THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR) ROADMAP MONITORING IN 8 MUNICIPALITIES OF WESTERN GEORGIA
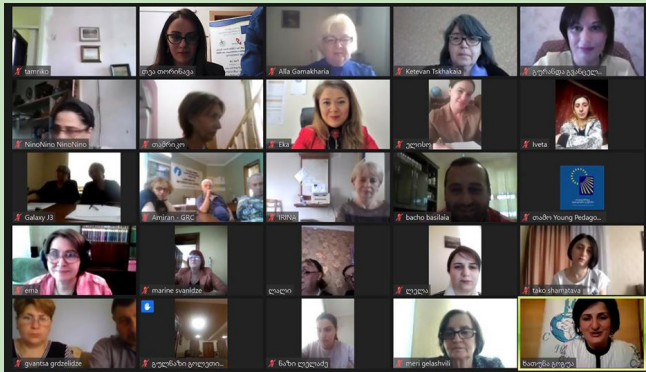
REPORT No 2

2020

MEETING OF PROJECT PARTNERS

TRAININGS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON PAR MONITORING

CSO FORUM MEETINGS

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

REPORT No 2

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

2020

C O N T E N T S

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

THE SECOND MONITORING CONSOLIDATED REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public Administration Reform (PAR) plays a fundamental role on the way of integration to the EU, and its successful implementation will significantly contribute to the fulfilment of the obligations under the "Georgia-EU Association Agreement", such as the establishment of a transparent, accountable and efficient public administration system.

The reform of the local self-government is one of the essential components of PAR, which is aimed at improving the process of decentralization and achieving better governance at the local level. The PAR Action Plan 2019-2020 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.*

Speeding up the e-government reforms, development of electronic service platforms and provision of their accessibility is especially vital in the conditions of COVID-19 pandemic.

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[1] of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Guria in the monitoring process of

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1 Municipalities of Khoni, Bagdati, Terjola, Vani, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Tsageri and Ambrolauri.

PAR implementation at the local self-governments **through creation and strengthening of CSO Forum ("Forum").**

The monitoring aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the e-governance, elaborate the relevant recommendations to fill the identified gaps and address the challenges, and start active advocacy to solve the problems.

Four stages of monitoring are planned within the project framework. The first was conducted in January-February, 2020. As a result of the monitoring, a detailed report has been prepared. It outlines the achievements and existing gaps in the course of the reform implementation. The detailed recommendations have been developed for the consideration of each municipality.

Some **essential interventions** have been carried out within the framework of the project to respond effectively to the gaps identified during the first monitoring and speed up the solution of the problems:

➤ CREATION OF "WORKING GROUPS" – A LOCAL INTER-SECTORAL COORDINATION MECHANISM

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 the public administration reform, as well as to analyse the shortcomings identified as a result of the monitoring and ensure 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. During the project implementation, to improve e-government system at the local level, "working groups" have elaborated **the local action plans,** which are currently considered, adopted and approved by Bagdati, Vani and Terjola City Councils. To ensure solution of the existing problems, the detailed **advocacy strategies** have been developed. 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. For instance, uploading public information (reports, regulations, etc.) on the official website has been improved in the specific municipalities; CVs and contact information of public servants have become available; electronic communication channels with local officials through the website have been created and/or simplified; special panels which allow citizens to ask

questions have been launched; in 2021 budgets of some municipalities, funds for construction of ramps at the entrances of the administrative buildings have been allocated; with the active participation of the working groups the ethic code and anti-corruption plans are being developed etc.

➢ **SMALL GRANT PROJECTS – TO ADDRESS PURPOSEFULLY THE GAPS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE MONITORING**

Within the frames of the project, the CSOs united in the "Forum" have elaborated and **successfully implemented 16 small grant projects**. The projects have contributed to strengthening and development of the local civil society organizations; raising awareness of the local authorities and the population on PAR; increasing participation of the civil society in political dialogue and decision-making process; informing the population about local electronic services and improving access to these services; several meetings, training/workshops, round tables and the meetings with the participation of self-government representatives and citizens (Vani, Bagdati, Ambrolauri) have been held; to ensure prompt response to the population's problems "Hotline" has been launched (Khoni); online application - "Lanchkhuti Municipality Electronic Manager" has also been created and launched, which allows the population to receive the comprehensive information about the city councils' events and ask the questions to the local deputies; short videos on using the electronic services have been prepared, and information booklets have been published for the population with no internet access (Ambrolauri, Tsageri); the participatory budget has been introduced, and relevant funds have been planned in the municipal budget of 2021 (Terjola, Lanchkhuti); the necessity to raise qualification of the local authorities has been identified, and professional development plans have been developed (Terjola, Lanchkhuti); forms of online application have been added to the municipal websites, including "Address the Mayor", "Address the Chair of the City Council"; an information panel "Request information" has been integrated into the websites of specific municipalities, through which any interested citizen can ask a question to the self-government representatives. A special field - "Plan your budget", has been added to the websites of specific municipalities etc.

Despite progress achieved and the activities undertaken to address the gaps, the **proper introduction of e-government at the municipalities, transparency of e-services and public information, and its accessibility,** remain a challenge. **The level of citizens's participation and practical use of existing mechanisms for participation in the local policy-making process, and accountability are rather weak.**

2. MONITORING AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The second monitoring aims to assess the progress of recommendations elaborated to address the gaps identified through the first 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 August, 2020 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 the local government work has been studied according to the monitoring mechanism and the questionnaire elaborated by the project partners. It implied 32 different criteria and assessment indicators.[2] The reform implementation assessment was carried out based on the monitoring of the official websites of municipalities, as well as the analysis of the public information requested from the local authority representatives and observation of the local practices of citizens' participation. Telephone communication, private meetings and official online sources have been used as additional tools of retrieving and verifying the information.

3. MONITORING FINDINGS - PROGRESS AND GAP ASSESSMENT

3.1. TRANSPARENCY

The level of transparency of the local self-government has been assessed based on the following indicators and parameters: the level of transparency of the vacancy announcement process in the municipalities; accessability 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 ethic code of the local public servants.

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.

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2 Preliminarily elaborated indicators were used to assess transparency - 9, efficiency 11 and inclusiveness - 12.

➤ **PUBLICITY AND TERMS
OF VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The websites of all the municipalities have a special field - "vacancy"; however, the rule and terms for sharing the announced vacancy are not equally preserved everywhere. Like the first monitoring, **the rules and terms of placing the vacancy** on the municipality website, are maintained in Bagdati, Vani and Terjola municipalities. Vacancies are uploaded both on the websites of the relevant municipalities and the governmental web portal www.hr.gov.ge. All the terms referring to placing, re-electing, appealing, interviewing, representing the candidate by the commission and appointing set by the Law are preserved. It is hard to track the progress in Ambrolauri and Khoni since based on the received information during both monitorings **vacancies have not been announced in the municipalities**. Despite the existing vacant places in Ozurgeti City Hall structure list, the municipality website panel for vacancies does not imply the information. The information on vacancies has not been updated on Lanchkhuti Municipality website, where the last vacancy was announced in October 2019.

The present monitoring demonstrates that there is no apparent progress in the municipalities which promptly had to upload the information about vacancies. Since there is no access to the internet in various settlements of the target municipalities, it is necessary to share the information not only through the website but via the press as well. It will increase the access of the citizens to the vacancies.

➤ **PUBLICITY OF THE CVs AND
CONTACT INFORMATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

After the first monitoring, **apparent progress** has been made in addressing the shortcomings. The information on the local governmental structures was initially uploaded on the websites of Bagdati, Vani and Terjola municipalities. It included CVs, duties, phone numbers and e-mails of contact persons. **The information has been revised and updated**. **There is some progress in Ozurgeti Municipality** where such information was unavailable during the previous monitoring. At present**, the detailed information on the organizational structure and contact information** of the public servants is uploaded on the websites. **The website of Khoni Municipality is actively modernized** and based on the given information, all the identified deficiencies are to be improved. The website is working in a test mode, and CVs of the administrative officials can be found without contact information. The website of Ambrolauri Municipality is also actively being refreshed, and the contact information of public servants is fully updated. Although the organizational structure of the City Council and City Hall including CVs, duties and contact information of public authorities was shared via Lanchkhuti Municipality website, an application "Lanchkhuti Municipality Sakrebulo Electronic

Manager" (www.lcman.ge) has been created with the assistance of the current project. It provides citizens with access to wide range of information on City Council's work, the detailed contact information on members of Sakrebulo, commissions and fractions.

➤ CITIZEN RECEPTION/ OPEN CONSULTATION DAYS

The second monitoring has revealed **some progress** and improvement regarding setting official reception days and hours for citizens and publicity of this information. However, this issue **is not fully regulated in the majority of municipalities**. City Council of Ozurgeti Municipality annually appoints official reception days for citizens, and this practice is currently exercised. **There is some progress in Vani Municipality**. While according to the previous monitoring, only the Mayor had officially appointed days for reception of the citizens, currently, in response to the proposed recommendations, by the official order of the Chair of the City Council, the reception days and hours have been set both in City Hall and City Council**. The situation has improved in Tsageri** as well, where, according to the previous monitoring data, there was no pre-defined schedule of meetings of officials with citizens. To date, there is a clearly defined schedule of reception days for individual officials, although this information is placed either on the doors of the administrative officials' room or on the information boards. **This infromation is available neither on the website nor on the FB page**.

The situation is the same in Bagdati, where official reception days are set only with the Mayor and the head of City Council, however, the information is unavailable on the web platforms. The monitoring has revealed that **the majority of public officials believe that setting special days for the reception restricts citizens** and consequently they do not officially appoint such days. However, under the City Council statutes and regulations, the members of City Council are obliged to set the reception days with the citizens. The local officials of Ambrolauri and some from Terjola share the idea that citizens should not be restricted in this regard. Thus, in Terjola only the chair of City Council and the deputy from Gvankiti village have officially set the reception days. The same situation is in **Lanchkhuti**, where unlike the first monitoring, **the days of reception for citizens have been annulled** by a chair of the City Council, deputy of chair, other deputies and deputies of the different departments. In the municipalities, where the local officials believe that citizens should not be restricted to meet public officials do not have any set mechanisms of registration for the meetings, which would make the management of visitors easier and decrease the time of standing in a queue. **Only Ambrolauri Municipality** has started working on introducing the citizens' online registration system (this proposal had been initiated by the Ambrolauri active working group). There are no officially appointed days of reception in Khoni Municipality either. Citizens actively communicate with the Mayor and his deputy. In addition, to

ensure prompt communication with citizens and timely response to the urgent issues the "Hotline" has been launched in the municipality.[3]

▷ PUBLISHING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATIONS

Significant progress has been made in terms of uploading the public documentations on the websites. As in the first monitoring, during the present one, the financial documentations, including the municipality budget, its implementation reports, and the procurement plan have been published by the municipalities of Khoni, Ambrolauri, Tsageri, Ozurgeti and Lanchkhuti. The situation has significantly improved in Vani, Bagdati and Terjola municipalities, where during the second monitoring, **the municipality financial documentations of 2020, including budgets, budget execution reports are uploaded on the website**. Agendas of City Council's sessions, all the adopted normative acts or resolutions, reports of the relevant services and departments are electronically available during the second monitoring in Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti, Bagdati, Terjola and Vani municipalities. In Tsageri Municipality, the City Council's agenda is available only on the information board and is not uploaded electronically on the website. It should be noted that the websites of the specific municipalities are actively renewed and modernized to improve the provision of e-services, and make the public information more accessible (Khoni, Terjola, Ambrolauri municipalities).

