**

However, there are some gaps. For example, the commissions and the bureau's protocols have not filled in since the second monitoring. Some service reports are not represented separately. They are integrated into the Mayor/City Council Chairman annual report.

Local decision-makers officially set citizen reception/open consultation hours, and information is available on the website. After each monitoring, some progress is observed. During the first and second monitoring, open consultation days were set only for one MP. Currently, their number is 12. However, if necessary, citizens contact them during working hours by phone and online due to the pandemic. Offline referrals have decreased. There is no separate field for MPs on the website. Negotiations are underway with the Ministry for the website's more efficient functioning, which is ready to include Terjola in the number of pilot municipalities.

Work regarding anti-corruption measures and regulations goes at a slow pace in the municipality. **Since the second monitoring, the issue has become a subject of discussion in the City Council.** It was decided that at the first stage, the existing legal framework in this area would be developed by local lawyers, and trainings would be conducted. An E-Services Development Action Plan for 2020-2021 has been elaborated to facilitate the Public Administration Reform Action Plan implementation, where the issue is formulated as follows: **"Raising Awareness of Georgia's National Anti-Corruption Strategy"**. It is planned to invite an expert and share a successful municipality experience (selected with an expert).

All ten City Hall services have regulations on ethical conduct, which are posted on the information board.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Municipal performance indicators allow us to measure existing progress/regress.

Traditionally, the City Council has a pre-drafted plan, which sets out the necessary standard issues. The regulations specify the number of City Council sessions to be held (once a month), the timing of various normative acts. However, depending on the situation, extraordinary sessions are also held. A total of 19 sessions were held in Terjola Municipality City Council during the reporting period (regular - 9; extraordinary - 10; Bureau session - 18). The commissions held a total of 29 sessions and the factions - 15.

After the second monitoring in monitoring the City Hall services' activities, monitoring deadlines and relevant forms, some progress is observed: City Hall services' monitoring has been introduced. The work of the City Hall employees is monitored once every three months. A scoring system is used in the evaluation.

According to the plan, different services submit a report to the City Council. 5 reports have been heard since the second monitoring. Internal monitoring involves the Internal Audit Service, which has inspected 3 services (legal, administrative, infrastructure), and appropriate audit procedures have been used. The social service report was heard at the City Council's last session on February 3, 2021. Due to technical and organizational problems, the website was suspended from January 1 to February 5. So the materials for 2021 are gradually uploaded. The report on the annual budget execution will be discussed at the City Council next session.

There are no clearly structured forms of assessing the population's satisfaction with the municipal services, and identifying the needs, although progress is being made at an increasing pace. Social network, personal meetings, surveys were used for the necessary interaction previously. Besides, the City Council Chairperson had regular visits to study the citizens' problems on the ground.

Compared to the previous monitoring, enquiries are more intensive and in-depth. Two social programs ("Social Assistance Program for Single Parents Registered in Terjola Municipality" and "Apartment Rental Program") have been monitored. Beneficiaries and citizens involved in the programs were interviewed, and the effectiveness was assessed. Based on it, the programs have been changed. Beneficiary funding for the Single Parent Assistance Program has been increased by 20 GEL. The parents' requirement to include the children in the free circles were met. At the request of the "Apartment Rental Program" beneficiaries, the rental period has been increased from 6 months to one year.

In the future, it is planned to monitor all social programs to increase citizens' involvement and improve service delivery.

The number of open consultation days has been set for meetings at City Hall and City Council. However, during the pandemic, remote communication was unlimited. Admission of citizens to the City Council Chairman is registered (19 visits in total). Citizens are registered in the City Council's other instances.

Due to the Covid-19 regulations, the City Hall was mainly addressed via telephone calls, which was not registered. The number of citizens referring to the official reception comprised 352. 112 people visited the Mayor, 98 ones the Deputy and 142 were recorded in different departments.

The average number of days to respond to citizens' letters and complaints (degree of response, feedback) is as follows: the deadline set by law is 10 days after registration. Consequently, feedback takes place within this period. This electronic program ensures that no letter remains unanswered or the deadline violated. Some letters are urgent to respond to, and feedback is provided accordingly. A total of 8 complaints and 3797 letters have been received, and 1739 letters sent. Besides, the number of letters and complaints is counted regularly at the end of the year and sent to the relevant government agencies.

Since the second monitoring, a total of 12 trainings have been conducted on the following topics: EHMS Module, HR Forum, Development of Electronic Human Resource Management System, Self-realization and Professional Development, Strengthening the Evaluation System in Imereti Region, Discussion of the Concept of Temporary Transfer of a Civil Servant, Training on Advocacy and Lobbying, Gender in Politics, The Role and Practice of Self-Governments in Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, Violence Prevention and Conflict Management Training in the Youth Group. 56 village representatives and 84 City Hall employees underwent the training.

1% of the municipal budget (22 000 GEL) is allocated for professional development. Out of which, only 9257 GEL was spent in 2020. The number of trainings has reduced due to the pandemic.

Percentage of local self-government representatives participating in the trainings (for the current monitoring period and during the last year): In 2020, 66% of City Council employees and 0% of the City Hall underwent training. After the second monitoring, the training participants' percentage comprised 44%. 91% of City Hall employees underwent training.

Self-governments use various tools or techniques for the quality management of activities. An online meeting system has been set up, and different services have exchanged experience with other municipalities. In this regard, the Fund “Sukhumi” project was named a serious resource, which provides prospects for the introduction of new tools.

Once a month, information is exchanged with the heads of N(N)LEs, heads of departments, village representatives in the City Hall. Based on the analysis of these meetings and official information, a plan is developed. A new electronic system is in the implementation process, which is a good tool for the quality management of activities. Qualification training regarding the introduction of the new electronic system is ongoing.

Work has begun on the issue of Internet radio, television, and the necessary data is being collected.

Governor`s office meetings were a good resource regarding exchanging information with local self-governments, sharing best practices/experiences. The mayors of all twelve municipalities and their deputies are involved in an online chat and discuss different relevant issues and share experiences. Similarly, a conversation space has been introduced for the representatives of 19 villages of the Terjola Municipality.

The Chairman of the City Council was actively involved in sharing best practices at the forums held within the project “A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring”. Tskaltubo’s experience on participatory budgeting was shared.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

No positive changes have taken place regarding the ramps at the administrative buildings since the previous monitoring. The building’s old construction does not allow making indoor ramps, although work has begun on arranging a specially adapted space on the ground floor.

According to the information obtained from the City Hall and the City Council, they are familiar with the legislation on inclusiveness adopted by the state. It is proved that out of 14 social programs, 5 refer to persons with disabilities. One of these programs is new (On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities). Cooperation with “Terjola Association of the Disabled Persons” is underway, and its leaders are

participating in the budget discussion. It is planned to renew the composition of the Council of Persons with Disabilities in the nearest future, and one member will be a person with disabilities.

It is hard to say whether vacancy announcements are non-discriminatory since no vacancies were announced during the last year.

There were no changes in the percentage of women employed in self-government. A total of 146 civil servants are employed, 51 of which are women (35%) and 95 are men (65%). However, since the first and second monitoring, there has been a change in terms of openness of this issue: the Gender Council field was added on the website, where the Gender Council statute and composition are posted. However, statistics cannot be found. Contact details do not accompany information on the council members.

There is also no change in the percentage of women in leadership positions in the local self-government (mayor, deputy mayor, chair of the city council, deputy chair, chair of the commission). There are 10 services in the City Hall. 8 of which are headed by men (80%) and 2 women (20%). There are also 8 departments, with 2 women (25%) and 6 men (75%) in leadership positions. No gender statistics are available on the website.

There is no person in charge of communication with vulnerable groups. The Social Service manages these issues. Specialists in the public relations department are also responsible for communicating with vulnerable groups, their contact information is provided, and citizens can contact them if necessary.

The submitted applications are reviewed in the municipality. A specific group is sent to study the situation on the ground (the group includes the representatives of the City Hall and City Council). A specific needs study is carried out.

A study was also conducted on the effectiveness of the social assistance program to families with phenylketonuria and diabetes under 18 years of age, which contributed to the involvement of beneficiaries. The joint approach of the City Council and the City Hall is apparent. Citizens' initiatives, proposals are reviewed/analyzed, and financial support is sought to reflect them in the budget. Two programs have been studied, and based on it, financial assistance to beneficiaries of the single mothers' program has been increased up to 20 GEL. Their proposal to include children in free sports circles has been met. Willingness and consent to participate in the budget have been identified and reflected in the 2021 budget.

How accessible are the e-services for citizen participation? According to the information received through the monitoring, there is no referral to the website, which is reasoned by the website complex technical side. **Petitions and complaints have not been received electronically. Many citizens apply to the City Council/City Hall through the social network and the official e-mail, and they receive a prompt reply.**

During the reporting period, 11 requests for public information were registered in the City Council. All the registered requests were answered within the timeframe provided by the General Administrative Code.

The City Council Chairman clarified the issue of the website`s inefficient functioning. Years ago, a standard format web platform for municipalities was created with the support of IDFI. Test mode expired, and websites had some technical problems in terms of management. At this stage, the Ministry plans a pilot program in several municipalities and has promised to include Terjola Municipality in it.

Interpreter services for non-Georgian speakers are not available in the municipality since there no need for it. Positive dynamics are observed in the activities of the Civil Advisory Council, Gender Equality Council, Council of Persons with Disabilities or other working groups in the municipality.

In 2020, Terjola Municipality signed a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation with Fund “Sukhumi”. With its support and assistance, a working group set up to implement public administration, participatory budgeting and e-services, has developed an e-Services Development Action Plan for 2020-2021 to facilitate the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Action Plan in Terjola Municipality. The City Council approved the plan at its next session in October. The group, whose members are representatives of the City Council, the City Hall and local public organizations, has held 6 meetings.

A new working group has been set up, and a memorandum has been signed with the NGO LDI Georgia, which provides for the training of Advisory Council members and civil society members` involvement in local self-government activities.

Regarding the gender budget, according to the officials` assessment involved in the monitoring, the work has been further improved after the second monitoring. Even though there is no separate gender program in the municipal budget, gender aspects are included in separate events and activities. **The amount allocated for the social budget in 2021 is 134 000 GEL, which is 8.3% of the total budget. In 2021,**

funds have been set aside for participatory budgeting. A targeted campaign has been launched to raise awareness of the issue.

Since the second monitoring, the participation of vulnerable groups in local processes has increased. Stakeholders, ordinary citizens attended the discussion of social programs at the City Council sessions and representatives of N(N)LEs and citizens attended the budget discussion.

There is a specialist in charge of the relations with CSOs/working groups in the self-government. In general, the municipality has a very positive dynamic regarding the use of public sector resources. The trend of forming new civil society organizations in the municipality is positively assessed, which is being strengthened within the Fund “Sukhumi” project. According to the City Council Chairman, this cooperation is comfortable and profitable - from a pragmatic perspective. So, their recommendations are essential for the future agenda and development of the municipality, new opportunities, and form collective responsibility.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring conducted under the leadership of Fund “Sukhumi” in the Terjola Municipality showed visible progress in the implementation of PAR in the municipality. Local political processes have become noticeably transparent and effective, increasing the level of citizens` participation.

For objective reasons, the website could not have been modernized to simplify its accessibility, diversity and improve the delivery of e-services. However, using the available resources, the posted material was supplemented with the mandatory information.

Serious work has started on the mechanisms of anti-corruption measures. It is planned to invite an expert and share a successful municipality`s experience to raise awareness of anti-corruption strategy issues. The scale of public meetings has increased, the practice of needs assessment and evaluating programs has been introduced, which has been reflected in new programs. The system of assessment of officials has been improved. The practice of other municipalities is successfully shared, and it is done by the inclusiveness of decision-makers, opera-

tive services, local active civil groups. Successful practices in using the resources of service provider organizations are observed. Vulnerable groups are actively involved in initiating new programs relevant to them.

Most of the recommendations have been taken into account, entirely or partially. There is an active political dialogue regarding those shortcomings (e.g. the website issue and infrastructure maintenance for people with disabilities).

There is less practice in collecting gender-segregated data, and the website does not reflect gender statistics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRANSPARENCY

- *It is necessary to find the resources to reorganize the website and maintain it according to modern standards to reflect better the current positive processes and existing challenges in the municipality and improve e-services. Introduce periodic reports on its work by the responsible persons (under regulations);*
- *It is necessary to add contact information (telephone, e-mail) to the data on self-government responsible persons, service representatives, members of various councils; display the open consultation days for citizens on the website to facilitate communication;*
- *It is essential to popularize e-petition and motivate citizens for local initiatives.*

EFFICIENCY

- *It is crucial to strengthen the progress made in assessing the population`s satisfaction with the municipal services, studying the needs of different groups of citizens; to develop and implement structured forms for this purpose, and training specialists with relevant qualifications;*
- *It is essential to maintain the positive dynamics in gender policy implementation, raising the local staff`s qualification on gender budgeting and ensuring a relevant “link” between the gender equality plan and the budget document; to establish a separate gender equality program. It is essential to ensure access to gender statistics on the website;*

- *It is essential to promote an open, transparent process of participatory budgeting in the municipality and constructive cooperation with civil groups to achieve its maximum efficiency so that its resources can be used for social security and inclusive processes. To make it as popular as possible, to get acquainted with the successful practice of project administration;*
- *It is desirable to find resources to develop an anti-corruption strategy and action plan; identify flexible mechanisms for its implementation.*

INCLUSIVENESS

- *It is necessary to continue the local dialogue on creating appropriate space in administrative buildings and finding resources for an environment adapted for people with disabilities - to provide appropriate services for them.*

BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

The introduction of quality e-governance in municipalities is a crucial segment of Public Administration Reform, which is directly related to the self-government's commitment to create a unified online space available to citizens, which will increase their involvement in the ongoing processes in the municipality. The represented report reflects the Public Administration Reform Roadmap implementation third monitoring results conducted by Fund "Sukhumi". It provides an opportunity to observe the extent to which recommendations have been taken into account since the first monitoring, what changes are observed, what dynamics are there and what challenges remain.