▷ ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES OF THE SELF-GOVERNMENT

No apparent progress is identified in self-governments regarding taking anti-corruption measures. Despite the recommendations suggested to the municipalities and active advocacy campaign undertaken to address the issue, the majority of them, except Ozurgeti, have not adopted anti-corruption provision and plans. There are no financial regulations and provision on the code of ethic as well. The working groups created within the project framework are actively involved in the elaboration of the documents mentioned above in specific municipalities. **The provision on code of ethic has been developed and adopted in Terjola Municipality. There is some progress in Ozurgeti** as well, where, with the active participation of the working groups "Ozurgeti Municipality Fairness and Transparency Strategy and Action Plan" was elaborated and adopted at the session of the City Council. After the introduction of the strategy, City Council elaborated and approved monitoring framework and assessment methodology of the strategy.[4] At the given mo-

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3 *The activity has been carried out under the sub-grant components, within the framework of the Fund "Sukhumi" project - "Public Administration Reform (PAR) monitoring in local self-governments".*

4 Developed with the support of the USAID program on "Good Governance Initiative" (GGI)

ment, **Ozurgeti Municipality is the first** having adopted an anti-corruption document at the local level. At present, to take anti-corruption measures, municipalities and representatives of the self-governments follow the law on "Conflict of Interest and Corruption in Public Service" and ordinance of the government of Georgia on "Ethic Code and General Rules of Conduct in Public Institutions".

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 activites undertaken by the the City Hall (whether there are any forms and terms for monitoring); whether needs of the local officials's qualification are assessed and whether the municipality has an appropriate professional development plan elaborated and adopted based on the results of the assessment.

LEVEL OF RESPONSES TO THE COMPLAINTS AND LETTERS OF CITIZENS

According to the monitoring data, **the websites of all the target municipalities have a separate field to submit a complaint, petition and send letters**. However, **there are some problems** while using the service. For instance, In Ambrolauri, the memory capacity of the web portal is small, and there is a risk of losing/erasing the sent information. In fact, citizens do not actively use these services, and it is a challenge for all the municipalities. At the same time, it demonstrates the lack of population access to the e-services (lack of internet, information or relevant technical means). Consequently, it will not be easy to increase using e-services by population without strengthening their electronic skills, raising their awareness on the existing services, and provision of the regions with high-speed internet. During the monitoring, it was pointed out that **the letters and complaints received from the citizens are not analysed, and relevant reports are not prepared by the local government officials**. Besides**, the statistics on the received letters, complaints and petitions** are not shared, which requires revision and improvement.

The deadlines for responding to the complaints or the letters in the municipalities are generally set within 10 days as of by the relevant law. However, depending on the specificity of the issue (complexity or simplicity), the response usually takes from 3 to 10 days.

MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

Conducting monitoring and assessment of the municipal services is a **challenge for the majority of municipalities**. **Except for Ozurgeti**, the self-government **service assessment system** is not adopted in any of the municipalities. Besides, terms of monitoring and the report form are not defined. The monitoring has revealed that **only Ozurgeti Municipality conducts monitoring** via monthly, quarterly and annual reports using special form and the terms. In other municipalities, self-**governments only appeal to the audit assessment**. As a result of the advocacy campaign and work rendered after the first monitoring, the local public officials have realized the necessity to undertake the citizens' needs and satisfaction assessment. However, this **process takes too long due to the lack of the qualified staff and person in charge for implementation.** In response to the challenge, the working groups are actively involved in the development of the appropriate forms for monitoring and evaluation. Training on monitoring and evaluation was also planned in some municipalities, which was reflected in the local officials' professional development plans.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The results of both monitorings demonstrate that the quality of municipal service delivery, proper performance of the functions and responsibilities by the local public officials depend on their professionalism and qualification. The monitoring results show that **the provision of the services tailored to the needs and priorities of citizens is hindered by the lack of relevant knowledge and qualifications on the ground**. The first monitoring revealed the necessity to assess professional development needs of the public officials and develop an appropriate plan based on this needs-assessment. The second monitoring shows **some progress in municipalities** regarding the professional development plan of the employees. Nearly all the target municipalities (except Khoni and Tsageri municipalities) have elaborated municipality employee professional development plan and submitted to the public service bureau for approval. Relevant funds for the further training of the employees have been allocated in some municipalities. Nearly in every municipality, employees have an opportunity to attend different professional development trainings. However, **such trainings are organized and held by external resources** (by funding of international and local organizations) **and not by municipal funds.**

Target municipalities show an increasing **tendency of collaboration and best practice sharing** between self-governments. Since **the number of** experience sharing **meetings organized by the self-governments** is insufficient, the representatives

of specific CSOs allow municipalities to participate in extended meetings for self-government representatives, round tables, training sessions and workshops. Sharing the best **practice makes a positive impact and contributes to introducing novelties and new services in municipalitie**s. The trainings and the meetings organized by the Fund Sukhumi in the state representative (governor) office with participation of the local officials from different municipalities were positively assessd by the representatives of local government. Such meetings enure information exchange and improve coordination between municipalities. During these events participants discuss perspectives of introduction of the long-term services, share the best practices of social and gender programs, and response strategies to the problems caused by the pandemic. During the present monitoring, **the experience of Tskaltubo participatory budget was shared in Terjola Municipality**, and an active work has started to adopt it.

3.3. INCLUSIVENESS/PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation and inclusiveness in the local policy-making process is a cornerstone of self-government. The level of communication between citizens and local public officials, participation and inclusion of the vulnerable groups (women, gender groups) in the identification of the local programs and policy, is the indicator of success of open and good governance. 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 involvement by citizens (submission of petition/complaint, sending letters), the functioning of the local gender equality and civil advisory councils, and the the councils of persons with disabilities.

PRESERVING THE STANDARDS OF INCLUSIVENESS

Based on the second monitoring data, there is **no progress regarding** the creation of the adapted environment for persons with disabilities in municipal buildings. **There are no ramps in the majority of the administrative buildings**. Their existence would provide participation of the persons with disabilities in the meetings at self-governments. Administrative buildings of Ambrolauri, Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Bagdati municipalities are **partly adapted**. There are only external ramps and allow persons with disabilities to enter only the ground floor of the buildings. Citizen service centre and social services are on the first floor in Lanchkhuti; however, meeting persons with disabilities with Mayors, Deputy Mayors and attending City Council's sessions is a chal-

lenge. As a response to the first monitoring, adapting the first floor is being planned in Terjola Municipality. In Khoni Municipality, active negotiations are being held on the allocation of funds on construction of external ramps in the budget of 2021. There are no real prospects regarding the improvement of the adapted environment for persons with disabilities in other municipalities. Since the buildings are old, it is impossible to conduct any kinds of reconstructions.

The majority of target municipalities, except for Terjola, **have councils of persons with disabilities**. There is a council called "**Civil council" in Tsageri Municipality**. It is responsible for the protection of the interests of the vulnerable groups, including the persons with disabilities and represents their needs while elaborating the municipal programs. However, the **council's meeting minutes or work reports are not available**.

It should be noted that the websites of Lanchkhuti and Ozurgeti municipalities have a special field "Infrastructure arranging service for persons with disabilities"; however, it does not contain any information on a specific group.

During the second monitoring, **a successful example of outsourcing** was revealed in Terjola Municipality. 100 000 GEL was allocated to the local CSO - "Terjola association of disabled persons" from the local budget to provide specialized and purposeful service.

In the majority of the municipalities, except for Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Tsageri, there is **no particular person responsible for communication with vulnerable groups** (women, socially vulnerable, IDPs, persons with disabilities). A special information-consultation space is arranged for the reception of citizens in Khoni City Hall where a specialist of the relevant competence assists vulnerable groups.

Municipalities do not provide **translator service for non-Georgians**. Self-governments explain it by the non-existence of ethnic groups in their municipalities. However, it turned out that the municipalities have never studied the number of non-Georgian people living in their municipalities. Consequently, the absence of this service is not based on the evidence-based information.

> ## LEVEL OF USE OF EXISTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

The second monitoring shows that there is some progress in municipalities regarding citizen participation. It is indicated by an increased number of e-mails. **The progress is especially apparent in Vani Municipality**, where according to the data of August 2020, 3128 e-mails had been received. It demonstrates the raise of the population awareness on e-services. T**he launching of the "Hotline" has raised the level of citizen applicability in Khoni.** 450 citizens applied to the

local government through it during March-August, 2020. Unfortunately, **citizens in Ambrolauri, Bagdati and Tsageri have not used the portals of the official websites - "Apply to government"** (Bagdati), **"Request information"** (Ambrolauri), **"Create petition"** (Tsageri). Besides, they have not used the mechanism of complaint and proposal submission on the website of Lanchkhuti Municipality (none of the submitted complaints in the municipality (there are only 2 of them) has been sent electronically). It indicates the passivity of citizens regarding using the e-services and can be reasoned not only by the lack of their awareness on the existing services but the lack of access to these services (the absence of the internet and relevant technical means or relevant skills).

The municipalities show more interest regarding adoption of participatory budgets. For instance, the participatory budget was not introduced during the first monitoring in Lanchkhuti and Terjola. As of today, their adoption is already planned for 2021. Lanckhuti City Council has planned to allocate at least 70 000 GEL on participatory budget and has already approved relevant legal provision, created the website www.idealanchkhui.ge for its administration, and announced competition for ideas. Compared to the previous year, funds for participatory budget have considerably increased in Ozurgeti (up to 300 000). Although the participatory budget is not adopted in Vani Municipality, active participation and inclusiveness of citizens is ensured in the process of planning of rural programs (4% of the municipal budget has been allocated for the rural programs). There is **no progress in this regard in Khoni, Tsageri and Ambrolauri**, however, an active dialogue with relevant local officials around this issue has already started. It is noteworthy that a special field **"Plan your budget"** has been added to the official website of Ambrolauri Municipality. It is aimed at making citizens more actively included in budget planning process. However, citizens do not use this mechanism.

GENDER COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPALITY EMPLOYEES

Gender composition of the municipality employees is **nonhomogenous**. According to the monitoring data, the share of the women employees is 31%-78% in the majority of target municipalities. The highest indicators have Ozurgeti (78%), Khoni (63%) and Ambroaluri (50%) municipalities. However, **the situation is quite different** while evaluating the statistic data of women working in executive positions. For instance, only 20% of women out of 78% employed at Lanchkhuti Sakrebulo, take executive positions. A similar situation is evident virtually in every municipality. The only exception is Khoni Municipality, where 51% of women take executive positions. **The lowest indicator has Tsageri Municipality**, where women comprise only 17% of City Hall employees and 3% of City Council. **No gender-segregated data** is available in the majority

of the municipalities. Ozurgeti Municipality official website is the only exception, where gender statistic data of employees, as well as executive officials, is available.

There are no discrimination signs while announcing vacancy, however, there is no special indication that encourages female candidates to apply for the jobs.

> ### REFLECTION OF THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Nearly in all the municipalities, there are civil advisory and gender equality councils; however, their impact on a local social policy is relatively weak, and there is no accountability on the rendered activities. The majority of the municipalities show low sensitivity and interest towards gender equality issues. In most municipalities, there is a rather low sensitivity and interest in gender equality issues, which is reflected in the rare meetings of representatives of gender equality councils and the weak pace of gender policy implementation in the field. Consequently, it is reflected in the lack of **gender programs and gender budget in municipalities**. None of the municipalities has a gender budget. However, some municipalities have **gender programs** spread in different directions of the budget. Lanchkhuti (5000 GEL) and Ozurgeti (20 000 GEL) municipality budgets stand out regarding gender program[5] integration, if assessed by the gender index, they would have a rather high mark. Nearly all the municipalities showed **the lack of knowledge on gender policy and gender budgeting**. The necessity of further training of the relevant employees and public officials has become evident.

The share of social budget in the budgets of municipalities ranges from 5% to 12%. Khoni Municipality allocates the biggest part (12%) on social programs.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the active advocacy campaign and efforts to address the revealed gaps by the CSO forum representatives and working groups, **second monitoring process demonstrated apparent progress** in terms of self-government transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness. Specific municipalities have modernized their websites, corrected contact information of the public officials, set the days and hours for citizen reception, improved the publicity of the local legislative documents, reports of City Hall and Councils' relevant units, budget and its execution reports, approved the plans of employee professional development, launched "Hotline", integrated special fields providing the communication between citizens and local authority representatives into the official websites and introduced civil budget. However, there are the following **challenges** which still need to be addressed:

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5 Gender programs- for instance, funding the women`s football club, rehabilitation program for women with breast cancer, support services for women victim of domestic violence, etc.

TRANSPARENCY:

- Minutes of the City Hall and City Council sessions and reports of different departments are still not available on the official websites in all target municipalities;

- The majority of the municipalities have not adopted anti-corruption plans and ethic code for public officials;

- The public officials of City Hall and City Council have not set the days and hours for citizen reception;

- Often, information on vacancies is unavailable;

- Some fields in the websites are blank or inactive, and it prevents finding information;

- Gender-segregated statistics is not available in the websites.