The third monitoring was conducted in February 2021. The monitoring was conducted in Bagdati Municipality by the civil society organization N (N) LE "Equality Now".

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The monitoring aims to observe the changes envisaged by the recommendations from the first to the last monitoring, evaluate the progress made, to develop appropriate recommendations to overcome the existing challenges.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The work of self-government was studied in terms of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness based on pre-designed questionnaires. The websites and Facebook pages of Bagdati Municipality City Hall and City Council were studied to collect information. The information was verified by face-to-face interviews with the authorized persons.

Unlike the previous monitoring, interviews with municipal staff mainly were conducted online, as face-to-face meetings were not allowed under pandemic regulations during this period. However, this was only a format correction that did not affect the content. The monitoring process was carried out without problems and on time.

The monitoring was conducted considering the three components: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

To what extent is Bagdati Municipality activity transparent, and how is it reflected on the website? Are online announcements about vacancies available? According to the second monitoring results, the problem of access to online vacancies has not been identified in the municipality. The vacancies were posted on the portal www.hr.gov.ge and the Bagdati Municipality website - www.baghdati.gov.ge.

As for the recent monitoring, **unfortunately, it is impossible to observe the progress in this regard, as no vacancy is announced on the website during the monitoring period.** The fact is reasoned by the pandemic induced restrictions. The municipality switched to online work, and finding new staff during this period is not considered reasonable. Accordingly, advertisements for vacancies were not posted on the website.

Are the deadlines observed when announcing a vacancy? It is impossible to assess changes in this direction due to the lack of vacancies on the website. However, based on the first and second monitoring results, we can conclude that the vacancy was announced on the municipality website in full compliance with the deadlines.

It is difficult to determine whether this trend has been maintained. However, previous months' practice confirms that when announcing a vacancy, the municipality relies on the resolution of the Government of Georgia on the rules of competition in the public service, which allows for the completion of the vacancy announcement process.

The organizational structure posted on the municipality website indicating the CVs of officials and contact information is one of the main features of transparency. The results of the first monitoring clearly showed the need for uploading the additional information in this regard. Following the relevant recommendation, this shortcoming was eliminated. Subsequent interim monitoring showed that any citizen could contact the public official through a CV posted on the website, containing the contact person's email and phone number. All organizational structures are posted on the website and information about all officials is also searched. **As for the recent monitoring results, this trend is fully maintained, and there is no need to fill in additional information.**

-Are the financial reports, approved budget, 3, 6, 9 - month budget implementation reports, procurement plan, relevant report published on the municipality website? The first monitoring revealed that there was no practice of uploading interim reports in Bagdadi Municipality, which was followed by relevant recommendations. With the active cooperation of the working group members, this shortcoming was gradually improved. The **progress is maintained to date**. The recent monitoring report showed that relevant reports are uploaded on the website at three-month intervals. The procurement plan is posted not on the website, but on the procurement agency website, which is also available to any interested citizen. Besides, complete information about the budget is presented in the local print media “Chveni Gazeti”, a source of information for a specific segment of citizens.

The monitoring results allow identifying the availability of different types of public information to citizens, for example, **the City Council sessions` date, the agenda, the protocols, the normative acts**. After the first monitoring, **all gaps are filled following the specified recommendations**. All kinds of information are posted on the website and are available to citizens. The working group actively cooperates with the self-government to maintain progress.

Constant communication with citizens is one of the most significant indicators of transparency. **Do the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, City Council Chairman, Deputy, City Council deputies have open office hours for citizens?** According to the previous monitoring information, the periodicity of receiving citizens is defined as follows: 3 hours a day and 2 days a week. **No change was observed in this regard during the last monitoring, which is supported by the relevant argument. Except for the officially set time, if the officials are present on the spot, they can receive the citizens on any day.**

The anti-corruption policy is a key feature of transparent governance at the local level. One of the questions in the monitoring refers to evaluating the current situation in this regard. A face-to-face interview with the relevant authority reveals that during the period between two monitoring, the municipality did not have an anti-corruption plan, a code of ethics. Consequently, there was no such information on the website. As an anti-corruption mechanism, the municipality is still guided by the Law on Conflict of Interest and Corruption. **No changes are observed in this direction. However, the Working Group plans to continue consultative meetings on these issues with the relevant authorities.**

An important result is observed regarding the Code of Ethics. It should be noted that after the second monitoring period, the working group started intensive

work to approve the Code of Ethics. A resolution on the general rules of conduct and ethics of public servants has been drafted. Consultations are underway, and a document is being prepared for approval by the City Council. It should be noted that the **majority of target municipalities do not have a code of ethics. It can be said that working on a code of ethics is an important step forward for Bagdati Municipality.**

➤ EFFICIENCY

The pre-designed work plan significantly determines the efficiency of the municipality work. **Does the City Council have a quarterly, semi-annual, annual work plan?** The results of the first monitoring highlighted the need for change in this direction. The results of the second monitoring confirmed the dynamics of the changes. The City Council quarterly, a semi-annual, annual work plan is systematically approved.

This approach has been maintained to date, and no changes are planned since it is considered that the system is fully operational and there is no need for correction.

The lack of a monitoring system is one of the major shortcomings in the activities of municipalities. **Does the City Hall have a practice of monitoring the activities of the services? Are the monitoring timeframe and the relevant form identified?** It was revealed that the monitoring system is not introduced in Bagdati Municipality, and a relevant recommendation was submitted to improve the shortcoming. The second interim monitoring showed that the municipality benefits from the received audit report and therefore benefits from the forms and deadlines used in this report. The Audit Service has its work schedule and annual work plan. The Audit Service is obliged to inform the City Council about the inspection results. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4006551?publication>

Recent monitoring confirms that no progress has been made in this regard. The municipality is using the information obtained from the audit at this stage.

Is there an assessment of the population's satisfaction with the municipal services in the municipality, and have the assessment's necessary forms been developed? Neither in the first nor the following reporting period did the municipality have a specific evaluation mechanism or form. However, a significant positive precedent is observed at this stage. A form of population satisfaction assessment with social service programs has been created and can be filled in by the citizens. The analysis

of the information obtained in this form allows identifying the quality assessment of the population satisfaction.

The monitoring showed that citizens can meet with officials on any of the working days. However, there are officially set days for open consultation. There are eight days a month for meeting with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, City Council Chairman, his deputy and MP. **No change is planned in this direction.**

In Bagdati Municipality, statistics of letters and complaints received from citizens are kept, which are submitted to the City Council in the form of an annual report. The monitoring shows that the statistics of incoming complaints and applications and the quality of response are analyzed according to the services. The number of unanswered or overdue correspondences is analyzed as well. This practice also existed during the second monitoring in the municipality. There is no change in this direction.

The quality of work performed is directly proportional to the professionalism of public servants. Consequently, effectiveness is largely primarily by competence. **Does Bagdati Municipality have a staff development plan?** The monitoring confirmed that the professional development plan was approved by order #41 549. As a result of this plan, 12 public servants were trained last year. Besides, progress is being made in terms of electronic structuring. When a public servant receives the final annual assessment, there is a special field in the assessment protocol form, filled out by the supervisor and the official himself. When filling out, the focus is made on what direction it should be developed: the preferred topics, the vocational training method, the resources needed, the deadline, and the expected results. Based on it, the annual professional development plan of a public servant is drawn up. These plans will be available electronically by the end of 2021, which is the progress indicator.

The training of public servants can be assessed by the number of trainings conducted for local government representatives. The monitoring reveals that a total of 25 trainings for MPs, City Council and City Hall employees were conducted in Bagdati Municipality last year. External resources like UNDP, PMC were among them. Internal resources were also used. Basic and public audit trainings were funded from the municipal budget. The commitment to invest 1% of the salary fund in training has dramatically increased the number of trainings for self-government representatives. **It is crucial that last year, 1% (17 000 GEL) of the officials' salary fund has been invested in the training, out of which 9 000 GEL has already been spent.**

The percentage of self-government representatives participating in the trainings is as follows: 12% of the total number of officials were trained last year. 60% of public servants participated in the trainings for the third monitoring period. It exceeds the previous indicators by 48%. Planned and donor-provided trainings are used to improve Bagdati Municipality's quality, and information is exchanged between different departments. Monitoring is introduced in the internal service. Changes are planned in this direction.

A meeting was held in the municipality regarding introducing an electronic case management system last year to exchange information with other local self-governments and share best practices. The interview revealed that there was no meeting organized to share experiences between the municipalities. However, it should be noted that according to the representative of the Human Resources Management Service, practice and experience is constantly shared through telephone and remote controls.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

Inclusive approaches like European standards increase the level of transparency and efficiency in the municipality activities. In this regard, the results of the third monitoring fully reflect the situation in Bagdati Municipality.

Changes regarding the adapted environment are not identified. City Hall/City Council building has an external ramp, which needs to be improved according to the standards.

Changes during the reporting period did not address this issue.

Is the municipality (City Hall, City Council) aware of the legislation adopted by the state on inclusiveness? The municipality representative mentioned in the interview that there is a Council of Persons with Disabilities in the municipality, which has a statute approved by the City Council. This regulation is developed based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities. **Information campaigns organized by NGOs contribute to raising awareness in this regard.**

There are no discrimination signs (e.g. age, persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic differences) when evaluating the text of the vacancy announcement posted on the municipality's website. There was no restriction on the applicants on any grounds.

This trend is maintained during the recent monitoring process.

What is the percentage of women employed in local government? Are gender statistics available (on the website)? The results show that the total percentage

of women employed in the municipality is 37.98%. There are no gender statistics on the website. The working groups are actively operating in this direction. During the interview with the relevant authorized person, it was confirmed that the work to improve this shortcoming has already started, which indicates signs of dynamics.

As for the percentage of women in leadership positions in local self-government, it is distributed as follows: the percentage of women in leadership positions in the City Hall is 46.65%; percentage of women in leadership positions in the City Council is 33.33%. **These statistics are not available electronically.**

Are there people in charge of communication with vulnerable groups in the municipality? Are Needs Assessment Reports Available? The monitoring has shown that **there are persons responsible for communication with vulnerable groups.** These are both public officials provided by the municipality's staff list and persons employed under particular contracts who communicate with specific groups within their responsibilities.

The needs assessment of vulnerable groups in the municipality is carried out periodically by responsible persons and the social service. A needs assessment report is available at the municipality's social service. Needs assessment reports are submitted by the responsible persons to the municipal City Council. **Progress in this direction is visible. During the monitoring process, needs assessment of socially vulnerable persons are carried out by the municipality.**

Fields for submitting letters, complaints and petitions are available on the Municipality's website. These electronic services are available and operational. However, they are not used in practice by citizens. It turns out that to receive e-services, they prefer to communicate through the municipality Facebook page and the representatives of various NGOs. The official e-mail of the municipality is more effective, through which various interested persons request information.

Work is underway to increase the website design flexibility and add various features. It should be noted through the cooperation with the municipality, news and the schedules of City Council sessions and public information have been actively published on the website.

As for the translator service for non-Georgian speakers, **the need for it has not been identified so far. No changes are planned in this direction.**

The first monitoring results showed that the City Hall and the City Council have a Citizens' Advisory Council, a Gender Council, a Council for Persons with Disabilities, which raises the level of inclusiveness in the municipality activities. **Progress in this**

direction is observed. The recent monitoring has shown that a Youth Advisory Council has been added to these councils.

The degree of inclusiveness is also significantly improved by gender and civil budgeting in the municipality. The second monitoring showed that the municipality has gender programs that are broken down into various sub-programs, although it does not have a gender budget. Consequently, it is impossible to identify the percentage of these programs. The municipality also does not have a participatory (civil) budget. No changes in this direction are observed from the first to the last monitoring. The share of the social budget in the total budget of 2021 comprises 7.3%.

How does the municipality regulate the inclusiveness of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process? According to the information obtained from the monitoring, the statute of the Council of Persons with Disabilities in the municipality envisages their active involvement in the decision-making process related to vulnerable groups. **Following the second monitoring recommendation, a normative, legal act was developed, and on this basis, persons with disabilities are involved in the issue management process.** There is also the regulation of the Gender Equality Council, which serves to strengthen vulnerable groups in this direction, to simplify providing public services to them.

In Bagdati Municipality, the Mayor`s advisor is in charge of relations with CSOs/working groups to provide efficient cooperation with CSOs. Practice in this direction has already been introduced, and the cooperation process is ongoing.

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, it can be clearly stated that a significant part of the recommendations developed for Bagdati Municipality has been taken into account, and the shortcomings have been eliminated. The interim reports of various departments are already published on the website. Normative acts and regulations of all forms can be found. Production of gender statistics and publication on the website is established. The municipality is already working on creating a code of ethics, which can be considered a significant positive step. Progress is being made in the inclusiveness segment, which includes the establishment of a youth advisory council in the municipality.

Along with the positive changes, there are still challenges that are reflected in the relevant recommendations. Implementing these recommendations will help Bagdati Municipality create an effective, transparent and inclusive governance model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To pursue anti-corruption policies and raise the level of transparency, it is recommended that the municipality have a proper mechanism in the form of an anti-corruption plan;
- It is advisable to strengthen the practice of sharing experience between internal structures: legalize the submission of reports by relevant normative decrees. The introduction of this practice will contribute to increasing the responsibility for reporting information by accountable individuals;
- It is recommended to introduce a civil budgeting system in the municipality, which will significantly increase the rate of transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness in the municipality activities;
- It is recommended to have a monitoring system in the municipality. It is also essential for the municipality to establish a mechanism for evaluating municipal services, which will simplify measuring the effectiveness of municipal activities;
- It is recommended to increase the competence of public servants on gender budgeting, which is possible by using internal resources. Specialized trainings on this issue will increase the motivation and competence of the authorized persons and will be a precondition for creating a gender budget;
- The absence of an interpreter service for non-Georgian speakers should be based on a study of this issue, which would reasonably reinforce the municipality's position on interpreter services and exclude discrimination elements.

KHONI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

This document represents the results of the third interim monitoring carried out in Khoni Municipality. The monitoring was carried out within the framework of the project - “A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring” - and fieldwork was carried out by local civil society organizations - the IDP Initiative Group and Khoni Center for Education and Development “Edelweiss”, at the request of the Women’s NGO - Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”.

Up to this stage, two monitorings have been conducted within the project, and their results, with relevant recommendations, have been submitted to the municipality for a response.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

Evaluation of the progress made in the municipality after the previous monitoring according to separate indicators; representation of the achieved results, positive trends, and the existing challenges.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

A monitoring plan was developed before the monitoring; a monitoring tool was agreed upon; on the research expert’s recommendation, adjustments have been made in the formulating and sequencing of indicators to identify existing progress and challenges. Monitoring was planned in the same areas: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

METHODS OF MONITORING

The monitoring was carried out by requesting information, interviewing the responsible persons, examining the municipality’s official internet platforms, analysing the legislation regulating monitoring issues, municipality normative acts and regulations, follow-up visits, observation of local political dialogue process, and political agenda topics.

PREREQUISITES AND RESTRICTIONS

The monitoring was conducted in February 2021, during the period of restrictions caused by Covid-19 and, consequently, had some impact on the work process. Nevertheless, as a result of the monitors' efforts, high awareness of the activity goals, methods and tools was achieved, and there were no obstacles. Business communication was held with the representatives of the municipality.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

The transparency of municipal activities is determined mainly by the extent of public information availability and the opportunity to communicate with the municipality on issues relevant to the citizens. One of the indicators of the municipality's activity transparency is the issue of **vacancy announcing** in the City Hall and City Council, access to information, and the vacancy deadlines. According to the obtained information, there were no vacancies at the given (third) monitoring stage.

According to the heads of the City Council's administrative services and the City Hall, the rule of sharing public information is observed in the municipality, there are appropriate ordinances and, in case of necessity, the procedures established by law **for the vacancy announcement deadlines** are adequately implemented.

It should be noted that the positive dynamics regarding **the organizational structure, officials, their CVs, rights and responsibilities and contact information, as well as other mandatory information** related to the reorganization of the website, **has slowed down**. The administrative service head's promise to fix the existing shortcomings identified during the previous monitoring after the website modernization **has not been fulfilled yet**. For the given period, the website is still running in test mode. Only the City Hall page contains some data, whereas the City Council page is empty. The data regarding the Mayor, Deputies, Heads of departments do not include contact information, telephone, or e-mail. No 2021 budget can be found (previous years budgets are uploaded), and no information on the organizational structure is available.

According to the City Council administrative service head, the website administrators are being trained. By the end of the month, all the necessary information will be uploaded to the new website.

The monitoring has revealed that almost **no online financial reports, budget reports for 3, 6, 9 months, annual report, and procurement plan are available**. The information on Mayor's report was announced via Facebook. According to the City Hall financial service head, "From April 13, 6 and 9 - month reports on the municipal budget implementation will be published following the law".

The municipality website also includes limited public information regarding **the City Council sessions' date, the agenda, the normative acts adopted by the City Council; resolutions; activities carried out by different departments of the City Council/City Hall (quarterly, semi-annual or annual reports)**.

Only the City Council session minutes can be found on the website. No meeting time and agenda has been announced.

The section "Legal Acts Regulating the Activities of the Municipality" is empty.

In Khoni municipality, **citizen reception/open office hours are well organized (especially at the City Hall)**, but the website's relevant columns are mainly empty. The website only shows the official reception days with the Mayor (Tuesday-Thursday, from 10:00 a.m.). Follow-up visits have demonstrated that, on the days of reception at the City Hall, the municipality Mayor and his deputies meet with the citizens and listen to their needs.

It should be noted that the municipality systematically registers, prepares a list (document) where the data of the citizens wishing to meet are entered.

As for the municipal council, the citizen reception days are not still officially set. According to the explanation, the City Council members meet with the citizens without any restrictions. But since there is no accounting, it isn't easy to talk about this approach's efficiency. **No recommendation to set the procedures and time for citizen reception at the City Council has been implemented.**

Citizens' communication simplification with self-government structures is still ensured by the local "Hotline", which was initiated within the framework of the project of the NGO Education and Development Center "Edelweiss" - with the provision of appropriate technical and administrative resources.

The monitoring has revealed that there have been no positive changes in the municipality in terms of anti-corruption measures (anti-corruption plans, anti-corruption provision, financial regulations, regulations on ethical conduct). However, there are positive dynamics: at the initiative of the project working group, the municipality committed and included developing an anti-corruption plan in the action plan. According to the explanation, this year, the issue should be initiated and politically supported.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Municipal performance indicators allow us to measure existing progress/regress. According to the previous monitoring, the municipal council did not have a quarterly/semi-annual/annual work plan. No progress is still being made in this regard. According to the administrative service, work is planned in this direction. According to the administrative service, work is planned to be carried out in this direction.

Through the monitoring, it was identified that **the practice of monitoring the activities of the City Hall services, monitoring deadlines, and the relevant form had been introduced.** There are an internal control and audit service in the municipality, and according to its regulations, it works pretty efficiently according to the outlined activities. However, the audit conclusions are not available electronically.

In Khoni Municipality, **the assessment of the population's satisfaction with municipal services and the introduction of the necessary forms for evaluation are outlined** by Khoni Municipality Strategy for Promoting Transparency and Good Faith for 2019-2022, which clearly prescribes the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and forms.

Compared to the previous monitoring, the progress is reflected by the fact that the main part of the previous document has been implemented (citizens' reception space has been organized, the website has been modernized, a hotline has been introduced). However, **the part of the monitoring and evaluation is not carried out in practice so far.**

There are eight days during a month for the meetings with citizens at the City Hall. The dates for the meetings in the City Council have not been officially set yet. In pandemic conditions, the apparatus mainly operates online.

There is significant progress in the municipality regarding communication with citizens, which is demonstrated by the fact that the organization "Edelweiss" operates a hotline (the initiative was funded by small grants from Fund "Sukhumi"). The project second target organization, the IDP Initiative Group, provided the website functioning, and people can contact the municipality services online. **Citizens' letters and complaints are responded to in the City Hall on average within 7-8 days. In terms of responding to them,** there was an expectation that the website's modernisation would facilitate access to public information and the procedures and volume of complaints and responses. However, the process did not go at the desired pace.

At this stage, letters, complaints and responses can be received via the City Hall e-mail khonismeria@yahoo.com. Inbound and outbound correspondence is sorted, and statistics are generated in gender dimension.

The monitoring has revealed that since January, the City Hall has received more than 800 e-mails (384 women, 420 men) and sent 694 letters. More than 20 citizens (9 women, 11 men) have called the hotline. **Reports are not prepared based on the analysis of received e-mails, but office work is systematic and is segregated by gender.**

According to the municipality's administrative service, an «electronic petition» window will appear on the website in the coming days.

Khoni Municipality has a strategic document developed in 2019 ("Strategy for Increasing Transparency and Good Faith of the City Hall"), raising the employees' qualification is among its priority issues. A strategic action plan states that this problem will be gradually solved in 2020-2021. Staff will be trained according to their needs, but the municipality has not implemented specific activities to promote staff development. They say that it is reasoned by the Covid pandemic and imposed restrictions. In City Hall, they say that due to the reduced budget and the existing restrictions, it is not possible to raise the qualification of employees at this stage. **Negative dynamics have been identified in this regard. Accordingly, the number of training sessions conducted for the local self-government representatives has been significantly reduced.**

As for 2020, up to 15 training sessions were conducted for the leaders and employees of the City Hall and the City Council, and most of them were online. Training topics were as follows: e-Course on Gender Equality, Gender Policy Assessment of Local Self-Government Bodies; Family Strengthening Strategy in the Context of Municipal Services; Role and Practice of Self-Governments in Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence; Achievements, Challenges and Possible Ways to Respond to them in Terms of Covid-19, Sexual Harassment, etc.

Up to 40 employees of the City Hall and City Council have participated in the trainings since August 2020 (28% in total). The monitoring has revealed that the number of training participants during the Covid Pandemic is significantly reduced.

At this stage of the monitoring, no **new tools or techniques** were used in Khoni municipality **to ensure quality performance of activities**, except for the relatively flexible online information exchange system and coordination introduced during the Covid Pandemic. The number of weekly business meetings introduced at the City Hall to protect security measures has also been significantly reduced.

Formal coordination meetings are held in the municipality to exchange information between self-governments and share best practices/experiences. There is some novelty in the municipality. It[municipality] is involved in the local self-government association competition «Best Practice», contributing to sharing best practices.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

There is not much progress in self-government regarding the improvement of the social protection of people with disabilities. However, there is a positive dynamic: **the City Hall building has been adapted, and people with disabilities can now physically apply to the citizens' reception.** This positive dynamic was achieved through an action plan prepared by the working group created within the project submitted to the City Council and subsequently reflected in the municipality Action Plan 2021. However, the ramp is not installed at the City Council building at this stage, and people with disabilities cannot enter the building.

The Council of Persons with Disabilities has been operating in Khoni Municipality since 2015. The charter of the council was amended in 2020, and it should contribute to its effectiveness. In the first stage of the monitoring and the given mechanism, the need to strengthen other institutional mechanisms (Advisory Council on Social Affairs, Gender Equality Council) in Khoni Municipality and the need for reporting practices were emphasized.

According to the municipality responsible persons, **the staff is aware of the legislation on inclusiveness adopted by the state (Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities; Labor Law; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)**, but cannot name the specific measures in this direction (training, qualification raising activities).

The public information requested as a result of the monitoring did not contain any signs of discrimination. However, no encouraging and motivating indicators for the participation of persons with disabilities or women were observed.

The monitoring has revealed that the municipality Gender Council periodically updates the gender statistics and database. According to the statistics, the municipality has a total of 902 employees, including 566 women. 63% of public sector employees in Khoni Municipality are women. As a result of the monitoring, it became clear that 232 people are employed in the leading positions of the public sector of Khoni Municipality, including 120 women. In Khoni Municipality, 52% of public sector employees are women. There

have been no significant changes in the gender composition of the self-government staff. Unfortunately, gender statistics are not available on the website.

In Khoni Municipality, both in Sakrebulo and City Hall, an official has been appointed to deal with vulnerable groups, and their needs are studied as far as possible. The issue was especially relevant after the pandemic outbreak. But unfortunately, there is no methodological knowledge and properly trained specialists. There is no generalization of cases and systematization of data, except for identifying the number of beneficiaries of a particular program. No reports are prepared. It should be noted that there is a good practice in this regard. With the help of Fund “Sukhumi”, gender needs of the IDP community have been studied and based on it, a budget program has been introduced.

The issue of using electronic resources to ensure citizens` inclusiveness is not sufficiently popularized. It is demonstrated by the fact that no electronic complaints have been registered in Khoni Municipality since August 2020. The electronic petition “window” is planned to be launched on the website in the spring of 2021.

Incoming mails: more than 800 mails (384 women, 420 men) have been received, and 694 letters sent in 2021. Some of them were received electronically, and some by hand (the ratio has not been studied). 90 citizens have been registered for the meeting.

Previous monitoring has revealed that no official translation service is available in the municipality, and there is no need for it. Attitudes towards the issue have not changed at this stage of the monitoring.

There is a Civil Advisory Council, Gender Council and Advisory Council on Social Affairs in the municipality. The statute of the Council of Persons with Disabilities has been updated, and selecting persons for the Council is underway. The working group created within the project is actively operating.

The municipality does not have a gender and participatory budget. According to the explanation, it is reasoned by the reduced budget affected by the pandemic. The social budget is quite large and makes up 15% of the total budget, which is more than a million GEL (it comprised 12% in the previous budget). The social budget share of the overall budget is rather high compared to other municipalities. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the budgets of municipalities, including the social budget, have changed. However, the change did not affect social programs.

Progress is being tracked regarding introducing gender aspects in the budget. Positive dynamics are observed in the Council activities in order to implement gender budgeting in practice fully.

The monitoring has revealed that there is **no normative act/regulation on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process or the provision of public services to them at the local level**. According to the City Council leaders, the reorganization of the Council of Persons with Disabilities will raise this issue.

There are contact persons in the City Hall, and City Council for relations with civil society organizations/working groups and information about them is available on the website.

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring conducted by the target civil society organizations in Khoni Municipality at the request of Fund “Sukhumi” has revealed the current situation regarding the implementation of public administration reform in the municipality compared to the previous period.

In terms of ensuring transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of self-government activities, some progress has been made in Khoni Municipality. Still, the processes are very slow, and mainly the result is supported by the activities carried out by the project target organizations.

The pace of introducing online petition, online consultation services for citizens and bringing them in line with existing standards is insufficient. The website platform is not used correctly, and the obligations of the municipality to proactively use public information are violated. There is no reporting regarding the provision and use of electronic resources.

An anti-corruption plan and a code of ethics have not been adopted yet. Taking appropriate steps towards developing a staff training strategy and a list of qualification topics is delayed. The practice of identifying needs and evaluating the program effectiveness need to be improved. However, there are some very interesting precedents for social services based on such studies.

Various civic engagement mechanisms, such as the trend to reorganize the Council of Persons with Disabilities to activate the Gender Council, give the basis for optimism. However, reporting on their activities should be improved.

The issue of participatory budgeting remains a challenge in terms of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of self-government activities and political dialogue regarding this issue is delayed.

Also, despite several targeted programs, there is no separate gender budget that describes the activities and costs required for gender policy and determines specific responsibilities.

The share of the social budget has increased from 12% to 15% since the previous monitoring. It should be noted that social programs have not been affected by sequestration due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eleven recommendations were submitted after the previous monitoring. 5 of them have not been fulfilled, and five have been partially or unfulfilled. It was essential to create an adapted environment for people with disabilities in the City Hall.