EFFICIENCY:

- In most of the municipalities there is no practice of assessing the satisfaction of the population with municipal services;

- The activities and work of the services operating in the municipality are not monitored, and monitoring reports are not published;

- There is no consistent policy providing professional development of municipal officials and employees: no research is conducted on the needs for the professional development of municipality officials, and no plans of professional development have been elaborated and adopted.

INCLUSIVENESS/PARTICIPATION:

- Awareness of the citizens on the municipal electronic services and mechanisms providing their participation is low;

- Several municipalities do not comply with the standards providing inclusiveness: municipal buildings are not adapted for the persons with disabilities, councils of persons with disabilities are not active, and reports on their work are unavailable;

- Councils of gender equality and civil advisory are relatively passive;

- In the majority of the municipalities, there is no active mechanism providing participation of the vulnerable groups in the decision-making process;

- Awareness and knowledge of the municipality officials on the implementation of gender policy and gender budgeting issues is very low;

The lack of internet access and access to the e-systems prevents the population from participation and inclusiveness. It often refers to the partly provision of the target regions with the internet, weak signal (mostly in villages), high cost of the internet, and unavailability of the population to the technical means (computer, smart-

phone, etc.). It is mainly affected by the hard economic condition and insufficient skills for using technologies (especially in the middle-aged and elderly population).

To fill the above-mentioned gaps and address the challenges, the following recommendations can be proposed:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

TRANSPARENCY:

- Communication strategy by the municipalities, with active involvement of the CSOs and media should be developed to fully inform the population on PAR and e-services. Differentiated approaches and methods of information dissemination should be employed, considering the target auditory location, age and skills for using e-platforms;

- Detailed instructions for using electronic services should be shared via municipality websites and social networks. The population that does not have access to the e-platforms due to the lack of the internet or appropriate skills should be provided with the necessary information by sharing the printed materials in public places (schools, pharmacies, shops, municipalities, etc.);

- Local self-governments should actively engage in negotiations with the internet providers to ensure the population's proper access to the e-services (strengthening "internetization" or the internet signal);

- Each unit of the municipalities should appoint an authorized person who will be responsible for sharing all kinds of public information on the municipality website;

- Since the classified budget and financial reports are vague for ordinary citizens, they should be shared through the informative diagrams;

- Self-governments should speed up elaboration and adoption of anti-corruption provision, financial regulations and ethic code, and upload them on the websites to ensure access to them for all the interested parties.

EFFICIENCY:

- Self-governments should introduce the practice of gender analysis and needs research of the vulnerable citizens, make gender and age segregated statistics, and elaborate evidence-based municipal programs. It is essential to raise the competence and skills of the local public servants and municipal employees to reach this aim;

- Professional development needs-assessment should be conducted in the self-government and based on it, professional development strategy for municipal employees and local public servants should be elaborated. It will imply a detailed specific professional development plan;

- Electronic services like construction permits, registration of agricultural and non-agricultural lands, registration for one-time assistance and other municipal services should be activated. It will ensure the transparency and make the services more accessible;

- Interactive electronic online platforms should be created where reports will be uploaded, and the population will have an opportunity to give feedback and have active communication;

- It is essential to introduce service efficiency assessment standards in the municipality to assess the impact and effectiveness of the existing municipal services on the population. Electronic assessment forms may be introduced, to obtain information about the satisfaction of services from the population promptly and with minimal costs;

- Appropriate forms for monitoring of the the activities carried out by the City Hall units and specific monitoring schedule should be elaborated.

INCLUSIVENESS/PARTICIPATION

- The municipal buildings should be adapted and equipped with ramps to ensure the access for persons with disabilities;

- It is necessary to timely inform citizens on the existing forms of participation to increase their involvement in political processes at the local level. Besides, citizens should have access to the information on planned City Council's sessions, public hearings, the village meetings and other meetings, and issues for discussions via media, social networks and websites (at least one week earlier);

- It is essential for City Council and City Hall to have a schedules of the meetings with the population and ensure wide dissemination of the information;

- It is desirable to register general meetings of the settlement. It will considerably increase the accountability of the local public servants and citizen participation;

- It is desirable to revise the rules of the citizen inclusiveness, namely the convening of the Civil Advisory Council, Gender Equality Council and Council of Persons with Disabilities. It is vital to increase the intensity of the work of these mechanisms and timely inform the general public about the meetings;

- In addition to the forms of citizen inclusiveness in local self-government stipulated by the law, it is desirable to introduce additional forms of citizen participation, including "participatory budget" programs;

- Preferably, the decision of the representative and executive authorities of the municipality should be based on the opinions expressed at the settlement general meeting and civil advisory council, through the relevant legislative amendments.

TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

■ The municipality autonomy should be strengthened and the policy of decentralization proactively pursued via extending the authority of the local government, transferring financial resources to them, and separation of power between the central and local governments;

■ To analyze the risks of decentralization, central governments should assess the needs and existing resources of local governments throughout Georgia;

■ To introduce new modules of e-government, the central government should provide self-governments with methodological assistance;

■ Strengthening the **Coordination and information exchange between central and local governments.** Coordination mechanism should be created in the form of the relevant thematic working groups and set schedules for the meetings (meetings should be held at least quarterly), where central, regional and local government representatives with the participation of the CSOs will discuss the local problems, barriers and challenges while PAR implementation, and will jointly plan the problem-solution strategies and specific actions.

TO CSOS

■ It is vital to consolidate CSOs operating in separate municipalities and actively use their human and technical resources to mobilize the groups with special needs and advocate their interests and needs;

■ Active CSOs should better disseminate information on PAR, using the existing technical and human resources, and carry out the relevant activities to facilitate the use of e-services by the population (instructions, skill development, information provision, etc.);

■ It is desirable to increase the role of CSOs in advising and methodological assistance to local authorities on issues such as the introduction of gender equality principles and standards in local politics, needs-assessment and gender analysis, gender budgeting and participatory budgeting, and services on protection from domestic violence etc.;

■ Undertake advocacy campaign for the attention of both national authorities and international organizations to promote the strengthening and development of the local CSOs.

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

➢ INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Public Administration Reform Roadmap Monitoring is an important step towards improving the availability of e-services in local governments, ensuring the strengthening of transparent, efficient and inclusive governance in municipalities.

This is the second monitoring within the project. The first monitoring was conducted in January-February 2020. The analysis of the researched materials revealed the gaps in the area of e-governance, accompanied by recommendations for individual municipalities. The recommendations were aimed at improving access to e-services and strengthening e-governance in self-governments, which implies the effective implementation of the obligations envisaged by the Association Agreement between the State and EU.

Another similar monitoring is planned within the project. Municipalities will be able to work to address the gaps identified as a result of the monitoring, which will contribute to the successful implementation of Public Administration Reform in local self-government.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The aim of this monitoring is to assess the ongoing changes in Vani municipality in the process of improving e-governance practices, which includes taking into account the recommendations based on the challenges identified in terms of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness and monitoring the results.

The information received, allows us to record the progress made in the municipality since the development of the recommendations and to continue working in the long – term perspective to overcome the obstacles.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The second monitoring of the Roadmap for Public Administration Reform was carried out in Vani Municipality from August 1 to August 20, 2020. The monitoring was carried out by two organizations: the non-profit (non-commercial) legal entity "Tanadgoma 2020" and the organization "Citizens' Activity for Effective Governance and Justice".

This report describes the results of the monitoring carried out in Vani Municipality: what is the level of readiness of the municipality to eliminate the identified shortcomings, in what direction is the progress observed, what changes have been introduced and what trends have been identified.

The effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of local government work, was assessed on the basis of a pre-designed monitoring mechanism and questionnaires. The evaluation of the reform process was carried out on the basis of the monitoring of the official website of the municipality, 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 communications with municipal officials, personal meetings, and all official online sources that contained the information needed to evaluate a particular issue. We thank the self-government of Vani Municipality for their assistance in the cooperation process.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➢ TRANSPARENCY

Legal liability is the basis of transparency of the municipality's activities, which is regulated by the Law of Georgia on Local Self-Government. Within the framework of this legal framework, the municipality is accountable for its citizens to provide information on all current activities.

Online postings on vacancies are a key feature of transparent processes. No defect was found in the materials obtained from the previous monitoring. *Progress in this direction continues again. The latest vacancy is searched: Order N20 802 of the Mayor of Vani Municipality - July 23, 2020 announcing an open competition. Vacancy announcement deadlines are also observed.*

The first monitoring revealed that the organizational structure was uploaded on the website of the municipality with contact persons, telephone numbers, e-mails and indications of duties.

Progress in this direction is visible: information data has been updated, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers have been updated.

As a result of the first monitoring, the review of the website of the municipality www. vani.gov.ge revealed, that the telephone numbers of those contact persons who answer calls from the City Hall and Sakrebulo 24 hours a day, are indicated as a means of receiving complaints and suggestions online. The service facilitates the cooperation of citizens, broad communication with public structures. *In terms of progress, it is important that this practice continues to this day. However, it is desirable for citizens to be able to submit complaints and suggestions anonymously in the appropriate column on the e-portal, which will significantly increase the ability to express their rights.*

The first monitoring showed that the 3, 6, and 9 month budget reports are not published on the websites www.vani.gov.ge and www.Matsne.gov.ge. This is an important segment in the activities of the municipality in terms of transparency, which is strengthened by the legal obligation. According to the ninth paragraph of Article 91 of the Code of Local Self-Government of the Georgian Organic Law, the self-government is responsible for this. *According to the issued recommendation, progress is noticeable, the 6-month report on the implementation of the 2020 budget of the municipality and a 6-month report on the implementation of municipal procurement is searched on the website.*

Changes are observed in connection with the publication of normative acts, resolutions, reports of various departments / divisions adopted by the City Council. One of the recommendations was to correct this gap. The change is also visible in this regard: *the minutes of the City Council meeting, resolutions and orders, adopted by the City Council in 2020 are already being searched on the relevant electronic field* (http://vani.gov.ge/).

The existence of open office hours and the posting of information on this issue on the website, determines the interests of both parties, which, in turn, is a kind of indicator of transparent self-government activities. The electronic field monitoring of Vani Municipality revealed that only the open consultation days to the Mayor were public, which was followed by the relevant recommendation.

The progress provided by the recommendation is obvious. Normative acts were issued both in the City Hall and in the City Council on determining the open consultation days. By the order of the City Council Chairperson, administrative-legal acts were issued - on the open consultation days in both the City Hall and City Council.

In the City Hall – "Order N20 907 of the Mayor of Vani Municipality of August 17, 2020 "On Determining the open consultative days, First Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Vani Municipality". Order N27 28 of August 18, 2020. The information is also uploaded on the website.

The following days shall be defined as the days of receiving citizens by the officials of Vani Municipality City Council: a) For the Chairperson of the Municipality City Council every Thursday from 10:00 to 16:00. b) For the Deputy Chairperson of the City Council every Monday from 10:00 to 16:00. c) For the chairperson of the Commission of the City Council - the second and fourth Friday of each month from 10:00 to 16:00. d) For the chairperson of the Factions of the City Council - the first and third Friday of each month from 10:00 to 16:00.

- Does Vani Municipality have a participatory budget, social budget, gender budget? - According to the head of the Finance and Budget Service, the participatory budget in the total budget of Vani municipality is 4%, it means, active involvement of the population in rural programs, the social budget is 10% (meaning social programs), as for the gender budget, it is less reflected in total budget and is difficult to derive the percentage. ***No progress is recorded. No change is planned. Establishing a gender budget is still a challenge for the municipality.***

The municipality has no anti-corruption measures. There is no anti-corruption plan, regulations, financial regulations, documents on relevant ethical conduct.

This gap has not been improved since the last monitoring results, but progress is being made, work has started in this direction. A working group, created in the municipality, to implement public administration reform, is working on an anti-corruption plan and a code of ethical conduct.

➢ EFFICIENCY

The efficiency of the municipality's activities means the access of citizens to the services provided by the self-government, the involvement, implementation of activities based on the principles of publicity, accountability and participation.