BASED ON THE MONITORING, THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED:

TO IMPROVE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE MUNICIPALITY -

- It is necessary to use the website resources and appoint the persons in charge of monitoring the implementation of the information proactive publishing rules; timely upload of all necessary information, conduct periodic analysis of the e-services provision quality and volume and hear the report on the work of the website in the City Hall and City Council.

TO ENSURE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE MUNICIPALITY -

- It is necessary to introduce municipal service evaluation. Besides, it is necessary to develop relevant forms and introduce needs assessment, citizens' satisfaction assessment and provide staff training for this purpose.

TO IMPROVE LOCAL PROCESSES' INCLUSIVENESS IN THE MUNICIPALITY AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION -

- It is essential to introduce various citizens' participation mechanisms, including the Gender Equality Council accountability to the City Council and citizens; provide budget support for issues included in the Action Plans;
- It is desirable to find a resource for initiating a civic budgeting program and facilitate cooperation with CSOs and municipalities with relevant experience.

AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

The third monitoring was conducted in Ambrolauri Municipality to study the progress regarding efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of the local self-government work.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The monitoring aim was to identify positive trends and the implementation quality of the recommendations developed through the first and second monitorings regarding shortcomings and identify the existing challenges to continue the positive steps.

The monitoring was conducted in February, impartially, transparently and effectively, showing the positive features of cooperation between the non-governmental and governmental sectors. Progress has already been made during **the third monitoring** regarding eliminating certain shortcomings identified during the second monitoring. The “working group” created at the local level is actively operating. It put the commitments given through the monitoring recommendations on the agenda. Those recommendations were given in the form of a work plan. However, the challenges are still to be overcome. The monitoring reveals that the Covid-19 pandemic has hampered the targeted activities for the full implementation of public administration reform in the region and the municipality.

In Ambrolauri Municipality, the third monitoring was conducted by **Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center (N. Sokhadze)** and **Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Hub - Abkhazintercont (K. Museridze)** under the leadership of the **Fund of Women Entrepreneurs**.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

Methodology - The monitors were guided by a pre-designed special questionnaire which included evaluation indicators. They studied the websites and Facebook pages of Ambrolauri Municipality City Hall and City Council to collect information. For more information, telephone and direct communications were made with representatives of various departments - in the executive and legislative system.

The monitoring team is thankful to the Ambrolauri Municipality City Council and City Hall representatives for their cooperation.

Monitoring indicators were again focused on three main elements: **transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness**.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

Based on the information received through the monitoring, it is clear that the basic standards in terms of transparency in the Ambrolauri Municipality are observed. However, there are some shortcomings on the website. Facebook page is active. Citizens have a partial opportunity to track the ongoing processes in the municipality online. Following the recommendations will improve the degree of transparency in the municipality.

In the third monitoring process, several questions were developed to identify the transparency of self-government work:

Are there any vacancy announcements available online? Are the deadlines for announcing a vacancy observed?

The municipality website <http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/> was reviewed to obtain information on this issue. To confirm the information, whether there is a vacancy in the active phase, the <https://www.hr.gov.ge/> has been checked. However, this component could not be evaluated during the third monitoring since the announced vacancies are automatically deleted after the term expiration. Based on the oral examination, they confirm in the municipality that the deadlines are observed in case of a vacancy, which is provided for 10 days.

Does the municipality website provide information about organizational structure including the contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mails and their tasks and responsibilities?

The monitoring group reviewed the municipality website [/http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/](http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/) to get the information. The obtained materials confirm that the information on the service structure is posted on the municipality website; there is data on the officials, including e-mail addresses and phone numbers. It should be noted that the municipality website is virus-infected, and the search engine has difficulty functioning.

Are the financial reports published online?

- **Approved budget;**
- **Budget reports for 3, 6, 9 months and annual report;**
- **Procurement plan and report.**

A review of the website http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/sajaro_info.php?id=1 shows all of the previous year's financial statements and current year's budget has been published. Anyone can view this document on the website. The last report found on the website is dated 02.03.21.

Does the municipality website include public information? For example:

- **Biographies of the officials;**
- **The agendas of the City Council/City Hall meetings;**
- **Normative acts adopted by the City Council; resolutions;**
- **Activity reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual) carried out by different departments.**

Through the monitoring group work, we have found out that the officials' biographies, as well as meeting agendas, normative acts adopted by the City Council, ordinances and all the mentioned information, are published on the municipality website http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/page_t.php?id=63. However, the meeting date is not announced ten days in advance.

Do the following officials have fixed open office hours for receiving and consulting citizens?

- **The Mayor;**
- **Deputy Mayor;**
- **The City Council Chairperson;**
- **Deputy of the City Council Chairperson.**

The third monitoring has revealed that City Hall is working on creating an online registration service to reduce the citizens' waiting time. There are no fixed consultation days, and the citizens can meet the Mayor, the City Council Chairman and all officials to get consultations at any time. Citizens have been informed about it.

Are anti-corruption measures implemented in the municipality?

Are the following documents available on the website?

- **Anti-corruption plans;**
- **Anti-corruption regulations;**
- **Financial regulations;**
- **A code of ethical conduct.**

During the monitoring process, an interview was conducted with the relevant service. Based on the interview information, we have found out that there are no anti-corruption plans, regulations, financial regulations, and regulations on ethical conduct in Ambrolauri Municipality.

Ambrolauri City Hall is currently using the government's decree - "Regulation on Ethical Conduct".

It should be noted that a "working group" is planned to become more active in this direction to assist Ambrolauri Municipality in developing these documents.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Identifying effectiveness is one of the monitoring segments, as public administration reform is somehow based on this component's quality in the municipality.

The effectiveness was identified based on the following questions:

Does the City Council have a quarterly/semi-annual/annual work plan?

The monitoring group received a reply that following the City Council regulations, the quarterly plans are published on the website in the form of an ordinance posted at the following link http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/sajaro_info.php?id=2.

Are the timeframes and forms for monitoring the activities of the City Hall services?

Based on the monitoring team interview, staff are evaluated in June and at the end of the year. The service heads' activity is evaluated by the Mayor, which is regulated by the forms developed by the Civil Service Bureau and carried out by an ordinance developed by the City Council.

Is populations' satisfaction with municipal services assessed in the municipality and have the special forms been developed?

There is no direct feedback from the population, however, citizens can express their opinion through the Facebook page. The municipality does not have a special form or similar work practice.

The number of days per month for open office hours in the City Hall and City Council to meet with:

- **The Mayor;**
- **Deputy Mayor;**
- **City Council Chairman;**
- **City Council Deputy Chairman;**
- **MP;**
- **Heads of departments.**

Despite the working group's numerous recommendations, no specific date(s) for receiving citizens has been set. However, the issue has been raised, and it has reached the relevant agencies and. We think a decision will be made soon.

Average number of days for answering complaints (quality of response, feedback):

- **Are the statistics produced on citizens' complaints and letters?**
- **Are the incoming letters from citizens analyzed and reports prepared?**

The third monitoring has revealed that 11 administrative complaints were submitted to

the City Hall in 2020. The complaints were answered within the relevant timeframe set by the law.

Does the municipality have a professional development plan for the staff?

Ambrolauri Municipality has elaborated a staff development plan. According to which a plan was prepared and approved by the City Council, written directions were requested from the primary structural units.

Number of trainings conducted for the local self-government representatives, including:

- **For the City Council members, the City Council and the City Hall staff (number of trainings held over the last year).**

Four public servants underwent basic training modules in 2020. Under the legislation, 1% of the salary fund is spent on professional development from the municipal budget. According to the agreement signed with Zurab Zhvania School, the 4 officials mentioned above have been trained. 350 GEL was spent on the training of each of them.

Percentage of the local self-government representatives who have participated in trainings (for the present monitoring period and during the last year)

Based on the conducted monitoring, it can be said that due to the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of these activities has been reduced by 30% compared to the second monitoring data.

Does the local self-government use any tools and techniques ensuring the quality of its activities (e.g. for managing competencies), including:

- **Workshops, trainings;**
- **Reports, information exchange between different departments.**

Through presentations made at the City Hall meeting, experience and knowledge are shared between different departments. They also use telephone and electronic information-sharing mechanisms.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the region, the number of these activities has been reduced during the third monitoring.

How many meetings were conducted over the last year with the representatives of other self-governments to share best practices/experience?

The mentioned information is not registered, however, the photos of the meetings are posted on Ambrolauri Municipality Facebook page.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

The monitoring focused on how Ambrolauri Municipality stands out in terms of implementing inclusiveness mechanisms. This field contains information that highlights the priority of inclusiveness in the municipality, but there are still many challenges and work to be done in this direction.

Are the City Hall/City Council buildings equipped with ramps?

Observations on the building confirm that the issue has been resolved in Ambrolauri self-government. However, moving inside the building is not adapted.

Are the municipality representatives (City Hall, City Council) aware of the legislation adopted by the State regarding inclusiveness?

- **The Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities;**
- **Legislation on labor rights;**
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

There is only one program for persons with disabilities. They get one-time assistance at a monetary value of 300 GEL. The monitoring has revealed that the existing program has not been updated, and feedback has not been received from the beneficiaries for three years.

Are the municipality vacancy announcement non-discriminatory?

Due to the website flaws, the indicator could not be checked. However, it should be noted that no active vacancies were observed based on the oral survey.

What is the percentage of women employed in the local self-government?

- **Are gender statistics available (on the website).**

50% is defined. Work is underway to reflect the Gender Statistics on website in soon.

What is the percentage of women working in senior positions in local self-government (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, City Council Chairpersons, Heads of Commissions)?

The data are as follows: City Council - 40% and the City Hall - 50%. Work is underway to publish the Gender Statistics on the website in the shortest time.

Is there a person in charge of the communication with the vulnerable groups, including:

- **Women;**
- **Socially vulnerable;**
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP);**

- **Persons with disabilities (with hearing, vision, movement problems);**
- **Are the needs of vulnerable groups assessed? (by whom and how often);**
- **Are needs assessment reports available?**

The third monitoring also reveals that no specific person is appointed. However, the head of the administration service receives these individuals and directs them to the relevant departments.

There is no practice of conducting needs study in Ambrolauri Municipality.

The level of availability of e-services ensuring citizens` participation (indicate the number of citizens using specific services);

- **Submitting letters;**
- **Petitions;**
- **Complaints;**
- **Registration for the meeting;**
- **Receiving the reply, etc.**

There is a similar e-service platform: there is a “Request Information” window on the website, where citizens are sent information by e-mail or SMS on their relevant issues. However, Ambrolauri municipality still has work to do in this regard.

Is the translation service available for non-Georgian speakers?

During the third monitoring, the municipality representatives state that there is no need for this in Ambrolauri Municipality. However, employees speak a foreign language and can provide these services if needed. They say that the lack of staff is reasoned by the fact that there is Georgian-speaking population in the region.

Are there the following councils in the City Hall and City Council?

- **Civil Advisory Council;**
- **Gender Council;**
- **Council of Persons with Disabilities;**
- **Other councils or working groups.**

There are councils in the municipality, which meet at the following intervals: the Civil Advisory Council meets once every three months. The Gender Council meets once a year, and the Council of Persons with Disabilities meets once every six months. No meetings are announced in advance (10 days in advance).

The third monitoring reveals that a youth council was set up with the NGO`s initiative. The council consists of 10 members, 5 of which are members of the Racha Youth Assembly.

The working group established within the CSO Forum meets once a month.

Do the municipalities have:

- **Gender budget? (indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget);**
- **Participatory (civil) budget? indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget);**
- **Social budget (indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget).**

During the monitoring, we could not find any direction broken down as a component in the budget. Accordingly, the issue of retraining the relevant agencies in this direction remains on the agenda.

Does the municipality have a normative act/regulation on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or on the provision of public services to them? If not, is it planned to implement/promote such an approach?

By talking to the municipality representative and monitoring the website, we have revealed that this issue has been partly solved in the municipality, but it needs to be reviewed and implemented.

Is there a contact person in the local self-government for relations with civil society organizations / working groups?

The Public Relations Service of the City Hall is responsible for relations with civil society organizations. Meetings are organized mainly at the initiative of local civil society organizations.

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Representatives of Racha Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Hub - Abkhazintercont and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center conducted the third monitoring **under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs**. The third monitoring results show that the shortcomings in terms of transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness in public administration in the Ambrolauri Municipality are being overcome at a slow pace. No significant changes are observed. However, active work is going on, and the municipality's readiness according to the activities planned for the future can be seen. It is noteworthy that through the working group's efficient work, the municipality has approved an "action plan", which will be aimed at the introduction and activation of e-services. There are still shortcomings regarding the website work. The built-in panel that allows any interested citizen to

“request information” and “plan his/her budget” does not work effectively. The municipality website needs to be improved so that any interested person can easily use the electronic service. The budget is general, and there is no separate social, gender and participatory budget. There is no document on ethical conduct, and there is no anti-corruption plan-regulation. However, active consultations are held in the municipality to address these issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THE THIRD MONITORING CONDUCTED IN AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY:

- The relevant services in Ambrolauri Municipality should be obliged to ensure the smooth operation of the municipality`s website;
- The open consultation days and hours for citizens with the public officials of City Hall and City Council should be available on the municipality website;
- The complaints or proposals submitted electronically on the municipality website should be analyzed and their answers published to increase the transparency and citizens` trust;
- The municipality relevant structures have to develop a participatory budget, social budget, gender budget and post it on the website;
- Anti-corruption regulations and plans, financial regulations and ethical conduct regulations should be developed in the municipality and be available on the website for all stakeholders;
- The necessary forms for the assessment of municipal services should be developed, including the creation of a service evaluation mechanism and development and approval of the assessment forms;
- The relevant municipal services should develop a staff development plan on issues such as budgeting, gender, transparency, inclusiveness, efficiency, and develop exchange programs to share knowledge and experience with other successful municipalities;
- The development of programs must be preceded by a needs study of persons with disabilities to create programs tailored to their needs.

TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

The third monitoring was conducted in Tsageri Municipality to study the progress regarding efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of the local self-government work.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The monitoring aim was to identify positive trends and the implementation quality of the recommendations developed through the first and second monitorings regarding shortcomings and identify the existing challenges to continue the positive steps.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The monitoring was conducted in February, impartially, transparently and effectively, showing the positive features of cooperation between the non-governmental and governmental sectors. Progress has already been made during the third monitoring regarding eliminating certain shortcomings identified during the second monitoring. The “working group” created at the local level is actively operating. It put the commitments given through the monitoring recommendations on the agenda. Those recommendations were given in the form of a work plan. However, the challenges are still to be overcome. The monitoring reveals that the Covid-19 pandemic has hampered the targeted activities for the full implementation of public administration reform in the region and the municipality.

In Tsageri Municipality, the third monitoring was conducted by the representatives of the local partner civil society organizations - “Tsageri Center for Women’s Rights and Equality” (M. Svanidze) and “Active Citizen - Accountable Government” (M. Liparteliani) under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs.

Methodology - The monitors were guided by a pre-designed special questionnaire which included evaluation indicators. Websites and Facebook pages of Tsageri Municipality City Hall and City Council were studied to collect information. For more information, telephone and direct communications were made with representatives of various departments - in the executive and legislative system.

The monitoring team is thankful to Tsageri Municipality City Council and City Hall representatives for their cooperation.

Monitoring indicators were again focused on three main elements: **transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness.**

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

How transparent are the municipality's ongoing processes regarding announcing vacancies, receiving applications, involving citizens? Is the organizational structure and contact information of public servants posted on the website? Is there a mechanism for submitting an online complaint or proposal? Are the municipality reports, approved budget, financial reports uploaded and how often? - The information collected on these issues emphasizes the municipality work transparency.

The questions to identify the transparency of the self-government during the third monitoring process were as follows:

Are there any vacancy announcements available online? Are the deadlines for announcing a vacancy observed?

The monitoring group studied the website www.hr.gov.ge, www.jobs.ge, www.tsageri.gov.ge and the Government of Georgia's resolution on the rules of competition in public service. The conducted monitoring showed that during all the three monitorings, no vacancy was announced in Tsageri municipality. Consequently, it was not published electronically either. However, there is a relevant field on the municipality website, where for 10 days, within the timeframe specified by law, any interested person can get the information in case of vacancy. In this case, the municipality is guided by the document "Resolution on the Rules of Competition".

Does the municipality website provide information about organizational structure including the contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mails and their tasks and responsibilities?

Based on the obtained information, it is found out that during the third monitoring, the organizational structure, including the contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mails and their tasks and responsibilities are comprehensively placed on the website tsageri.gov.ge (it should be noted that no position changes are not recorded at this time).

Are the financial reports published online?

- **Approved budget;**
- **Budget reports for 3, 6, 9 months and annual report;**
- **Procurement plan and report.**

A review of the website of the municipality (www.tsageri.gov.ge), Facebook page "Tsageri Municipality" and the newspaper "Lechkhumi" shows that within the framework of this monitoring, approved budget, 3, 6, 9-month budget implementation re-

ports, an annual report is transparent and can be searched in case of interest -[tsageri.gov.ge/image/data/dokumentebi/45-is danarti.pdf](http://tsageri.gov.ge/image/data/dokumentebi/45-is_danarti.pdf) 2020

6-month budget implementation report annex is dated 02.09.20120. The City Council ordinance #45 of September 2, 2020, on Tsageri Municipality Budget Implementation Report for 6 months 2020, City Council Resolution #24 of December 30, 2020, approving Tsageri Municipality 2021 Budget.

Based on the current data, City Council members and the mayor's reports and procurement plan reports of 2020 could not be found on the website. However, information about the mayor and the City Council's implemented activities, projects, and various programs are published daily on the Tsageri Municipality Facebook page. It is accompanied by photos or videos, which fill the gap in terms of transparency. Media holding "Kvira" also covers this information.

Does the municipality website include public information? For example :

- **Biographies of the officials;**
- **The agendas of the City Council/City Hall meetings;**
- **Normative acts adopted by the City Council; resolutions;**
- **Activity reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual) carried out by different departments.**

The municipality's website www.tsageri.gov.ge has been reviewed, and interviews were conducted with the City Council apparatus Chairman Gocha Megreli and Zerinab Khetsuriani, City Hall apparatus Chairperson. All this has shown us that the date, agenda and minutes of the meetings of the City Council and the City Hall are published on the information board. No progress has been made in this regard since the previous monitoring. On the contrary, the situation has deteriorated. However, it should be noted that this information is posted on the municipality Facebook page. They say that it is reasoned by the website small capacity, which automatically deletes the information. Work is underway to resolve the issue.

- **Do the following officials have fixed open office hours for receiving and consulting citizens?**
- **The Mayor;**
- **Deputy Mayor;**
- **The City Council Chairperson;**
- **Deputy of the City Council Chairperson.**

Through the review of the website www.tsageri.gov.ge and interviews with the Head of City Council apparatus Gocha Megreli and Mirza Kometiani, Deputy Head

of the City Hall apparatus, we have found out that the progress in this direction is visible since open consultation hours/citizen reception hours are set and posted by the officials. Days and hours of the reception and consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Head of the apparatus, the City Council Chairman and his Deputies have been set: **citizens can meet them every day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** The schedule is posted at their rooms` entrances. It has not yet been published on the municipality's website. Although during the monitoring, they said that this problem would be resolved by the end of the month.

Are anti-corruption measures implemented in the municipality?

Are the following documents available on the website?

- **Anti-corruption plans;**
- **Anti-corruption regulations;**
- **Financial regulations;**
- **A code of ethical conduct.**

The monitoring group interviewed Datuna Letodiani, Head of the Inspection Service, and Tamaz Chabukiani, Chairman of the City Council Mandate and Ethics Commission. Regarding creating a code of ethics in the municipality, a group has been set up, which soon, in coordination with the "working group", will develop **a regulation on ethical conduct, which will be posted on the municipality's website upon approval.** Anti-corruption plans, anti-corruption regulations, financial regulations are regulated by **Resolution #37 of the Internal Audit and Inspection Service of March 7, 2018, and Resolution #39 of Tsageri Municipality City Council.** Active work is underway in this regard, and changes will be made in this direction based on other experienced municipalities' practice.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Identifying efficiency is one of the monitoring segments, as PAR is somehow based on the quality of this component in the municipality.

The efficiency was identified based on the following questions:

Does the City Council have a quarterly/semi-annual/annual work plan?

The monitoring group reviewed the municipality website tsageri.gov.ge and talked to **Gocha Megreli**, the Head of the City Council apparatus. It was found out that under the City Council decree #52 of September 2, 2020, the quarterly reports are uploaded on the website. During the third monitoring, the updated document could not be found. However, they say that it will be updated in the coming days.

Are the timeframes and forms for monitoring the activities of the City Hall services?

As Head of Public Relations Department **Tamar Davituliani** says, the issue has not changed, and there is no similar form in the municipality. Meetings of the “working group” with the competent persons are planned to raise the issue and develop the mentioned forms.

Is populations` satisfaction with municipal services assessed in the municipality and have the special forms been developed?

Gocha Megreli, the Head of the City Council apparatus and **Tamar Davituliani**, Head of Public Relations, mentioned that the municipality does not exercise such practice. However, they will work over this issue to increase the level of public trust.

The number of days per month for open office hours in the City Hall and City Council to meet with:

- **The Mayor;**
- **Deputy Mayor;**
- **City Council Chairman;**
- **City Council Deputy Chairman;**
- **MP;**
- **Heads of departments.**

The website **tsageri.gov.ge** was monitored, and an interview was held with the Head of City Council apparatus. It was revealed that during the second monitoring, the Citizen Service Bureau was opened in Tsageri Municipality with the support of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) program “Good Governance for Local Development”. During the third monitoring, the City Council officials have officially set 3 days a week for citizens` meetings. There are 4 hours daily for meetings with officials at the City Hall. The number of meetings is not recorded electronically during the monitoring. The request for meetings is recorded in the citizens` meeting room. It turns out that there are about 25-30 meetings per week.

Average number of days for answering complaints (quality of response, feedback):

- **Are the statistics produced on citizens` complaints and letters?**
- **Are the incoming letters from citizens analyzed and reports prepared?**

In the interview, **Gocha Megreli** and **Tamar Davituliani** say that the statistics are countable. Based on the Chancellery information, 5 complaints were registered, which were answered within the timeframe set by law (8-10 days in the City Hall; 10 days

in the City Council). For instance, the application-complaint written by N. O. was addressed to the City Hall Social Service through the State Chancellery. A response was prepared within the established time and sent by mail to the citizen.

Does the municipality have a professional development plan for the staff?

Through the municipality website review and interview with HR department representative Mamuka Letodiani, we have found out that the municipality does not have a similar plan regarding the staff training. However, an article is included in the budget (1% of the salary, which amounts to 7000 GEL) to improve the employees' training and qualification.

Number of trainings conducted for the local self-government representatives, including:

- **For the City Council members, the City Council and the City Hall staff (number of trainings held over the last year).**

Through the interview with **Gocha Megreli** and **Tamar Davituliani**, we have found out that five trainings were held in the City Council on the following topics: Human Resources Management; Economic Development; Finances; Solid Waste Management and Public Administration. Due to the pandemic, all trainings were conducted using the online Zoom platform and were funded by the organizers (sageri.gov.ge/new/427-treningebi-moqalaqeebisatvis-rachalechkhumisa-da-qvemo-svanetis-regionshi).

Percentage of the local self-government representatives who have participated in trainings (for the present monitoring period and during the last year)

Through the interview with **Gocha Megreli** and **Tamar Davituliani**, we have found out that **during the third monitoring, the percentage is distributed as follows: 30% - City Council, 35-40% - City Hall.**

Does the local self-government use any tools and techniques ensuring the quality of its activities (e.g. for managing competencies), including:

- **Workshops, trainings;**
- **Reports, information exchange between different departments.**

Through the interview with **Gocha Megreli** and **Zurab Khetsuriani**, we have found that regular meetings are held, which are reflected in the relevant protocols, but they are not posted online. During the pandemic, trainings and workshops were held in Zoom format, but the official data is not recorded anywhere. It was explained by the fact that the region includes 4 municipalities. Once a month, a meeting is held with the state representative governor, where they share experiences and represent reports.

How many meetings were conducted over the last year with other self-governments representatives to share best practices/experience?

In the interview, Marika Bendeliani (Head of Resource Management Service) and Gocha Megreli (Head of the City Council apparatus) pointed out that due to the created pandemic situation, the number of meetings and trainings planned within the exchange program have decreased compared to last year. The meetings held are mainly posted on the Facebook page. Online meetings are held throughout the year. The monitoring group could find the information about 8 meetings held last month.

➤ **INCLUSIVENESS**

Are the City Hall/City Council buildings equipped with ramps?

Observations on the building show that the mentioned issue has not been addressed. The administrative buildings are built in such a way that the arrangement of ramps requires additional funds. However, on the City Hall ground floor, there was a meeting room for citizens adapted for people with disabilities.

Are the municipality representatives (City Hall, City Council) aware of the legislation adopted by the State regarding inclusiveness?

- **The Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities;**
- **Legislation on labor rights;**
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

In an interview with the representatives of the City Hall and the City Council, it became clear that under the Mayor`s order (Order #45, January 2019), a commission was set up to work with persons with disabilities. Accordingly, awareness of the law is provided by them.

Are the municipality vacancy announcements non-discriminatory?

The monitoring evaluated the vacancy announcement template text (no vacancies were announced in 2020), and it does not contain any discriminatory phrases.

What is the percentage of women employed in the local self-government?

- **Are gender statistics available (on the website)?**

After reviewing www.tsageri.gov.ge and the HR Management Department representative`s interview, we found out that gender statistics are available on the website and are included in City Hall Staff by category and gender. It comprises 40% of the staff.

What is the percentage of women working in senior positions in local self-government (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, City Council Chairpersons, Heads of Commissions)?

Gender statistics are available on the website www.tsageri.gov.ge. During the third monitoring, the percentage mark was increased by 2%, and it comprises 10% in the City Council and 11% in the City Hall.

Is there a person in charge of the communication with the vulnerable groups, including:

- **Women;**
- **Socially vulnerable;**
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP);**
- **Persons with disabilities (with hearing, vision, movement problems);**
- **Are the needs of vulnerable groups assessed? (by whom and how often);**
- **Are needs assessment reports available?**

Through the interviews with Gocha Megreli (Head of the City Council apparatus) and Zurab Khetsuriani (Head of the City Hall apparatus), we have found out that there is a Health and Social Affairs Commission in the City Council, and its head was trained to study the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

They have also been trained on the assessment of the specific needs of vulnerable groups. **Needs assessment reports are not available.** The survey showed that although the municipal budget reflects the social programs, social needs study findings are not fully and accurately prescribed.

The level of availability of e-services ensuring citizens' participation (indicate the number of citizens using specific services);

- **Submitting letters;**
- **Petitions;**
- **Complaints;**
- **Registration for the meeting;**
- **Receiving the reply, etc.**

The main window on the municipality's website visibly presents the field "Create Petition" (tsageri.gov.ge/page/dasakhlebis-saerto-kreba, tsageri.gov.ge/page/samoqalaqo-sabcho, tsageri.gov.ge/page/skhdomebshi-monatsileoba, tsageri.gov.ge/page/angarishi, tsageri.gov.ge/page/118-sachivris-forma). There is also an application form and complaint form. The registration of those wishing to attend the City Council ses-

sions is not recorded electronically. However, an interview with Gocha Megreli and Tamar Davituliani showed the existence of such applications. Statistics on the use of these services by citizens are not available on the website, and only Chancellery has statistics on complaints and applications.

Is the translation service available for non-Georgian speakers?

During the third monitoring, the municipality representatives state that there is no need for this in Tsageri municipality.

Are there the following councils in the City Hall and City Council?

- **Civil Advisory Council;**
- **Gender Council;**
- **Council of Persons with Disabilities;**
- **Other councils or working groups.**

Through the interview with a Human Resources Service specialist and the information obtained from the website (tsageri.gov.ge) (05.07.2017, Order # 3/87 February N 2-167 Sakrebulo Ordinance 9-07 2017 1.O # 98 Sakrebulo Resolution 7-98/45), we found out that there is the City Hall Advisory Council and a Gender Council. Temporary councils are also set in the municipality upon necessity.

Do the municipalities have:

- **Gender budget? (indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget);**
- **Participatory (civil) budget? (indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget);**
- **Social budget (indicate the percentage of a specific budget in the overall budget).**

Specifically: there is no participatory budget. But there is a social budget, named a priority by Tsageri Municipality in 2020, and 385 000 GEL is invested in the social budget. The last budget is dated December 30, 2020, on the website. There are no specific components in the budget.

Does the municipality have a normative act/regulation on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or on the provision of public services to them? If not, is it planned to implement/promote such an approach?

An interview was conducted with the head of the social service, **Davit Chakvetadze**. Based on the Social Service Resolution N25, we found out that the Culture and Sports Service has special programs for people with disabilities. A sports competition with the

participation of people with disabilities will be held in April. There are two canteens for the elderly, persons with disabilities and vulnerable persons.

Is there a contact person in the local self-government for relations with civil society organizations/working groups?

Eka Bendeliani (apparatus staff member) has been appointed as a contact person, and in the City Hall, Vasil Saghinadze has been appointed as a contact person with CSOs.

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitoring conducted by partner civil society organizations in Tsageri Municipality under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs revealed the situation regarding the implementation of public administration reform in the municipality.

Some progress has been made in the municipality to ensure transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of self-government activities. Still, the processes are slow, which is partly affected by the situation caused by the **covid-19**. The “**working group**” created within the project, which includes representatives of the civil sector and the self-government, is actively working in this direction in the region. The municipality has approved an “Action Plan” for greater efficiency, strengthening public administration and introducing e-services to support the population of Tsageri municipality. The third monitoring shows that a special group has been set up in the municipality, which is actively working on creating a code of ethics and the development of an anti-corruption plan. Citizen reception hours are set, there is a space where citizens can meet with decision-makers on their relevant issues. However, this issue is still not fully resolved as it is not available electronically on the website.

Positive, effective changes have been observed in terms of staff development strategies and the list of qualification topics. The councils` work activity and effectiveness have not been demonstrated, and gender, participatory and social budgeting remain a challenge.

The online petition`s operation and online citizen consultation service do not provide positive features in line with the standards. However, it should be noted that there is a built-in window on the website which allows you to «create a petition» or «request information».

Funds are being raised in Tsageri municipality to address the ramp issue.

Progress is observed compared to the previous monitoring. It seems that the municipality is responsible and ready to stand among the advanced municipalities that have a high level of the transparent, efficient and inclusive governance system.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THE THIRD MONITORING CONDUCTED IN TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY

- The open consultation days and hours for citizens with the public officials of City Hall and City Council should be available on the municipality website;
- The complaints or proposals submitted electronically on the municipality website should be analyzed and their answers published to increase the transparency and citizens' trust;
- Anti-corruption regulations and plans, financial regulations and ethical conduct regulations should be developed in the municipality and be available on the website for all stakeholders;
- The municipality relevant structures have to develop a participatory budget, social budget, gender budget and post it on the website;
- The necessary forms for the assessment of municipal services should be developed, including the creation of a service evaluation mechanism and development and approval of the assessment forms;
- A project to adapt the municipal building for the people with disabilities should be developed, and funds should be raised for its implementation;
- The relevant municipal services should develop a staff development plan on budgeting, gender, transparency, inclusiveness, efficiency, and exchange programs to share knowledge and experience with other successful municipalities.

LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

The project aims to facilitate the implementation of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Roadmap at the local level. For this purpose, the Civil Society Forum of Western Georgia has been established, and control over the public administration reform implementation in 8 municipalities of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Guria is strengthened. Several stages of monitoring have been carried out. Recommendations based on the monitoring reports are submitted to the local authorities, and their implementation is advocated.

This document is the third monitoring report conducted in Lanchkhuti Municipality. The monitoring was conducted in February 2021 by the Georgian Rural Hall and Lanchkhuti Information Center under the curator organization Imereti Scientists` Union "Spectri".

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The monitoring aims to study the current situation in Lanchkhuti Municipality in terms of fulfilling the tasks set for the self-government through public administration reform in the direction of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of local government work; assess the progress made regarding the results of the previous monitoring; identify the implementation of recommendations submitted to the self-government.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

A monitoring tool was developed in advance by the project partners, indicators and following methods of information retrieval were identified: study of documents, review of electronic platforms of the municipality, observation, telephone interviews with City Council and City Hall officials (taking Covid-19 situation into account), public information request.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

Monitoring indicators were discussed according to three main elements: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

➤ TRANSPARENCY

1. The monitoring reveals that **online announcements for vacancies in Lanchkhuti Municipality are available**. However, there are no new vacancies. The last vacancy is dated October 16, 2020, and announced by Lanchkhuti Municipality City Hall, position - “Head of the Department of Child Protection and Support of the Social and Health Service”.

2. **Vacancies are published within the timeframe provided by the Civil Service Law.**

3. The situation is satisfactory in terms of indicating the organizational structure, CVs, rights and duties and contact information of officials (telephone numbers, e-mail) on the municipality website. Most of the information is comprehensive. The project financed by the Small Grants Program of Fund “Sukhumi” should be emphasized. Within its framework, a new application, www.lcman.ge was launched. It contains complete contact information (phone, e-mail) of the City Council members, Commissions and Fractions, and the staff members.

The application provides transparent and comprehensive interaction with the City Council members. It allows to send a letter to the City Council members online and receive a response to it. The platform shows the number of received letters, their addressees. This innovation has made a significant contribution to improving the municipality transparency.

4. It should be noted that **financial reports, approved budget, budget implementation reports for 3, 6, 9 months, annual report, procurement plan, and reports are systematically published on Lanchkhuti Municipality’s website**. Audit reports (only the reports of 2018 and 2019) are uploaded on the website as well. The Mayor’s monthly report on budget implementation is also available. The last report on budget implementation for 2021 is dated March 4, 2021. The information is published in compliance with the norms and deadlines provided by law. The draft normative acts and other documents are posted on the website, and interested persons can get acquainted with them in advance. It is convenient to get information about the sessions, get acquainted with the agenda and register on the City Council application.

5. **The Municipality website and the application www.lcman.ge include all kinds of important public information, including CVs of the officials; date, agenda and protocols of the City Council/City Hall sessions; City Council resolutions. After the second monitoring,** quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports on various commissions and departments' activities have been added to the list.

6. In **2021, due to the pandemic, communication with the population is carried out online and via telephone, except for some specific cases.** A pre-pandemic schedule of open consultation hours is posted on the website. It should be noted that the open consultation hours for the Chairman of City Council have been changed on the website. Instead of Wednesday, he can receive citizens every day.

It is apparent that the pandemic induced restrictions affected the situation regarding relations with citizens. According to the officials, after removing these restrictions, communication with citizens will return to the second monitoring period's standard, with the advantage that the City Council Chairman will receive citizens every day.

7. There is no anti-corruption strategy and action plan in the municipality to regulate transparency and accountability. There is no provision on ethical behavior. Only financial regulation documents are available.

➤ EFFICIENCY

1. According to the monitoring, **the City Council, has a quarterly/annual work plan. Sessions are held following the regulations. Annual work plans are published on the website and are available.** The existing positive practice is maintained in this regard.

2.As for monitoring the City Hall services' activities, the Mayor evaluates them according to their reports. Monitoring dates and appropriate form are identified. The Internal Audit Service conducts monitoring following the Mayor's order and within specific deadlines. The situation has improved in this regard. Internal audit works according to the set schedule.

3. In Lanchkhuti, assessing the population's satisfaction with the municipal services has not been introduced, and the necessary forms for the assessment have not been developed yet. It prevents to identify the service efficiency, introduce new programs or correct the old ones.

4. In the City Hall and City Council, the number of open consultation days for citizens is determined: 4 days with the Mayor, 21 days with the Deputy Mayor, 21 days with the

Heads of Departments and Heads of the Services, 4 days with the City Council Chairman, 21 days with the Deputy Chairman, 21 days with the Council Members.

In 2021, due to the pandemic, communication with the population is carried out online and via telephone, except for some specific cases. In 2021, 25 telephone communications have been reported in the City Council so far. The indicator is not registered in the City Hall.

5. The average number of days to respond to citizens' letters and complaints (degree of response and feedback) is as follows: the City Hall responds to public information within a maximum of 10 days (more often 4-5 days). A personal letter or complaint is answered within 3 days on average.

Progress: the City Council has a program for complaints and letters - www.lcman.ge. There is no such application in the City Hall. There is no information on the website about administrative complaints, i.e. the citizen will not be able to send it electronically via the website.

Statistics of citizens' letters/complaints in the City Council are carried out automatically through the City Council program www.lcman.ge. 43 letters have been sent to date, and only 2 letters are currently unanswered by the City Council members. 57 letters have been received in 2021.

Statistics of citizens' letters and complaints are created, but the data only show quantitative indicators. The issues indicated in the letters and challenges faced by the citizens are not analyzed.

6. The monitoring has revealed that Lanchkhuti Municipality has a staff development plan. It is annually created based on the Officials Needs Assessment, which identifies the staff's professional development needs. The plan is uploaded to the Public Bureau database. The assessment is conducted once a year.

7. In 2020, there was an apparent regression regarding training sessions for Lanchkhuti local self-government representatives. The number of trainings in the pandemic conditions has sharply decreased. In 2020, a total of 12 trainings were conducted. Training sessions covered the following issues: self-government; local development; communication; gender budgeting issues; development of domestic tourism; www.lcman.ge application management training for the City Council members and staff, etc. The donor organizations mainly funded the trainings. Funds were not allocated on the staff professional development from the budget.

8. According to the obtained information, in 2020, 100% of City Council members, 70% of City Council staff and 45% of City Hall services participated in the trainings. In 2021, due to pandemics, only a few trainings have been held. The training was conducted

for 10 employees of municipal N(N)LEs on communication and quantitative research management by the Georgian Rural Hall. Also, Fund “Sukhumi” conducted a training “Municipal Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan”.

9. Tools or techniques for conducting activities efficiently are only partially exercised by local governments (for instance, regarding knowledge management). The exchange of information between different departments is introduced in practice.

10. Last year, two meetings were held with Ozurgeti and Chokhatauri municipalities to exchange information between self-governments and share best practice/experience. There is an apparent regression due to the pandemic in this regard.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

1. Adequate environment for people with disabilities (providing ramps for administrative buildings) is of particular importance in terms of citizen involvement and equal conditions. No positive changes have taken place in the municipality in this regard, which is an indicator of insufficient sensitivity to the issue.

2. The monitoring shows that there is low awareness in the municipality (City Hall, Sakrebulo) about the legislation on inclusiveness adopted by the state (Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities; Labour Law; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). However, the programs implemented by the municipality also include social protection programs for people with disabilities.

3. Based on the study of the announcement texts and the criteria in the municipality, it can be said that **the announced vacancies do not contain signs of discrimination.** However, there can be no talk of positive discrimination against women or other groups.

4. The percentage of employed women in the local self-government is as follows: 54% of women are employed in the City Hall, and 78% of women are employed in the City Council. As for the City Council apparatus, there are 5 men and 17 women employed there, whereas 28 men and four women are the City Council members.

5. The percentage of women in leadership positions in local self-government is as follows: City Hall - 45% and City Council - 20%. The situation has not changed in this regard. Gender statistics are not available on the website. In general, there is not much practice in the municipality in terms of collecting gender-segregated data.

6. There is a contact person in the municipality in charge of communication with vulnerable groups. Like the previous monitoring, in the City Council the issue is supervised by the Chairperson of the Gender Council and a social service specialist at the City Hall.

Unlike the previous monitoring, where it was explicitly stated that no needs studies were conducted, **at this stage, specific needs are assessed through social services**. Social programs address the needs of vulnerable groups. Systematized Needs Assessment Reports are not available. Research materials from partner civil society organizations are also used in the municipality, often accompanied by recommendations on local social policy planning. Raising qualification on data collecting in self-government structures is being introduced (training for N(N)LE staff by the Georgian Rural Hall).

In terms of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, essential programs (Support Program for Operated Women with Breast Cancer Diagnosis; providing the women victims of violence with temporary housing; “Iavnana” Center program for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Socially Vulnerable Children; providing IDPs with firewood; one-time assistance to victims of violence; child support program for celiac disease, an assistance program for autism spectrum children) are included in Lanchkhuti Municipality budget. These programs are based on the needs assessment, but the knowledge is not sufficiently systematized, and self-government staff still lack relevant experience for conducting qualified research and analysis.

7. The indicator of access to e-services providing citizens` participation in the municipality is the number of citizens using specific services, for example - submitting letters, petitions, complaints, registering for a meeting, receiving a response, etc.

In 2021, both platforms (www.lanchkhuti.gov.ge, www.lcman.ge 34) has provided submission of letters (106), petitions (0) and complaints (0). After the amendment of the Self-Government Code, it is not necessary to register to attend sessions.

In the case of the City Council, progress is evident. It is necessary to introduce a program similar to www.lcman.ge to achieve full feedback.

The petition column has detailed instructions. Only one petition is currently being searched on the website.

8. In Lanchkhuti Municipality, translator service for non-Georgian speakers became necessary only in one case (service for Turkish businessman). The need is provided by the resources available in the Governor`s Office.

9. There are an Advisory Council and a Gender Equality Council in the municipality. Temporary working groups have not been set up in 2021. The inclusiveness of citizens in the councils' work is minimal. A hindering factor is their low awareness, which also affects the council efficiency. Minutes of the sessions are published on the website.