The first monitoring materials confirmed the effectiveness of the communication of the chairpersons with their own citizens. Open consultation days for citizens were determined only by the Mayor, the number of days per month is 4 (four).

According to the recommendation, progress is being made in this direction. For today, open consultation days in the municipality have been set for the Deputy Mayors and City Council officials. There is a corresponding order N 27 28 of August 18, 2020.

Monitoring materials in February confirmed that the organizational structure, with notification of the contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mails, and the designation of defined duties, was posted on the website. However, an analysis conducted by the website administration revealed that the emails provided by some public officials were not valid and required updating, the same situation was with biographical data.

Progress is clear here too: similar gaps have been corrected.

Timely and qualified delivery of existing services means the efficiency of the municipality's activities. According to the materials, studied in Vani municipality, it turns out that citizens can receive the respond to complaints and online mails within 10

working days, with the exception of a mail that, due to the complexity, requires additional time.

Minor adjustments were made to this service as well. In case of difficulty of the answer, the citizen is sent an intermediate answer about the reasons for the delay.

The monitoring results show progress in the number of online mails, which indicates an increase in citizen engagement. According to the researched materials, in 2020, totally 6 applications regarding the land plot were submitted to the City Hall as a complaint. There are ongoing court disputes over two issues. The practice of registering electronically, to plan meetings with officials is not fixed. Citizens still prefer face-to-face meetings. As for the online portal, for the period of August 15, 2020, the City Hall has received 3128 mails electronically.

The quality of performance of administrative, technical and social functions is directly linked to the qualifications of civil servants. Therefore, for the effective functioning of self-government bodies, it is important to increase the competence of public servants, to develop their capacities.

According to the Self-Government Code, municipalities are obliged to use at least one percent of the total budget allocations for training of local self-government public servants.

It is noteworthy that there is still work to be done in this direction in the self-government. It is true that the municipality is interested in training public servants, there is a staff development plan, however, the training was not commissioned by the self-government. 8 public servants passed trainings remotely and in an external format in the City Hall, 3 persons in the City Council. Trainings were conducted on the following topics: Administrative Law, Staff Assessment, Training for Gender Statistics User, Fundraising and Advocacy Strategy, Project Proposal Development, Case management. The percentage of local self-government representatives participating in the trainings is 10% of the number of municipality public servants.

In order to share experience and knowledge, the City Hall holds coordination meetings every week with the participation of services and departments, which are attended by all municipal officials and they exchange information, get acquainted with the experience of others. The Mayor also has a business meeting with the Mayor's representatives in the administrative units once a week. The results of conducted services are also evaluated there.

This practice has changed slightly due to pandemic regulations. Progress, however, has not slowed. The online format is actively used.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

The presented monitoring report confirms that the biggest challenges exist in terms of inclusion. Continuation of the work in this direction is essential in the long – term prospect to make municipal services accessible to all vulnerable groups.

There are no changes in the arrangement of ramps for people with disabilities, no information was found, that would confirm any changes in this direction.

The situation regarding the gender indicator is unchanged. The percentage of employed women has remained unchanged - 31%. No rules have been introduced to determine the number of women working in self-government, as evidenced by an interview with a representative of the City Hall Financial Budget Service and the Legal and Human Resources Management Department. No progress has been made in this direction.

The municipality does not have an interpreter service. The socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons (IDPs), persons with disabilities, use the services, available to all citizens. **No progress has been made in this direction either.**

Public servants have knowledge of inclusiveness in accordance with the legislation adopted by the state, Article 16, Paragraphs 3 and 4, Article 24, Paragraph 3 and Article 61, Paragraph 2 of the Organic Law of Georgia on Self-government and the Law on "Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities".

Council for Persons with Disabilities has been established in the municipality, Resolution №18 27/05/2020.

This council helps to address the issues of people with disabilities.

Existing practice is not regressive. The Council actively works to study the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

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 the provision of public services to them. According to the latest monitoring data, based on an interview with the Head of the Service of Health and Social Affairs of the primary structural unit of the City Hall, it is planned to introduce the practice of involving vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level and providing them with public services.

On February 15, 2019, the representatives of the municipality passed training on gender budgeting. However, there was a small part of them, which is insufficient in terms of gender budgeting. *There is a readiness of the municipality in this direction however, no serious progress is planned in the budget programs.*

The monitoring reveals that a contact person has been appointed in the municipality for relations with civil society organizations, working groups. This is legally confirmed

by the relevant orders. The contact person from the City Council is Sopiko Gvinianidze, from the City Hall - Sophio Giorgadze.

The first monitoring will confirm that the Gender Council, the Council of Persons with Disabilities, working groups, are created in the City Hall and City Council, on the basis of relevant orders. ***Progress is evident in this regard as well. Based on the order N20 556, the Civil Advisory Council was established in Vani Municipality.***

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

> ➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT

OF THE MONITORING REPORT FOR VANI MUNICIPALITY:

■ *Planning relevant trainings in accordance with the plan of public officials in order to increase the qualification and competence of civil servants employed in self-governments;*

■ *It is desirable to train specific person in the municipality, who will be instructed to communicate with various vulnerable groups;*

■ *It is advisable to introduce translation services for non-Georgian speakers;*

■ *A strategy for creating an accessible environment for people with disabilities is desirable, which will facilitate their involvement in the decision-making process;*

■ *Due to the international obligations of the state, it is important to strengthen gender policy at the municipal level, to expand the activities of the municipality, which may be reflected in the introduction of a gender budget or the increase of gender programs in the municipal budget;*

■ *In terms of citizen involvement, in determination of their needs, it is important to introduce a participatory budget in the practice of the municipality.*

TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY

THE SECOND REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
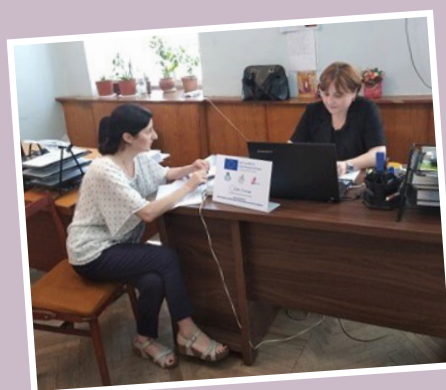
➢ INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the results of the second interim monitoring conducted in Terjola Municipality, conducted 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 Road-map monitoring".

4 phases of monitoring are planned within the framework of the project (the first monitoring was already conducted in January-February 2020 and the relevant report and recommendations were submitted to the municipality).

AIM OF MONITORING – To evaluate the progress made in the municipality after the first monitoring according to separate indicators; to highlight positive trends and existing challenges.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY - Prior to the start of the second phase of monitoring, the project implementation team, in collaboration with partner organizations, agreed on an existing monitoring tool and monitoring plan in same directions: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of self-government activities. Existing progress and challenges were identified with 32 indicators.

METHODS OF MONITORING: Study of the official internet resources - website and Facebook page of the municipality; Analysis of legislation, regulating monitoring issues, normative acts and regulations of municipalities; Telephone communication and meetings with the representatives of the relevant services of the municipality - to verify and fill in the information; Observing the process of local political dialogue and changes in the political agenda.

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

PRECONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS: Monitoring was conducted in August 2020. The work process was transparent and high awareness about monitoring goals, methods, tools was achieved. No obstructive factors arose during the planned monitoring

period. There was business communication with the representatives of the municipality and timely response and cooperation to all questions or requests.

The follow-up period coincided with the constraints caused by Covid-19 and, consequently, the positive trends in certain issues were slowed down, or had an impact on the existing progress.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ ## TRANSPARENCY

The existing practice of transparency in Terjola Municipality, in addition to electronic communication, still includes alternative means of disseminating information and communication (local newspaper, information boards in administrative units, personal communications with municipal staff).

The monitoring revealed an intensive civic dialogue on the measures needed for e-governance in the municipality and, in particular, for a more efficient functioning of the website (initiated by the Union for the Protection of Children's Rights and Civic Education "Children - the Future of Georgia"). As a result, the municipality took a decision about on the necessary measures for the reorganization of the website.

The Transparency and Availability Indicator for Vacancies was again used to assess the transparency component. According to the information received, no new vacancy has been announced in the City Council and this process is planned for the end of 2020. As for the City Hall: in 2020, based on the order of the Mayor of the municipality N44 655, an open competition was announced for 5 vacancies. The information was posted on the website of the municipality, as well as on the portal https://www.hr.gov.ge. Interviews with the representatives of the relevant services revealed that the deadlines for announcing vacancies have been met. There was no discrimination in developing the necessary criteria for the position.

The maximum number of candidates for vacancies also indirectly indicates the transparency of information. To date, 3 candidates have already been selected; the desired candidates were not selected for 2 vacancies and a new competition is planned to be announced in the near future. Vacancy texts did not contain elements of discrimination and the selection of candidates was transparent.

According to the previous monitoring materials, the website of the municipality has a relevant meaning to ensure the statute and organizational structure of the City Hall and City Council in Terjola Municipality, communication with citizens, provision of information, but some gaps were observed, such as incomplete information about a number of contacts, open office hours for citizens.

The monitoring revealed that the database on the website was updated: the organizational structure of the City Hall with contact persons, indicating their telephone numbers, e-mails and defined duties.

During the previous monitoring period, 6 and 9 month reports were not uploaded on the website. Currently, these documents have already been posted and the interested citizen can get acquainted with them in the field - "News".[1] However, it would be more appropriate to have a separate space for reports so that finding them is not difficult.

The monitoring revealed that structural changes to the existing website were planned in the municipality. Work is currently underway to ensure the simplicity of the website and better access to it.

At this stage of the monitoring, the need for a more rational allocation of administrative and human resources for the management of a given electronic platform was identified, in particular, the need to delegate his powers was announced by the authoritative person, as he considers it ineffective to combine it with other duties.

This time the municipality website contains more public information than under the previous monitoring conditions. The issues discussed at City Council meetings, various resolutions, normative acts, reports (the last information was uploaded on August 12, 2020) can be seen in the field "News" http://www.terjola.gov.ge/ge/news/all/4. According to the monitoring results, system updates are loaded in full compliance with the deadlines.

After the previous monitoring, some changes have been made in terms of determining open office hours for citizens and pointing them to the website. One candidate added open office hours following the monitoring recommendations.

Information about the open office hours for citizens is published on the website only by the Chairperson of the City Council and the candidate from the village Gvankiti. There was an active political dialogue around the issue in the City Council of the municipality, although some officials still believe that they should not restrict citizens and leave the time for meetings unlimited. This is somehow contrary to City Council regulation, which defines City Council officials' obligation to meet with citizens.

There is no regress in terms of social burden of the budget in Terjola municipality. The social budget is 5.7% of the total budget. Despite the sequestration of the local budget as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been no delay in the implementation of social programs (*the last change in the budget was recorded on July 3, 2020, Resolution N10*).

The monitoring revealed that there is a serious gap in the municipality in terms of the introduction of participatory budgeting. There is a noticeable positive change

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1 http://terjola.gov.ge/ge/news/all/4?page=1

in the awareness and attitude towards the issue, which was revealed in the agreement - to allocate a certain amount of money for civil budgeting in 2021 budget. The positive perspective of the issue is due to the project of the "Union for the Protection of Children's Rights and Civic Education "Children - Future of Georgia" - "Participatory Budget - The Road to Democracy"[2], which resulted in creation of active community groups, promotion of self-government staff training and dialogue on the issue of civil budgeting.

There is no anti-corruption plan, regulations, financial regulations in the municipality at this stage either. The monitoring revealed that there is a political readiness in the municipality to resolve this issue. It is realized that the issue requires deep knowledge, experience and special training, so the topic is included in the training plan of the municipality and after the end of the election period, work will start to resolve this issue.

➢ EFFICIENCY

In terms of the efficiency of local services, it is important to what extent citizens have the opportunity to communicate with different municipal services. At this stage of the monitoring, the acting Mayor of the municipality has received 110 citizens after the previous monitoring (the number of applications is 496). According to the available data, communication with citizens is relatively active.

Open consultation days to the City Council were relatively reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, and Chairperson of the City Council received only 9 citizens. Citizens are not registered to other responsible persons of the City Council.

No petition / complaint was posted on the website at this stage of the monitoring. Significant progress is the notification that from November 2020 it is planned to launch a special program system, where the citizen will be able to send any application from home (without e-mail). The training on teaching the introduced system has already been held in the City Council and is currently underway in the City Hall.[3]

The monitoring revealed that the provision on ethical conduct has been adopted and is visibly posted on the information board.

Previous monitoring findings highlighted the need for a staff development plan in the municipality. There is readiness for changes in this direction in the municipality: a training-needs plan has been developed for the given period, teaching activities have been written in accordance with the budget. The plan is submitted to the Civil Service Bu-

2 The activity has been carried out under the sub-grant components, within the framework of the Fund "Sukhumi" project - "Public Administration Reform (PAR) monitoring in local self-governments".

3 The information given relates to the period up to August 20, 2020.

reau on March 31. That is - it can be said that there is currently a relevant vision of staff development in Terjola municipality. The training plan is agreed with the Civil Service Bureau and is calculated to 2% of the budget.

According to the training plan, in 2020, 4 trainings were held on the following topics: "Municipal property issues"; "Accounting/bookkeeping"; "News on the Law on Public Service and Administrative Law"; "The Role of Local Self-Government in Family Strengthening and Violence Prevention." 10 employees of the City Hall attended the trainings.

The head of the primary structural unit of City Council passed a training (topic - "News on the Law on Public Service and Administrative Law"). The online training organized by the Civil Service Bureau on the topic "Evaluation Module" was conducted by City Council HR.

Without a plan, 4 training were held within the framework of the project "Participatory Budget - The Road to Democracy": Training on "Citizen Participation in Self-Government; The Essence of Participatory Budgeting, Specifics"; Simulation Game: "Choose and Implement"; Sharing the experience of Tskaltubo Municipality, topic - "Involvement of Citizens in the Budgeting and Decision Making Process"; Round table on "The Role of e-Services in Civic Budgeting".

In total, 37 employees of the City Hall and 28 employees of the City Council passed the training stages within the framework of the project. Overall, in 2020 (January-August) 30% of City Hall employees and 66% of the City Council employees completed training courses.

Business meetings with various groups of City Hall services are traditionally used for exchange of information and reporting.

The monitoring revealed that there is a tendency to introduce new tools or equipment for the qualified management of activities in the municipality. For example, the electronic case management system has been successfully introduced as an effective tool for managing official documents and assignments. As it appeared in the interview with the representatives of the relevant services, another new method of e-service is gradually being introduced. Municipal services are already running the eDocument program. All important documents are placed on it. The electronic case management system provided electronic replacement of the paper document, quick access to assignments, control over the execution of the assignment, constant monitoring of organizational processes. Each worker has their own electronic database where archived material is stored and used when needed. This allows municipal staff to easily and efficiently conduct case management processes.

During the monitoring period, trainings were conducted for the introduction of electronic modules in City Council and City Hall of the municipality and the qualification of the staff was improved.

Previous monitoring showed that employees in the municipality are evaluated by a special system, which identifies the best employees (this does not apply to contract staff). No assessment has been made in the City Council in 2020 yet. The reason was the delays caused by the pandemic. As for the City Hall, an interim evaluation of the employees was carried out at the end of June.

There is no separate monitoring system for City Hall services. As in previous monitoring, it appeared that mainly state and local audit materials are used. No progress has been made in this regard.

Despite the recognition of the need and the declared readiness for changes in this direction, the existing picture has not changed in terms of elaborating a staff development plan so far.

As for the forms of evaluation of beneficiaries' services, which are required by the City Council regulations, the municipality has not yet developed them, despite the fact that there is a positive tendency to study the services provided to citizens and their satisfaction, their needs are identified and responded accordingly in a systematic way.

Positive dynamics are observed in the municipality in terms of getting acquainted with the successful practices of other municipalities: in particular, the experience of Tskaltubo municipality in the field of civil budgeting was shared, for which the person in charge met with both the active civil sector and various branches of self-government. The initiator of the issue was the Union for the Protection of Citizens' Rights and Civic Education ("Children -the Future of Georgia").

➢   INCLUSIVENESS

In terms of citizen participation, at this stage of the monitoring, it was revealed that a dialogue has started in the municipality on measures to involve people with disabilities in public or political life, and to improve access to community services. In response to the shortcomings identified in the previous monitoring (lack of internal ramps in administrative buildings), it was revealed that the building was built according to the old design, so the inner ramp could not be done, but there is talk about arranging a communication space with proper technical infrastructure on the first floor.

After the previous monitoring, there is no change in the percentage of women employed in the City Council in 2020. As for the City Hall: the percentage of employed

women has been reduced to 30% after the previous monitoring. According to previous monitoring results, 47 (32%) out of 148 civil servants were women.

The situation in the municipality has not changed in terms of adoption of a special normative act that would regulate the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process or the provision of public services to them, but there is political readiness to cooperate and have a dialogue with citizens, especially vulnerable groups. For example, the project "Road to Changes" implemented by "Women for the Future of Georgia", which conducted a study on the effectiveness of the social assistance program for families with phenylketonuria and diabetes under 18 years old, was taken as notification in the municipality and the information was responded, which to some extent facilitated the involvement of beneficiaries.

The monitoring shows that the municipality is becoming aware of its responsibilities in terms of gender and social inclusion in general, and this is a sign of the ongoing active processes in the municipality in terms of local planning, civic order and response (this issue was greatly facilitated by the project "Road to Democracy"). Cooperation between civil society and local governments is evident.

After the first phase of the monitoring, progress was made in improving communication with civil society, which was reflected in the fact that the City Hall has allocated a person responsible for relations with CSOs.

No significant changes were observed at this stage of the monitoring in terms of the functioning of local institutional mechanisms: the 12-member Civil Advisory Board continues to operate unchanged; The Gender Equality Council (with 19 members) is trying to put gender policy initiatives on the local agenda. The next meeting of the council was held in July.

During the monitoring period, a working group started to work Terjola Municipality. It was established within the framework of the project "A common forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap monitoring". Its aim is to initiate measures for the successful implementation of Public Administration Reform. Based on the results of the monitoring and needs research, the working group developed and presented a work plan at the local level. The multisectoral working group has already achieved tangible results in terms of improving e-services and putting the issue of improving social packages on the political agenda.

The monitoring revealed interesting practice in the direction of so-called outsourcing (selling services) in the municipality. Civil society organization "Terjola Association of the Disabled Persons" is financed with 10000 GEL from the local budget. The readiness of the self-government in terms of co-financing and allocation of human resources for the implementation of various initiatives is evident in the municipality.

➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring conducted by the target organizations in Terjola Municipality under the leadership of the Fund "Sukhumi" revealed the progress in the implementation of public administration reform.

The recommendations of the previous monitoring were related to increasing the effectiveness of the existing institutional mechanisms in terms of normative acts, review of the draft budget and elaboration of recommendations, holding public meetings according to the priorities; Promoting citizen engagement activities; Developing a staff development strategy and a training plan; Training of staff in terms of research and monitoring methods; Website modernization in terms of improving access and delivery of e-services.

It can be said that the dynamics in the direction of a number of monitoring recommendations is noticeable in the municipality. In particular:

For the given stage - serious work has been done in the municipality and various citizen involvement activities have been promoted; Knowledge and practical experience on participatory budgeting have been improved, this issue has been partially resolved within the framework of the project "Participatory Budget - The Road to Democracy" and work is currently underway to reflect the appropriate amount in the 2021 budget.

A staff development training plan has been drawn up and agreed with the Civil Service Bureau, and a political decision has been made to include the relevant amount in the 2021 budget.

As a result of the civil dialogue to improve e-services, in particular, to promote the effectiveness of the website, clear measures have been taken to modernize this e-platform in terms of its accessibility and the provision of e-services. Work is underway to introduce a new electronic system and improve the design of the website. The appropriate amount is provided in the budget.

There is a practice of creating social packages based on needs studies or improving existing programs in the municipality, but the scale of the use of appropriate methodologies and tools and the systematic introduction of monitoring and service evaluation, provided in local policy documents are still weak.

Citizens, especially vulnerable groups, are encouraged to work with provider organizations to provide services that contribute to the development of long-term, qualified, services.

At this stage of the monitoring, the following recommendations can be offered to facilitate local implementation of civil service reform:

Suggestions:

- **For the transparency of activities** - it is important to continue the positive dynamics in terms of improving e-services in the municipality, including:

It is necessary to introduce new modules of the case management e- system, which provides constant monitoring of organizational processes, enables simple and effective management of case management processes.

In order to improve the functioning of the website, in response to the identified needs, it is desirable to allocate adequate financial, administrative resources and introduce a monitoring system, ensuring compliance with the standards of proactive publication of information, maintenance of an interactive communication system with the customer.

- It is important to develop an anti-corruption plan, regulations, financial regulations in the municipality, which is envisaged by the obligations of the self-government defined by law in the direction of transparency and accountability of activities.

To improve the efficiency of the service - it is important to realize the positive perspective of the direction taken in the implementation of participatory budgeting in Terjola Municipality and constructive cooperation with civic groups, which, in the long run, leads to modern standards of citizen participation / engagement.

- For the municipality it is desirable to expand the successful practice in the use of provider organizations in the delivery of services, which gives the best results in terms of service efficiency and saving resources. It will be interesting to study and generalize existing experiences to strengthen other areas.

  For greater participation and inclusive processes - it is important to strengthen local institutional mechanisms (Mayor's Advisory Board, Gender Equality Council) to have more influence on local social policy, development of gender expertise, gender monitoring skills; development of long-term service initiatives.

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

BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY

THE SECOND REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
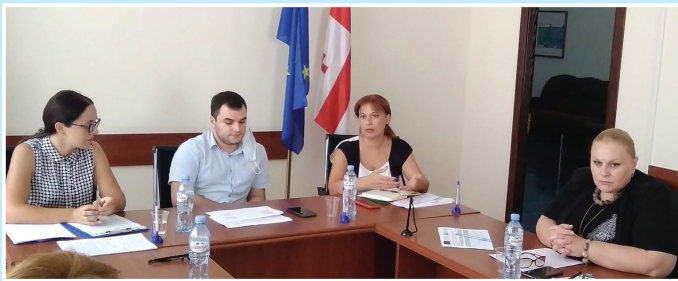
➢ INTRODUCTION

The high quality of e-governance ensures transparent, efficient and inclusive governance between the population and the self-government,which is defined by Public Administration Reform.

The presented report reflects the results of the implementation of Public Administration Reform(PAR) Roadmap Monitoring in Bagdati Municipality from August 1 to August 20, 2020, conducted by "Civil Spectrum Equality" and "Equality Now".

According to the project, the first monitoring was carried out in February 2020. The analysis of the results revealed the recommendations that were given to the municipalities in order to eliminate the existing gaps and improve the situation.

AIM OF THE MONITORING: The aim of this monitoring is to observe the changes in e-governance in Bagdati Municipality in the period from the first monitoring to the last monitoring and to evaluate the achieved results.

MONITORING FORMAT: The websites and Facebook pages of Bagdati Municipality City Hall and City Council were studied in order to collect information. The information was verified with the authorized persons. The process was carried out without problems and on time. No objections were observed during the interview with public officials. Fund "Sukhumi" thanks the self-government of Bagdati Municipality for the assistance.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS
➢ TRANSPARENCY

Transparency in the governance system is a key feature of the municipality's activities, one of the indicators of which, is the information reflected on the website.

The vacancies announced by the municipality are based on the decision of the Government of Georgia on the rules of competition in public service. According to the results of the initial monitoring, the terms of announcing the vacancy, selection and interview stages were kept on the website of the municipality. The ongoing processes for three months were accordingly reflected on the website.

SIMILAR TRENDS HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED TO DATE, as proved by recent monitoring data. The problem of access to online vacancies does not appear on the e- portal of the municipality, the vacancies are posted both on hr.gov.ge and on the website. During the monitoring period, the request for vacancies is searched on the e-mail. Within three days after receiving the consent, additional qualification requirements are

agreed with the Civil Service Bureau, after which the vacancies are uploaded and published within the specified time. All deadlines set by the legislation are kept: placement, selection, appeal, interview, nomination and appointment of a candidate by the commission. All procedures are completed within 3 months after the announcement of the vacancy.