10. Lanchkhuti municipality has a social, participatory and gender budget. Their shares are as follows: gender budget - 0.049% (5000 GEL), participatory budget - 0.569% (69900 GEL), social programs - 5.49% (625500 GEL). Progress in this regard is indicated by the successful introduction of a participatory budget. Lanchkhuti Municipality participatory budgeting portal <https://idealanchkhuti.ge/> has been created. The portal describes the essence of a participatory budget and its implementation in details. The system is very flexible in terms of submitting ideas, discussing and voting. Electronic voting allows the authorized citizen to choose the three projects approved by him and carry out these processes fairly and democratically. Lanchkhuti participatory budget criteria allow the submission of diverse and innovative initiatives in different areas, which sets it apart from other municipalities.

11. There is no normative act/regulation in the municipality on the inclusiveness of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or providing public services to them. "What would you like to do in your place of residence?" may be considered as an exciting initiative, which is an incentive for citizen inclusiveness/participation.

12. In the local self-government, in the City Council and the City Hall, there is a contact person for relations with CSOs/working groups. There is progress in this regard, since, after the previous monitoring, a responsible person has been allocated in the City Hall.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring conducted in Lanchkhuti Municipality has revealed the situation in the self-government regarding the public administration reform implementation, which showed both the current progress in responding to the challenges identified by the previous monitoring and a relatively slow pace in terms of local governance transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

With the website proactivity and smoothness, innovative mobile applications for citizens' uninterrupted informing are welcomed. The municipal services' constructive

cooperation in terms of information transparency to fulfill their obligations should be emphasized.

However, many “fields” of the website need to be renewed to get the most out of a web resource. It is necessary to facilitate access to some information and fill the gaps of some of them, for instance, to submit gender-segregated data.

The introduction of participatory budgeting at such a rapid pace and the activism of citizens is welcomed. It is interesting that village dwellers are also involved in the process and indicate the need to expand it further. There are still gaps in the municipality regarding the provision of anti-corruption measures, creating a code of conduct, elaborating an orderly strategy after identifying the staff’s qualification needs, and the issue of its budget support. There are also shortcomings in collecting and processing qualified data by municipal structures, evaluating programs, identifying needs and using it to implement long-term services. Creating an adapted environment in the self-governing space for people with disabilities should be a topical issue on the agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *It is necessary to make maximum use of the website resource for the smooth delivery of electronic services to citizens: receiving information, electronic communication, participation in local initiatives, especially in conditions of cohabitation;*
- *For more convenience of citizens, it is important to place information about open consultation hours with the officials and representatives of various services on the website in an easily accessible place;*
- *It is necessary to study and analyze citizens’ letters, complaints and periodically prepare the relevant report. The most important thing is to segregate the data according to gender and produce appropriate statistics;*
- *It is essential to encourage citizens to use forms of participation in self-government, especially the electronic petition’s popularization, to make its more active use to attract all groups of citizens;*
- *It is important to have materials on gender statistics available on the website of the municipality;*

- *It is necessary to identify a list of qualification topics for municipal staff and use the budgetary resources allowed by law for professional development activities, especially in needs assessment, data systematization, and analysis;*
- *Use the resources of civil society organizations, individuals, professional groups in the municipality to collect evidence-based data;*
- *It is necessary to organize the relevant activities to ensure anti-corruption measures: to create a multidisciplinary group to develop an appropriate strategy and action plan, to use the resources of partner civil society organizations in this direction;*
- *It is crucial to develop a code of ethics and ensure its visibility on electronic platforms, information boards;*
- *It is necessary to find adequate resources to equip the municipality administrative building with ramps to make an adequately adapted space for people with disabilities to allow them to receive services without interruption;*
- *It is essential to further popularize the successful practice of participatory budgeting to increase the program allocations gradually.*

OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY

**THE THIRD REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

➤ INTRODUCTION

The project “A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring” aims to promote the implementation of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) at the local level. The Civil Society Forum of Western Georgia was set up to ensure public inclusiveness and control in 8 municipalities of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Guria in PAR monitoring.

The project is implemented by Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi” in partnership with the “Fund of Women Entrepreneurs” and the Imereti Scientists’ Union “Spectri” with the financial support of the European Union. It was the third monitoring stage.

This document is a monitoring report conducted in February 2021 in Ozurgeti Municipality. The monitoring was conducted by the Center for Education and Equality and the Young Teachers’ Union with the support of Imereti Scientists’ Union “Spectri”.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The monitoring aims to study the current situation in Lanchkhuti Municipality in terms of fulfilling the tasks set for the self-government through public administration reform in the direction of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of local government work; assess the progress made regarding the results of the previous monitoring; identify the implementation of recommendations submitted to the self-government.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

A monitoring tool was developed in advance by the project partners, indicators and following methods of information retrieval were identified: study of documents, review of electronic platforms of the municipality, observation, telephone interviews with City Council and City Hall officials (taking Covid-19 situation into account), public information request.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

Monitoring indicators were discussed according to three main elements: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

➤ TRANSPARENCY

1. Access to online job vacancies is essential in terms of transparency. Unlike the second monitoring, when there were no announcements on the website, there is some progress. A function for posting existing vacancies has been added to the administered website. The last vacancy is dated July 09, 2020, <http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?cat=86>.
2. Like the previous monitoring, **vacancies are published within the timeframe provided by the Civil Service Law.**
3. Progress is noticeable for each subsequent monitoring in terms of indicating the organizational structure, CVs, rights and duties and contact information of officials (telephone numbers, e-mail) on the municipality website. The organizational structure posted on the municipality website has been updated. It includes a graphic scheme, where it is possible to get acquainted with the individual structural units, all the necessary contact information, telephone numbers, e-mails. A question can be sent from the specified field to the desired recipient without any problems.
4. In Ozurgeti Municipality, **financial reports, approved budget, budget implementation reports for 3, 6, 9 months, annual report, procurement plan, and reports are published** in compliance with the norms and timeframe set by law. Report submission deadlines are announced. Budget of 2021 and budgets of the previous years, their implementation reports can be found on the website.

However, recent data are incomplete. At this stage, only the first quarterly report of the 2020 budget (March 2020) is searched on the website. Annual reports of City Hall services are available on the website.

The website introduces an interesting novelty, “Online Budget” as a budget transparency tool. It is explained that many citizens find it difficult to read the budget, and they are interested in getting the answer to the question: “Where does our money go?!” The program allows citizens to find answers to questions of interest to them in an understandable language. Compared to the second monitoring, when the online budget was working with shortcomings, the situation has been improved.

5. **The Municipality website and the application include all kinds of important public information, including CVs of the officials; date, agenda and protocols of the City Council/City Hall sessions; City Council resolutions.** The last protocol of the Ozurgeti Municipality City Council session is dated 29.01.2021. Announcements of events to be held in the City Council and the City Hall are posted (for example, at this stage, it is announced to hear the City Council members report on February 23).

Reports of different departments can be easily found. Annual reports of N(N)LEs are posted as well. Documents have a download function.

6. There is a positive change regarding open consultation hours for citizens. During the previous monitoring, City Council members did not have a stable schedule for meeting with citizens. The order of January 18, 2021, "On the approval of the schedule of reception of citizens by the officials of the Ozurgeti Municipality City Council", stipulates that the City Council receive citizens one day a week, following a relevant schedule. The schedule can be viewed by downloading the corresponding order.

Due to preventive measures, citizens have not been admitted to the City Hall in the conditions of the pandemic since 2020. However, they can receive municipal services without interruption via a hotline and electronic platforms. Based on the obtained information, when the pandemic is over, the citizens' reception will resume in the same way.

At this stage, information on citizen reception and consultation hours is not available on the website of local officials (Ozurgeti Municipality Mayor and Deputy Mayor) due to the website test mode.

7. According to previous monitoring materials, **significant progress has been made in Ozurgeti Municipality in terms of anti-corruption measures.** There are Transparency and Good Faith Strategy of 2019-2022 and Action Plan of 2019-2020. It is an anti-corruption document of the municipality (see <http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?p=6251>). The strategy monitoring framework and assessment methodology have been approved for this phase. An indicator of the existing positive dynamics is introducing a corruption risk assessment system in March 2021. Documents related to financial regulations are also available on the website.

The rules of conduct for public officials are set out in the regulations. Still, a separate regulation on ethical conduct has not yet been developed. However, there is a dialogue on this issue in the municipality.

➤ EFFICIENCY

1. **Like the previous monitoring period, Ozurgeti Municipality has the City Council annual work plan.** It is posted on the website and is dated January 28, 2021. Previous good practice in this regard has been maintained.

2. As for the practice of monitoring the activities of the City Hall services, according to the municipality's responsible persons, such measures are imposed within the framework of the anti-corruption strategy. Consequently, monthly and quarterly monitoring of the activities of the services is carried out, also through the annual reporting system, which has a particular form and appropriate deadlines. The City Hall activities are monitored by the City Hall Audit Service within the timeframe provided by law. However, the audit conclusions are not available electronically. The corresponding window on the website is empty.

3. In Ozurgeti municipality, **assessing the population's satisfaction with municipal services has been introduced, and the necessary forms for evaluation have been developed.** The population's satisfaction has been assessed in accordance with the commitments made under the Open Government Partnership Action Plan. However, the method is only in the process of being tested. Last year, the assessment was conducted by the Center for Innovation and Civic Development in cooperation with Ozurgeti City Hall. The study results showed that the population is dissatisfied with the lack of garbage containers in some villages. The existence of stray dogs in the city and road surface condition on several rural roads were also serious problems.

The project donor IRM recommendation was that **"Self-government should not only show citizen satisfaction but also respond and propose appropriate changes"**. They recommended that "public service evaluation results be published and that the government take legal responsibility for reflecting the evaluation results".

4. **The monitoring has revealed the number of open consultation days during a month at the City Hall and City Council.** Open consultation hours are set for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the City Council Chairman, deputy chairman and department heads. According to the City Hall and the City Council officials, every Wednesday from 10 am, the Mayor and the Deputy Curators, and the Heads of the Service review the citizens' needs and respond to them on time.

Remote communication is also going on in the City Council in a pandemic situation. For example, a live broadcast of a City Council member's report allows him to contact voters. The recordings are placed in the video archive and can be viewed by any interested person.

5. The monitoring has revealed **the average number of days for responding to citizens' letters and complaints in the municipality and the degree of response and feedback**. As it turned out, there are no statistics on citizens' letters and complaints, and there is no systematic analysis of incoming letters from citizens. The citizen's letter is responded within the General Administrative Code framework, and s/he has the opportunity to receive information online and in written form. Under the law, information is received within 3-10 days. Letters are displayed electronically.

Ozurgeti Municipality City Council does not produce statistics on complaints. As they say, a new window has been introduced on the website, and citizens are using it less. In case of referral, it is planned to create a register. There is an opportunity to ask questions during the live broadcast of the City Council session.

6. **There is a staff development plan in the municipality**. According to the responsible persons, it is developed once a year, based on professional development needs. It is uploaded on the Human Resources department website. According to them, the assessment system of professional public servants has been introduced in agreement with the Civil Service Bureau, carried out in full compliance with the procedures. Relevant approaches were taken in this regard during previous monitoring. There are particular forms for evaluating officials provided electronically to each employee, and the human resources department administers the process.

7. The monitoring has revealed **the number of trainings conducted for the local self-government representatives**. The municipality did not benefit from the allowed 1% this year and did not spend the budget on professional development. Due to the pandemic, no training was purchased in 2020. However, the number of participants in trainings under various projects has increased. The trainings covered the following topics: **Public communication during the COVID-19 pandemic; E-governance; Ozurgeti Municipality Website, Coordination Seminar - PLATFORMA; IV International Forum of Practitioners in Ukraine; OGP Local: Webinar - Eastern Partnership Region Overview; Information-educational webinar - goals of sustainable development; Issues of management and publication of open data; Localization of gender equality policy**.

8. 170 people (85%) were trained in self-government last year.

9. According to the information provided to the monitors, regular meetings, exchange of information between departments, trainings and other tools and techniques are used in the municipality to ensure quality implementation of activities. Several trainings were conducted to ensure proper employee evaluation. Various new electronic modules have been introduced.

10. In 2020, Ozurgeti Municipality joined the Open Government Partnership Local Program with 53 new members. The best practices are shared within the program. Besides, at the initiative of international organizations, local NGOs, central and regional authorities and the municipalities, meetings are held with various municipalities of Georgia in which municipal practitioners participate. For example, Poti, Abasha, Senaki, Zugdidi use the innovative engagement mechanisms implemented in Ozurgeti, and the participatory budgeting model - “Be a co-manager” - is being multiplied. A memorandum of mutual collaboration was signed between Ozurgeti and Zugdidi’s municipalities, including multilateral cooperation, including practice sharing. At the municipalities’ meeting involved in Open Government Partnership, initiated by Ozurgeti, the practices and gained experiences were shared.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

1. 2119 people with disabilities live in Ozurgeti municipality. Access to movement in administrative buildings is one of their essential needs. At this stage, as before, the City Hall and City Council buildings have only an external ramps. Wheelchair users can only move on the ground floor. Unfortunately, the field on the new website - “Adapted Infrastructure Service for Persons with Disabilities” - has been removed.

2. As in previous years, the 2021 Ozurgeti Municipality Budget Education Article contains sub-programs aimed at inclusive education. The municipality responsible persons believe that the relevant services representatives have some knowledge and skills regarding the legislation on inclusiveness. However, there is a need to increase their competence regarding these issues.

3. **The analysis did not reveal any discriminatory statements regarding age, sex or disability status in vacancy announcement in the municipality.** However, no incentive statements are used when announcing vacancies to attract women or people with disabilities.

4. The percentage of women employed in local self-government has not changed compared to the previous monitoring. 38% of public servants employed in the City Hall are women, and 62% - men. Whereas 45% of the City Council staff are women and 55% are men. **There are no gender statistics on the new website.** According to previous reports, there was gender-segregated data on the website. However, there is some regression in this regard. According to the provided information, the filling of the website information fields will continue.