The website of the municipality http://www.baghdati.gov.ge/ is built in accordance with the General Administrative Code of Georgia. The data obtained from the first monitoring confirm that the organizational structure with the contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mail and indication of defined responsibilities, is posted on the website of the municipality.

Based on the above-mentioned monitoring, the researched materials confirm that the progress has been maintained. The standards required for transparency on the municipality's website are still kept and maintained. Adding phone numbers to the biographical field of different service representatives, emphasizes transparency and increases the access of citizens to contact the head of a particular structure and get the necessary information.

The materials obtained from the first monitoring confirm that there is a field -"Contact the government" on the website of Bagdati Municipality - The same page gives the hot-line number 595 909005, which operates 24 hours a day. It turned out that there was no phone call between monitoring. **In order to make progress, it is important to promote the "Hotline Activation" service and to justify its importance to the citizens.**

According to the General Administrative Code of Georgia, citizens have the opportunity to communicate with the representatives of any service by e-mail. But there is no practice in the municipality to monitor how actively citizens use e-mails as means of communication, how many mails are received and what is the content. Monitoring in this format will allow municipalities to determine the rate of e-space usage from the side of citizens and the mechanisms for its activation.

The existence of an online complaint, or proposal mechanism for citizens, is of particular importance for the transparency of the municipality activity.The monitoring of the website of Bagdati Municipality shows that it is possible to write a mail or a complaint from the website electronically (http://baghdati.gov.ge/ge/contact); the website https://mkhileba.gov.ge/ is also linked to the website. **Progress is observed in the sense, that these fields work without problem.** However, the submitted complaints and mails have not been analyzed so far. There is no concrete responsible person in the municipality who will monitor the received complaints and, consequently, the efficiency and quality of the existing service have not been analyzed.

Accountability to the citizens is one of the features of open and transparent governance. According to the materials, examined during the first monitoring, the approved

budget is uploaded on the website of Bagdati Municipality, which is accompanied by an annual report of the budget implementation. However, the reports,on what was happening and how the budget activities in the municipality were implemented in the period of 3, 6, 9 months, were not uploaded.

Considering the received recommendations, progress is observed in terms of uploading reports. In particular, the website already shows the reports of various services, including the Financial Service for 3, 6 months. Interim reports of various services, as well as normative acts have been uploaded - (http://baghdati.gov.ge/ge/documents).

- How easy it is for citizens to meet with the officials, are the official open consultation days for citizens determined?The first monitoring revealed the gaps in this regard. Despite the fact, that the open office hours for citizens are officially determined by both the Mayor and the Chairperson of the City Council - 2 days a week, for 3 hours, this information is not searched on the online portal. **No progress has been made in this regard and the gap needs to be corrected, as the municipality has a responsibility to provide the citizen with specific information about the time-frame of meeting with the officials. The information about changes in the open consultation days should be updated. The working groups, created in the municipality, plan to work on correcting the existing gap in this direction.**

The transparency mark is determined by the involvement of citizens in the budget formation process. Bagdati Municipality does not have a participatory budget and the citizen involvement rate is appropriate. It does not have a separate gender budget, the percentage of gender budget cannot be identified, because gender programs are broken down in different sub-programs. The percentage of social budgets from the total budget of the municipality is 7.4%. During the pandemic, the percentage rate fluctuated, as the spending part of the social budget increased.

No progress is observed in this direction: Based on the situation regarding the communication with concrete officials, the attempt to introduce a participatory budget is considered in the longer prospect.

The municipality has not taken anti-corruption measures, has no anti-corruption plan, regulations, financial regulations, no regulations on ethical conduct. Consequently, there is no such information on the website: in order to clarify the information, interviews with accountable persons revealed, that as an anti-corruption mechanism, the municipality is guided by the Law on Conflict of Interest and Corruption, as well as the Government Resolution on General Rules of Ethical Conduct. After the first monitoring, the municipality was recommended to work on the adoption of an anti-corruption plan.

Changes in terms of progress are observed: working groups, created in the municipality to improve e-services in public self-government, are already working to eliminate the gap. Local anti-corruption and ethic conduct regulations are planned to be developed in the near future. It is planned to submit a work plan for approval to the City Council, which includes the improvement of the anti-corruption base.

Changes in this direction will contribute to the protection of citizens' rights and transparency of processes in self-governments.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Effective work of self-government is directly proportional to the high quality of cooperation with its citizens. Involvement of citizens, development of civic activism, high quality of cooperation, are significantly balanced by the perfect, smooth work of the e-portal.

In the beginning of the year, the information received from the monitoring of the official website and Facebook of Bagdati Municipality, does not provide basis for complaints about the inefficient work of the municipality. However, the need to correct the gaps is still evident. According to the given situation, two days a week are officially envisaged to meet with citizens. Besides official days, if necessary, meetings with both bodies are held on a continuous basis, without a legal document.

Determining the quality of the effectiveness of these services is a bit difficult, as the self-government has not studied, if officially announced two days a week, are enough for citizens, especially on which days there is a high turnout, which structure has more visits. **No progress has been made in this regard, although an analysis of this issue would greatly simplify the determination of the quality of service efficiency.**

The same situation is regarding the response to complaints sent by citizens to the self-government. The number of response days corresponds to the deadlines set by the Code, which means 10 working days. The first monitoring revealed that the page does not search for reports on incoming letters, complaints, petitions. This practice does not exist in the self-government.

Positive trends are observed in terms of progress. A working group set up by the Fund "Sukhumi" to implement the Roadmap for Public Administration Reform on the field, is actively working in the municipality, which also includes representatives of local self-government. The working group initiates the issue of analyzing the complaints submitted by the citizens online and displaying the results on the e-portal.

The effectiveness of the activities of the municipality is mainly determined by the professionalism of public officials, their high qualification. The monitoring results showed that the issue of their retraining remains a serious challenge.

- Does the municipality have the staff development plan? Based on the information

obtained in this direction, it is confirmed that the municipality has a staff development plan approved by Order 41549, on the basis of which 12 public officials were trained.

Progress in this direction is well visible. According to the survey, the percentage of local self-government representatives, participating in the trainings, is 12% of the total number of public servants.

City Council and City Hall employees were sent to trainings, which were conducted on the following topics: public relations, legal issues, the issues of introduction of official'sevaluation.

The challenge is that the trainings were not organized with local self-government resources.

The monitoring reveals that the information and experience, gained from the trainings are systematically shared between different departments and services, which contributes to the professional development of public officials and the quality management of their activities. However, the website does not upload reports on information exchange activities.

The recommendation on the need for forms required for the evaluation of municipal services, was made after a monitoring, conducted in February, when the information obtained revealed that the self-government mainly relies on the evaluation of the audit in terms of evaluation. **It should be welcomed that progress has already been made** on the basis of this recommendation, with the latest monitoring materials, in communication with specific individuals, confirming that the work initiated by the working group set up in the municipality is aimed at establishing an evaluation mechanism. Consultations on this issue have already started in the municipality.

Effective activities of self-government also involve sharing the experience of others and trying to put best practices into place. Similar trends are noticeable in Bagdati municipality. Monthly meetings are held in the provinces, where the heads of the municipalities share their experiences with each other. However, there is no official document on the website about such meetings, there is no report.

The monitoring shows that the positive practice of the previous years is maintained and the quarterly, annual work plan is systematically approved by the City Council. The schedule of the next session of the City Council is written according to the regulations of the City Council -https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2417270

An important tool for measuring efficiency in the municipality is the existence of a monitoring system, are there deadlines and forms for monitoring the activities of the City Hall services? - It is confirmed that the Audit Service of the Municipality has the authority to periodically monitor the services. This is also envisaged under the relevant legislation. Regulations of the Audit Service -https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4006551? Publication = 1

➢ INCLUSIVENESS

The priority of the issue of inclusiveness is of particular importance for the municipality, as the lack of an adapted environment close to international standards, indicates the violations of the rights of persons with disabilities. The challenges in this regard are visible and familiar to everyone, as the outdoor ramps, arranged at the entrance to the building, partially address this problem.

No changes are observed in this direction, as the adaptation of the interior perimeter of the building is a large-scale project for inclusive persons and, therefore, there is no readiness at this stage.

The existence of statements, substituting discriminatory elements, has not been recorded on the self-government website and **these tendencies are still maintained** hr.gov.ge, although the same cannot be said about the picture existing in gender direction in self-government. The number of employed women is 37%. This figure is even lower at the top positions - 9%. In response to the recommendations made in this regard, **the municipality strives to ensure equal access to vacancies for both genders. There was no restriction for the applicant in terms of his or her gender status or any other indicator.**

There is still no translation service for non-Georgian speakers in the municipality, and due to the lack of other ethnic groups, the municipality representatives indicate the lack of need for this service. **Changes are observed in this regard.**The work should be done in this direction, as the number of non-Georgian speakers,living in the municipality has not been studied and the determination of needs is not based on any kind of research.

No changes were also observed due to the absence of a person for communicationwith various vulnerable groups. There is no such staff unit, this function is given to a representative of the public relations department.

Each representative of this sphere works with vulnerable groups within its own competence**.**

How competent are the persons employed in self-government in the issue of inclusion, do they have knowledge (in the Municipality, City Hall, City Coucnil) about the State Legislation on Inclusion? Do they know the Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities; Labor Law - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Based on an interview with a representative of the municipality, it is confirmed that the municipality has information on the listed issues and their work is carried out in accordance with this legislation.

- Is there gender budgeting / knowledge about its functioning? -Monitoring shows that there is no competent knowledge on gender budgeting in the munici-

pality. The information is based on an interview with the head of the budget planning, analysis and control department. This issue is still unresolved, **but there is progress and willingness in the municipality to attract NGOs working in this direction and gain relevant knowledge on gender budgeting, the introduction of gender programs.**

> ➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED AS

A RESULT OF THE MONITORING FOR BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY

- It is advisable to create a service evaluation mechanism, develop and approve the necessary forms for evaluation, which will facilitate the effective management of the work of various municipal services.

- Defining the official open consultation days for citizens on the basis of regulations and posting the information on the website.

- It is recommended, to introduce a participatory budget in the municipality. This practice is justified in other municipalities, promotes citizen involvement and activates the civil sector.

- As there is no gender budget in the municipality, it is important to increase the competence for gender budgeting, which is possible with specialized trainings. Raising the qualifications of the representatives of the municipality on this issue, will help to increase the parameters of the gender budget.

- It is advisable, to refine the anti-corruption base, to develop local anti-corruption and ethic conduct regulations.

- Introduce translation services for non-Georgian speakers or train any specific person in this regard.

- In order to improve the qualification and competence, it is desirable to assimilate the 1% of allocations of the municipality and to train the employees in accordance with the development plan.

- Adapting the building for vulnerable groups and drafting an appropriate project to create an inclusive environment.

- Allocate staff to train specific individuals, to improve communication with various vulnerable groups.

KHONI MUNICIPALITY

THE SECOND REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
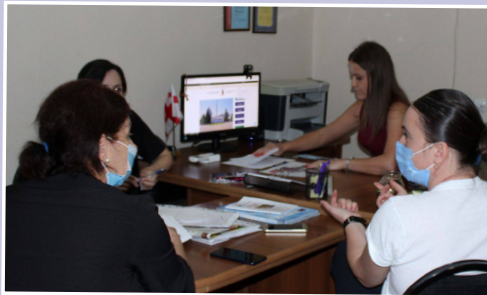
➢ INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the second interim monitoring carried out in Khoni Municipality. The monitoring was conducted under the leadership of the Women's NGO Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi" in the framework of the project - A common forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap monitoring. The monitoring field work was carried out by local civil society organizations - the IDP Initiative Group and the Khoni Center for Education and Development "Edelweiss".

Within the framework of the project, the first monitoring was carried out in January-February 2020 and the relevant report and recommendations were prepared and submitted to Khoni Municipality.

AIM OF MONITORING - evaluation of the progress made in the municipality after the first monitoring according to separate indicators; positive trends and existing challenges.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY - Prior to the start of the second phase of monitoring, a monitoring tool and monitoring plan were developed by the project team in collaboration with partner organizations. Monitoring was carried out in the same areas: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness. Existing progress and challenges were identified with 32 indicators.

METHODS OF MONITORING: Analysis of the legislation, regulating monitoring issues, normative acts and regulations of the municipality; Study of the official internet resources of the municipality - website and Facebook page; Verification and clarification of information through personal meetings or telephone communication with the representatives of the relevant services of the municipality; Analysis of local political agenda and civic dialogue.

PRECONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS: No obstacles were observed during the monitoring period. Fieldwork was conducted in August 2020. The whole monitoring process was transparent and high visibility of the goals, methods and tools of the activity was achieved. There was willingness from the side of the representatives of the municipality, for cooperation and there was a timely response to all questions or requests.

The follow-up period coincided with the restrictions caused by Covid-19, which in some respects had an impact on the results of the existing progress.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➤ TRANSPARENCY

The transparency of the municipality's activities largely determines how much public information is available and how easy it is to communicate with the municipality on issues, important for citizens.

One of the indicators of transparency of the activities of Khoni Municipality is the issue of announcing a vacancy in the City Hall and City Council, access to information, the terms and conditions of the vacancy. According to the information obtained, there were no vacancies at the moment of monitoring.

The given monitoring revealed positive trends for citizens in terms of access to various information related to the reorganization of the website. According to the head of the Administrative Service, after the modernization of the website, all existing gaps that were observed during the previous monitoring will be corrected. For the given period, the website is working in the test mode.[1] In particular, this refers to the data of the deputies of the City Council of the Municipality and other contact persons; Access to budget, financial reports and procurement plans, CVs of officials, periodic reports of the City Hall, etc.

Work is also underway on the platform, to create a flexible online form for submitting complaints or suggestions, comments and recommendations electronically. The work of the website, according to modern standards, became possible through a mini-project of the local CSO "IDP Initiative Group", supported by the Fund "Sukhumi".

The monitoring revealed that the time and conditions set for open consultation days of citizens in the City Hall and City Council were adjusted in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic: due to the current reality, the movement of citizens in the City Hall is restricted. The rules acting in the country are protected, however, due to urgent needs, citizens can use the days of open consultation days. They have communication with both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayors. Registration is traditionally done in the municipality. A list (document) is made, where the data of the citizens, willing to meet, are given.

As for the City Council of the municipality, open consultation days for citizens are not officially defined yet. According to the monitoring materials, the position of the City Council members is that they receive citizens without restriction, which is, in essence, a violation of the City Council regulations[2]: *Article 140, meetings of the City Council member with voters.*

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1 Webpage is available at: - http://khoni.gov.ge/

2 https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2397171?publication=0 Statute of Khoni Municipality City Council (Regulations)

Monitoring revealed that in the pandemic conditions, the administration was mainly working remotely. According to the State Regulation, an emergency hotline has been launched (Tel: 595509024). The questions of the population of Khoni Municipality were answered almost 24 hours a day. During March-August, 450 incoming calls were received from citizens.

At the initial stage of the monitoring, there was no official hotline in the municipality and comprehensive information on available services was less available by telephone. By this time, the local hotline has already been launched. In this regard, the local government actively cooperated with the Education and Development Center "Edelweiss", which provided the process of preparation of the hotline technical and administrative resources, staff training[3].

It must be said that the visibility of the hotline has been raised since the beginning of its functioning. Several telephone calls were made from abroad, by which citizens applied to the municipality regarding the needs of elderly parents, living in the municipality and received relevant services. The service was quite effective in terms of transparency and improvement of services in the municipality.

In terms of transparency and efficiency of self-government, the issue that the municipality has not introduced participatory budgeting and a political dialogue on the issue has not started yet, is still a challenge, although the self-government conducted periodic dialogues and had arguments, why the service is important for the transparency of local services.

Also, despite a number of targeted programs, there is no separate gender budget, which will simultaneously describe the measures and costs, required for gender policy and define specific responsibilities for its results.

At the first stage of the monitoring, the share of the social budget in relation to the total budget was observed, which is quite high in comparison with other municipalities - 12%. Ongoing monitoring revealed that during Covid-19 pandemic, municipal budgets, including social budgets, have changed. Nevertheless, the change did not affect social programs.

The monitoring revealed that no positive changes have taken place in the municipality in terms of anti-corruption measures (anti-corruption plans, anti-corruption regulations, financial regulations, regulations on ethical conduct) and according to the results of interviews with officials, they are not planned in the near future. Issues are regulated by the anti-corruption measures, legislation and financial regulations in the country.

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3 The activity has been carried out under the sub-grant components, within the framework of the Fund "Sukhumi" project - "Public Administration Reform (PAR) monitoring in local self-governments".

➢ EFFICIENCY

Various indicators were used to measure the effectiveness of the municipality's activities, which made it possible to detect progress or negative trends after the results of previous monitoring.

Previous monitoring in Khoni Municipality revealed positive dynamics in terms of communication with citizens from both branches of local government (especially this applies to the activities of the executive branch). Citizens' open consultation days at City Hall were not reduced during this period either, although pandemic conditions restricted the movement of citizens to public premises. Due to urgency, citizens are received by both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayors two days a week. As for the City Council, open consultation days here are not officially defined yet. In pandemic conditions, the apparatus was mainly operating remotely.

There were no changes in the timeline for submitting and responding to citizens' complaints in the municipality, although it is expected that the modernization of the website will facilitate not only access to public information, but also the procedures of complaints and responses.

The modernized website will have an online petition window, which will allow citizens to become more actively involved in the issues of local governance and raise problematic issues for the citizens on the local political agenda.

The strategic document "Increasing Transparency and Good Faith of the City Hall" developed by Khoni Municipality names raising the qualification of employees in priority issues. According to the action plan, in 2020-2021, the employees will be trained according the needs. At this stage, there is a dialogue on envisaging the issues in the budget.

The monitoring revealed that the training of employees in pandemic conditions and ensuring their involvement in various trainings was significantly reduced in comparison with the previous stage. The situation has worsened in this regard. The exception is the training - forum "Local Strategy for Family Support", organized by the Fund "Sukhumi" and trainings on hotline and website administration.

At this stage of the monitoring, no new tools or equipment were used in Khoni municipality to conduct qualified activities, except for the relatively flexible system of online information exchange and coordination introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the monitoring materials, in Khoni Municipality, as well as in the first stage, the internal audit is evaluated and controlled according to a pre-scheduled plan.

Despite the fact, that Khoni Municipality has formally implemented a well-proven quality management mechanism and the "Document of Good Faith and Transparency" explicitly describes the monitoring and evaluation forms, as during the first phase, it has not been implemented in practice and the current situation has not changed significantly.

The period of the Covid-19 pandemic, when the needs of the most vulnerable groups in Khoni were actively identified and responded to, had a certain impact on the practice of identifying needs in the municipality. Although the process was not clearly structured, it had quite positive results and showed the administrative resource of the municipality in terms of needs research and analysis.

The situation has not improved significantly in terms of sharing best practices / experiences between municipalities. During the monitoring period, safety norms were tightened in relation to the pandemic, which was related to the introduced regulations. Nevertheless, according to the obtained materials, the meeting organized by the Fund "Sukhumi" with the participation of representatives of 11 municipalities was positively assessed in terms of sharing experiences on the prospects of introducing long-term services; Successful practice of social, gender programs and challenges in municipalities, including the results of the pandemic.

➢ INCLUSIVENESS

The current legislation (Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities) instructs the self-government to address specific issues aimed at the needs of persons with disabilities (Articles 9 and 11 of the Law). The social program of Khoni Municipality provides 68,000 GEL for various categories of social protection and assistance to persons with disabilities. It should be mentioned that in recent years, the municipality has introduced long-term social programs for people with disabilities, which are based on a study of the needs of beneficiaries.

The Council of Persons with Disabilities has been operating in Khoni Municipality since 2015. The statute of the Council was amended in 2020, which should promote its effectiveness. In the first stage of the monitoring, in addition to this mechanism, the need to strengthen other institutional mechanisms in Khoni Municipality - the Advisory Board on Social Affairs, the Gender Equality Council, need for reporting practices was seen. No noticeable progress in this regard is observed at this stage of monitoring.

According to the monitoring results, the picture is essentially unchanged in terms of maintaining the infrastructure adapted for people with disabilities, in particular, arranging ramps. However, it should be noted that a dialogue has started and the issue is included in the action plan of the municipality for 2020-2021. There is an agreement that the local budget of Khoni for 2021 will envisage the arrangement of ramps on administrative buildings.

The monitoring revealed that the Gender Council of the municipality periodically updates the gender statistics and database. No changes were observed as a result of the monitoring.

Previous monitoring showed that there is no official translation service in the municipality and the need for this service, according to the assessment of relevant services of the municipality, does not exist. Attitude towards the issue have not changed at this stage of the monitoring.

In Khoni municipality, according to the information of the first stage of monitoring, there is a positive environment for relations with vulnerable groups. The City Hall has a special information-consultation space for receiving citizens, where a specialist with appropriate competence talks to the vulnerable groups and provides appropriate assistance. According to the materials of the given stage of monitoring, during the pandemic restrictions, this communication was replaced by electronic and telephone resources, and citizens had no delays in communicating with the municipality and receiving services.

The monitoring revealed that despite the obligation, taken by "Transparency Document", which includes the involvement of local vulnerable groups in the decision-making process (specific activities in this regard are defined in the Action Plan 2020-2021), this is more formal for the municipality and has not been implemented yet.

Progress in implementing a gender budget is also insignificant. Although there is some knowledge and active local political dialogue in the municipality to build the budget on the gender aspects, gender budgeting is not fully implemented in practice.

➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitoring findings:

The monitoring conducted by the target civil society organizations in Khoni Municipality under the leadership of the Fund "Sukhumi" revealed the progress achieved in the implementation of Public Administration Reform.

Based on the results of monitoring, covering the period of March-August 2020, some progress has been made in terms of ensuring transparency, efficiency and inclusion of self-government of Khoni municipality.

First of all, it concerns the successful implementation of the projects proposed by the target organizations - the IDP Initiative Group and "Edelweiss" (modernization of the website; maintenance of the "Hot line" service), as a result of which, the services provided in the municipality, are in the final stage of implementation. The gaps identified as a result of the previous monitoring on the main electronic platform of the municipality are corrected in accordance with the provisions of the website. An online petition, online service of citizen consultation is being introduced and brought in line with existing standards. The recommendation made by the municipality in this regard has been implemented in close cooperation with local CSOs. With their help, a recommendation was made to proactively publish public information in Khoni Municipality in order to improve the qualifications of the persons responsible for the administration of the hotline, to standardize their training issues.

Another recommendation concerned the provision of an adapted environment for persons with disabilities. The community became politically active in the municipality and the issue was included in the action plan for 2020-2021. A dialogue is ongoing on the amount of necessary funding.

The efficiency of the municipality's activities is still under question by the fact that work on the anti-corruption plan, the rules of financial spending, the Code of Ethics has not yet begun. Trends in staff development are welcome, although there is no consistent strategy on required directions and qualification topics. It is especially important to refine the practice of identifying needs and evaluating the effectiveness of programs, which should become the basis for new and relatively long-term budget programs.

The municipality has Councils for Persons with Disabilities, Social Advisors, Gender Equality, which have their own clearly defined areas of intervention. Nevertheless, their impact on local social policy is fragmented and their reporting on activities is weak.

No progress has been made in the City Hall and City Council in providing translation

services, which will create some inconvenience in case of the need for services for non-Georgian speakers. Monitoring Recommendation – to identify a public servant or contracted person who, if necessary, will provide translation services to a foreign language citizen, has not been considered.

The recommendation to assess the socially vulnerable individuals and families living in the municipality with the involvement of the Mayor's representatives and to provide them with information about the services, programs and procedures, implemented in the municipality remains relevant.

Also, the recommendation to identify issues of evaluation and professional development of City Hall employees has not lost its urgency. Visions were expressed that a document certifying the qualifications of the City Hall staff should be created and based on the research, a list of necessary trainings and qualification raising training courses should be determined.