5. The percentage of women in leading positions comprises 17%. There is only one woman in a leading position in the City Hall. Electronic data has not been updated since 2019.

6. There is a person in charge of communication with vulnerable groups, both in the City Council and City Hall. Needs assessment is being introduced in the municipality, but the results are not available electronically.

7. There is no normative act in Ozurgeti Municipality City Council and City Hall regarding electronic services promoting citizen participation. However, to simplify the e-service, there is a video instruction on using the website (website guide: http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?page_id=5254), which helps the citizen to orientate on the platform. An electronic petition, register of petitions, submission of letters, registration for the meeting are available. A total of 17 electronic petitions have been submitted. No new petition was registered in the Petition Registry in 2020. An appropriate field/window is provided on the municipality website to use citizen participation forms.

Special mention should be made of the civic budget project “Be a co-manager”, which showed the maximum data on citizen involvement (40%) and is being implemented in the municipality with increasing progressive dynamics. All submitted projects are searched on the website <https://votes.oz.gov.ge/>, and there are criteria for participation.

8. The Governor`s Office resources provide access to translation services for non-Georgian speakers in the municipality.

9. In the municipality there is a **Civil Advisory Council, a Gender Council, a Council of Persons with Disabilities, Public Hall at the City Council, Youth Council, Youth Gender Council, different working groups, including the Working Group for Supporting the Implementation of Public Administration Reform and Ozurgeti Municipality City Council Temporary Working Group set up to fulfill its obligations under the Open Governance of Georgia Action Plan 2019-2020.**

The website contains information on some of the above mechanisms: regulations, plans, protocols, reports. Mostly there is a list of members, contact information. In some cases, it isn't easy to find the desired information. For example, the regulations, plans, and reports of the Gender Council are searched in the section in the Municipality Development Plan category: <http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?cat=81>.

According to the provided information, citizens' inclusiveness in the councils' activities is very low.

One of the challenges was a lack of civic awareness and activism. A lack of government attempts to attract more citizens' groups to use these mechanisms to represent their interests better.

10. Ozurgeti Municipality social and health budget in 2021 is 1 670 000 GEL (according to the previous monitoring report, in 2020, it was 1 800 000 GEL) and represents 6.7% of the total municipal budget. **The gender budget** is divided into two parts: 30 000 GEL for the development of a gender strategy and 5 000 GEL for the implementation of gender-oriented activities in the relevant department.

The participatory budget in Ozurgeti in 2019 was 150 000 GEL. In 2020 - 300 000 GEL; in 2021, it comprised 300 000 GEL. However, according to the provided information, it is possible to make adjustments to increase it. It is related to the fiscal situation during the pandemic and the mobilization of the municipality revenues.

11. **There is no normative act/regulation in the municipality on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or providing public services to them.** It was said that it is envisaged to be introduced. The needs of vulnerable groups are planned to be studied with donors and vulnerable groups to obtain evidence-based information and initiate budget programs based on them.

12. **There are contact persons in the City Hall and City Council for civil society organizations /working groups.** The monitoring has revealed that Ozurgeti has an outstanding experience in this regard. The local program's official contact person (Open Government Partnership) is the City Council apparatus head, who is also the NGO Forum coordinator.

Holding meetings with civil society organizations in municipalities has a long history, and the process is currently being institutionalized. Several joint meetings are organized by the municipality and with the involvement of CSOs.

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The monitoring has revealed the current situation in Ozurgeti Municipality in terms of public administration reform (PAR), which has shown progress in responding to the challenges identified by previous monitoring. It turned out that the website has been reorganized and, despite the shortcomings (the website operates in test mode), its functionality has become much more convenient for the user. It provides uninterrupted access to the necessary information. The practice of visual budget and video instruction to use website should be emphasized. It achieves a higher level of transparency in the municipality activities. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to find more optimal «fields» for their placement to access some information. It is welcomed that the website administration offers the user to suggest their vision regarding the website smooth functioning.

It turned out that a lot of exciting novelties has been introduced in Ozurgeti municipality in recent years. The successful practice of participatory budgeting looks very impressive. However, perhaps the situation has matured to include this budget component as a separate program to make it even more diverse and loaded with new content such as social security, education, culture and new projects.

Significant progress has been made in identifying needs, studying the effects of programs, and using NGOs' resources in this direction. There is a need to consolidate and institutionalize these achievements.

Deficiencies have been identified in terms of citizen letters, systematization and analysis of complaints. No audit findings are available. The positive dynamics in terms of promoting anti-corruption measures have slowed down to some extent. First of all, it concerns the issue of creating a code of ethics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to ensure more efficient use of the website to facilitate information retrieval, for example, by moving gender equality policy issues to a separate field;
- It is necessary to fill in the website fields with the information proactively published for the municipality. Fill in/update old data;

- It is necessary to simplify and make available on the municipal website the open consultation hours for citizens by local officials and services and to be provided in an easily understandable form. Also, City Council deputies' existing schedule of receiving citizens should be placed in an easily accessible place;
- It is necessary to systematize citizens' letters and complaints and prepare reports to reflect socially relevant issues;
- It is necessary to ensure access to audit conclusions in parallel with other reports;
- It is necessary to continue the positive dynamics in terms of anti-corruption measures and develop a code of ethical conduct;
- There is a need for a representative working group to implement the “good faith strategy” of other municipalities, which implies greater involvement of different sectors. The monitoring plan of the City Hall services and the monitoring results should be visible on the website;
- It is crucial to set up a working group on service evaluation indicators and identify the data collection forms and methodology. Consistently raise relevant qualifications in this direction and institutionalize services, reduce dependence on qualification resources of partner organizations;
- It is important to publish the results of local service assessments and to have them reflected in local programs by local authorities;
- It is desirable to separate the participatory budget component from the infrastructure program and include it in the budget as a separate independent program, making it much more diverse and flexible to address citizens' needs.

APPENDIX

THE MONITORING MECHANISM (QUESTIONNAIRE) FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM ROADMAP MONITORING IN 8 TARGET MUNICIPALITIES

Transparency	How will the monitoring be conducted/ what documents have to be analyzed	Indicators/ data of the second monitoring	Basic indicators Monitoring Results/ Indicators	Progress achieved since the second monitoring In case progress is not observed, describe whether any changes are being planned. If yes, please explain.
1. Are vacancy announcements available online?	Analyzing the following web-sites: -www.hr.gov.ge -The Municipality Website -www.jobs.ge		Yes/No If not available, an interview may be conducted to find out the reasons for this and clarify how vacancies are announced	
2. Are vacancy announcement deadlines observed?	Analyzing the following documents: - The Ordinance of the Government of Georgia on the "Procedure for Conducting Competitions in Public Service" -Staffing standards/rules in the municipality (if available)		Yes/No	

<p>3. Does the municipality website provide information about organizational structure including the contact persons, their telephone numbers, emails and their tasks and responsibilities?</p>	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If not, an interview should be conducted to clarify how a citizen can communicate with the contact persons</p>	
<p>4. Are the financial statements published online?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopted budget? - Budget reports for 3, 6, 9 months and annual report? - Procurement plan and report 	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p>		<p>Yes/No;</p> <p>The Date of the last report;</p> <p>If not, an interview should be conducted to clarify where citizens can find these reports, for example, on TV, radio, in newspapers, etc.</p>	
<p>5. Does the municipality website include public information, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the biographies of officials, - the agendas of the Sakrebulo / Mayor's Office meetings, - normative acts adopted by the Sakrebulo, - decrees, reports from various departments? 	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>The date of the last update</p>	

APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)

<p>6. Do the following officials have fixed open office hours for receiving and consulting citizens?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Mayor, - Deputy Mayor - Sakrebulo Chairperson - Deputy Sakrebulo Chairperson, - Sakrebulo members, - heads of departments <p>If yes, is this information published on the municipality website?</p>	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p> <p>Calling the municipality hotline</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Frequency:</p> <p>How many days per week?</p> <p>How many hours?</p>	
<p>7. Are anti-corruption measures implemented in the municipality?</p> <p>Are the following documents available on the website?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-corruption plans; - Anti-corruption regulations; - Financial regulations; - A code of ethical conduct. 	<p>Interviewing representatives of the self-government</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>When was it last updated?</p>	

Effectiveness	How will the monitoring be conducted/ what documents have to be analyzed	Indicators/ data of the first monitoring	Monitoring Results/ Indicators	Progress achieved since the first monitoring In case progress is not observed, describe whether any changes are being planned
1. Is there an annual/ monthly plan for conducting Sakrebulo sessions?	Analyzing the information on the municipality website Interviewing a municipality representative		Yes/No	
2. Do the municipalities monitor activities of the departments of Mayor's office? Are the timeframes and monitoring forms determined?	Interviewing the municipality representative		Yes/No	
3. Have the forms for evaluating municipality services been developed?	Interviewing the municipality representative		Yes/No	

APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)

<p>4. Number of days per month for open office hours in the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the Mayor, -Deputy Mayor -Sakrebulo Chairperson -Deputy Sakrebulo Chairperson, -Sakrebulo members, -heads of departments 	<p>Interviewing Public Relations Department representatives of the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo</p> <p>-Scheduling an appointment with an official in the capacity of a regular citizen</p>		<p>Actual number of days</p>	
<p>5. Average number of days for answering complaints of citizens</p>	<p>Interviewing the Mayor's Office and/or Sakrebulo representatives</p> <p>Submitting a complaint from a citizen</p>		<p>Actual number of days</p>	
<p>6. Do the municipalities have a professional development plan for the staff?</p>	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p> <p>Interviewing a representative of the self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>Yes/No</p>	

<p>7. Number of trainings conducted for the representatives of local self-government, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Sakrebulo members, - the Sakrebulo and the Mayor's Office staff (total and over the past year) and what were the topics of the trainings 	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>1.Total number of trainings</p> <p>2. Number of trainings over the last year</p>	
<p>8. Percentage of the local self-government representatives who have participated in trainings (total and over the past year)</p>	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>1.Percentage of training participants in total</p> <p>2. Percentage of training participants over the last year</p>	
<p>9. Availability of any tools and techniques used by local self-government, such as: trainings, workshops, exchange of information between various departments for ensuring the quality of its activities (for example, for managing competencies)</p>	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, which tools and techniques are used: regular meetings, exchange of information between various departments, trainings?</p>	

APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)

10. How many meetings were conducted over the last year with representatives of other self-governments to share best practices/ experience?	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department		Number of meetings conducted	
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Inclusiveness	How will the monitoring be conducted/ what documents have to be analyzed	Indicators/ data of the first monitoring	Monitoring Results/ Indicators	Progress achieved since the first monitoring In case progress is not observed, describe whether any changes are being planned
1. Are the Mayor's Office/ Sakrebulo buildings equipped with ramps?	Inspection		Yes/No	

<p>2. Are the representatives of the municipality (the Mayor's Office, Sakrebulo) aware of the legislation adopted by the State regarding inclusiveness? Are they familiar with</p> <p>The Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities;</p> <p>Legislation on labor rights;</p> <p>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>Interviewing a municipality representative</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, please list the documents and programs</p>	
<p>3. Are the municipality vacancy announcements non-discriminatory?</p>	<p>Analyzing the vacancy announcements</p>		<p>Number of restrictions for the applicants (for example, by age, sex, status, etc.)</p>	
<p>4. What is the percentage of women employed in the local self-governance staff?</p>	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>Percentage of women employed</p>	

APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)

<p>5. What is the percentage of women working in senior positions in local self-government (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Sakrebulo Chairpersons, Heads of commissions)</p>	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>Percentage of women working in senior positions</p>	
<p>6. Does the municipality have a focal point for relations with vulnerable groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -women -socially disadvantaged -IDPs -persons with disabilities (with hearing, sight, mobility issues). 	<p>Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative</p>		<p>Yes/No</p>	

<p>7. Availability of e-services insuring citizen's participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - submitting letters; - petitions; - complaints; - scheduling meetings, -receiving replies, etc. 	<p>Analyzing the municipality website</p> <p>Interviewing the self-government's Public Relations Department representative</p>		<p>List available forms</p>	
<p>8. Is the translation service available for non-Georgian speakers?</p>	<p>Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If not, explain the reason</p>	
<p>9. Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an advisory board, - a gender council, - other councils and working groups <p>operate in the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo?</p>	<p>Interviewing a representative of Human Resources Management Department</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	

APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)

<p>10. Do the municipalities have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participatory budget? -Social budget? - Gender budget 	<p>Interviewing a representative of the Mayor's Office (Finance Department)</p> <p>Analyzing the municipality website</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>The date of the last budget</p>	
<p>11. Does the municipality have a normative act/ regulation on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or on the provision of public services to them? If not, is it planned to implement/promote such an approach?</p>	<p>Interviewing a municipality representative</p>		<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, please list of documents and programs</p>	
<p>12. Does the municipality have a focal point for cooperation with civil society organizations/working groups?</p>	<p>Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative</p>		<p>Yes/No</p>	

MEETING IN VANI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY



MEETING IN KHONI MUNICIPALITY



VANI MUNICIPALITY



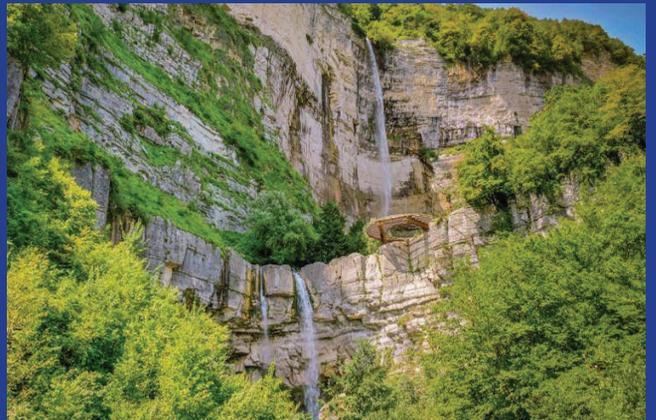
TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY



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