BASED ON THE MONITORING FINDINGS,

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS WERE DEVELOPED:

IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE MUNICIPALITY:

- *It is necessary to carry out systematic monitoring and reporting on compliance with the standards of full functioning of the website in the starting mode;*

- *It is necessary to officially determine the procedures and open office hours for citizens in the City Council;*

- *It is important to start a local dialogue on participatory budgeting as an instrument of local self-government transparency and inclusiveness and to prepare the ground for its further implementation;*

- *It is important to actively use the local institutional mechanisms for transparency of local processes, accountability, dialogue with different groups of citizens: Councils of Persons with Disabilities, Gender Equality, Social Advisers.*

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE MUNICIPALITY'S ACTIVITIES:

- *It is desirable to draft a specific staff development plan and allocate funds in the 2021 budget for qualification raising trainings. It is necessary to prepare a list of topics where the qualification and skills should be improved in order to provide higher quality services to citizens;*

- *Implement specific activities as defined in the Action Plan; Create service impact studying document forms and introduce the system of activity evaluation;*

- *It is important to adapt to the online training system, so that despite the threat of a pandemic, qualification raising activities can be carried out smoothly;*

- *It is important to use e-service resources more efficiently in force majeure situations to respond to the needs of citizens.*

IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE INCLUSION OF LOCAL PROCESSES AND

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY:

- *It is very important to strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of the existing Councils in the municipality (Persons with Disabilities, Gender Equality, Social Advisors) as a mechanism for active participation of citizens in local processes; Introduce a reporting system to the municipality;*

- *It is necessary to allocate resources for the maintenance of adapted infrastructure for people with disabilities in 2021 budget;*

- *It is desirable to periodically monitor the commitment of the "Transparency Document" in the municipality and the action plan for 2020-2021, which outlines the measures to involve local vulnerable groups in the decision-making process.*

AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY

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

➢ INTRODUCTION

According to "Georgia-EU Association Agreement", Georgia has made a commitment to establish a transparent, efficient and inclusive public administration in the country. One of the main parts of the reform is self-government reform. One of the obligations, which should be fulfilled, is to provide e-services in local self-governments, to improve the quality of access for the population.

THESE ARE THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT "A Common Forum forCSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring", in the framework of which, the initial monitoring was carried out in Ambrolauri Municipality (January - February 2020). The gaps, identified as a result of the initial monitoring and the developed recommendations were provided to the representatives of the municipality for further response.

THE AIM OF THE SECOND MONITORING is to monitor the progress of implementation of the gaps and recommendations identified on the basis of the primary monitoring and the development of positive trends, as well as identification of the existing challenges in terms of three main components: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness under the supervision of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs.

The second interim monitoring in Ambrolauri Municipality (in August) was carried out by the representatives of the local partner Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Hub –"Abkhazintercont" and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Self-Government Resource Center.

METHODOLOGY: The monitors were guided by a pre-designed special questionnaire, which included 32 indicators. Web pages and Facebook pages of Ambrolauri Municipality City Hall and Sakrebulo were studied in order to collect information. For more information, phone and direct communications were made with representatives of various departments - both in the executive and in the legislative system.

We thank the representatives of Ambrolauri Municipality Sakrebulo and City Hall for their cooperation.

The tool and element of monitoring evaluation are still unchanged: transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness.

THE MONITORING PROCESS WAS CARRIED OUT IN AUGUST. The process was conducted impartially, transparently and effectively, showing the positive features of cooperation between the non-governmental and governmental sectors. During the second monitoring, theprogress in some areas in direction of gaps, identified in the

primary monitoring process has been shown, although challenges remain to be overcome in terms of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness. The monitoring process showed that the problems and regulations caused by Covid-19,were the obstacles in order to fully overcome the challenges and achieve more successful results.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➢ TRANSPARENCY

According the law, self-government has an obligation of transparency: awareness of the population in the municipality, dissemination of information. This component was assessed by monitoring the municipality's electronic resources, reviewing legislation and analyzing internal regulations.

Question: Are vacancy announcements available online? It turns out that the answer to this question was not assessed during the second monitoring process either, according to their observations, there were no active vacancies at that time, therefore, the study confirms that no vacancies were announced within the mentioned period of time in the municipality. However, it turns out that all vacancies are posted on ***ambrolauri.gov.ge,*** as well as on ***https://www.hr.gov.ge/, https://jobs.ge/,*** which is available to all interested parties.

The second monitoring conducted in Ambrolauri Municipality, revealed that serious work is being done in the municipality to modernize the website, the information about all public officials were corrected.

Within the framework of the small grant of "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Hub-Abkhazinterkont", a booklet and a video were prepared within the framework of the project "Accountable and Transparent Self- Government-Informed Population", which includes contact information of all public officials, which will help to provide information to those, who do not have access to the internet and, consequently, do not have information about e-services. There is also a significant change on the website.

A built-in panel has been set up, through which any citizen can electronically apply to the local self-government. Monitoring revealed, that there are no scheduled open consultation days in the current year. The citizen can meet the Mayor, the Chairperson of the City Council, the Deputy of Chairperson and all the officials for consultations at any day. Citizens have information about this. In order to reduce the waiting time of the citizen, the City Hall is working on introduction of possibilities for citizens to schedule meetings online, which was initiated as a result of the work of the "working group".

With partnership of "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center" with the "Finance Association"–"Involvement of Citizens Living in Ambrolauri in Public Administration Reform" - a section "Plan Your Budget"was added to the web-page of local self-government. In order to increase the visibility of this service, two graphic vid-

eos were prepared, which were posted on the web and Facebook pages of the community radio "Voice of Ambrolauri" ("Ambrolauris Khma"). Currently, 24 applications have been submitted and voting is taking place electronically, which sets a precedent that the issue, considered as a priority by the population,will be envisaged in the self-government budget. According to the monitoring results, no progress has been made in the process of forming the social budget and the gender budget. The situation regarding anti-corruption plans, anti-corruption regulations, financial regulations and ethical conduct has also not changed.

➢ EFFICIENCY

Efficiency is one of the most important responsibilities in self-government. During the second monitoring, it is necessary to find out how effective the activities of the municipality are, whether the picture has changed in Ambrolauri Municipality. The picture is following: there are no scheduled open consultation days. The citizen can meet the Mayor, the Chairperson of the City Council, the Deputy Chairperson and all the officials for consultations at any day. Citizens have information about this. However, as a result of the activities of the "working group", work is underway in the municipality to resolve this issue. City Hall is working to create an online e-service that will be agreed in time. The monitoring showed that the incoming complaint is answered within 10 days in accordance with the law.

This year, the City Hall has received 7 administrative complaints. Mainly, the complaints are related to land approval and water-related problems. E-services: Submitting letters, Petitions, Complaints, Registration to the meeting, Response. The monitoring reveals that all these types of services are available on the web-page of Ambrolauri Municipality, however, due to the lack of memory of the website, the information is sometimes deleted. The second monitoring of the Ambrolauri Municipality website revealed two types of buttons, available to the population: "Plan Your Budget" and "Request Information", which are developed within the framework of various projects implemented in Ambrolauri.

Work is also underway on an electronic recording mechanism. The municipality has an employee development plan, however, due to the pandemic-limiting regulations created in the country, they used an online platform. For qualified management of the activities, a presentation is held at the City Hall, during the meeting for 15-20 minutes, during which experience and knowledge are shared between different departments. Phone and electronic information sharing mechanisms are also used to share knowledge. The lack of necessary forms for the evaluation of municipal services remains an insurmountable challenge.

➢ INCLUSIVENESS

This part of the monitoring includes information on how the issue of inclusiveness is protected in the municipality, to what extent this topic is a priority, whether there are ramps in City Hall / City Council buildings, what is the percentage of women employed in local self-government and women in positions.

Ambrolauri Municipality, unlike other municipalities, has a ramp for the building, the building is adapted in terms of receiving people with disabilities. Whether municipality statements about vacancies are discriminatory, this indicator could not be assessed during either the first or the second monitoring because the vacancies were not fixed in an active state. The percentage of employed women is 50%. There is no special staff for translators for non-Georgian speakers, however, during the monitoring process it was noted that if necessary, the staff speaks a foreign language and can provide these services. The absence of the staff, according to them, is due to the fact that the region has a Georgian-speaking population.

As it was observed during the monitoring, there is only one program for people with disabilities, assistance of 300 GEL once a year. "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center" applied to the relevant service of the City Hall to develop a special program for people with special needs at the Ambrolauri Day Center. There is no positive answer to this question yet, according to the state program, the City Hall is obliged to take care of people with disabilities and people with special needs.

The monitoring shows, that Ambrolauri Municipality has no experience in implementation of a gender budget. There was expressed a desire to plan trainings to improve knowledge. The function of contact person with civil society organizations is taken by Public Relations Services: in the City Hall - Nino Rusishvili and Marika Dvali, in the City Council – Sophio Khidureli.

➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Achievements: Representatives of "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Regional Hub –Abkhazinterkont" and "Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center" conducted a second monitoring under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs. The results of the second monitoring show that the gaps identified during the first monitoring have progress in terms of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness in the implementation of public administration, but challenges still remain.

The website is being modernized in terms of introducing full-fledged e-services, the contact information of the authorized persons of the City Hall and The City Council services has been corrected, a video on the use of e-services has been prepared by local partner organizations. Information brochures were printed for the part of the population that does not have access to the internet. A panel - "Request Information" - has been added to the website, through which any interested citizen can electronically apply to the self-government. Work is underway to write time schedule according to the open consultation days.

Challenges to overcome: The monitoring process revealed that the budget is general, the City Hall does not have a social, gender and participatory budget, there is no online mechanism of submitting proposals, there are no financial regulations, ethic regulations and anti-corruption plan-regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to improve the quality of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of local municipal governance it is desirable to:

TRANSPARENCY

1. Post the schedule of specific reception days and hours of the officials of Ambrolauri Municipality and the City Hall on the website;

2. Develop and post the anti-corruption plan and anti-corruption regulations of the municipality on the website;

3. Improve e-services and receive feedback from the side of citizens.

EFFICIENCY

1. Develop the forms, necessary for the evaluation of municipal services;

2. Open a new field on the website - for direct communication and consultation with public officials;

3. Increase competence on gender budgeting and draft a separate gender budget;

4. Introduce participatory budget, promote citizen and civil society involvement;

5. Post information about meetings, trainings and gained experiences on the website;

6. Define topics and raise qualification of the employees.

INCLUSIVENESS

1. Raise awareness of officials on the state legislation about inclusiveness;

2. Facilitate the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process;

3. Post complete information about the Councils on the website, number of Councils and number of members and feedback on their reporting.

TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY

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

➢ INTRODUCTION

According to "Georgia - EU Association Agreement", Georgia has made a commitment to establish a transparent, efficient and inclusive public administration in the country. One of the main parts of the reform is self-government reform. One of the obligations, which should be fulfilled, is to provide e-services in local self-governments, to improve the quality of access for the population.

THESE ARE THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT "A Common Forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap Monitoring", in the framework of which, the initial monitoring was carried out in Tsageri Municipality (January - February 2020). The deficiencies identified as a result of the initial monitoring and the developed recommendations were provided to the representatives of the municipality for further response.

THE GOAL OF THE SECOND MONITORING is to monitor the progress of implementation of the deficiencies and recommendations identified on the basis of the primary monitoring and the development of positive trends, as well as identification of the existing challenges in terms of three main components: transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness.

The second interim monitoring in Tsageri Municipality (August) was conducted by the local partner CSOs - the "Tsageri Center for Women's Rights and Equality" and the "Active Citizen - Accountable Government" – under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY: The monitors were guided by a pre-designed special questionnaire, which included 32 indicators. Web pages and Facebook pages of Tsageri Municipality City Hall and City Council were studied in order to collect information. For more information, phone and direct communications were made with representatives of various departments - both in the executive and in the legislative system.

We thank the representatives of Tsageri Municipality City Council and City Hall for their cooperation.

The tool and element of monitoring evaluation are still unchanged: transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness.

THE MONITORING PROCESS WAS CARRIED OUT IN AUGUST. The process was conducted impartially, transparently and effectively, showing the positive features of cooperation between the non-governmental and governmental sectors. During the second monitoring, the progress in some areas in direction of efficien-

cies, identified in the primary monitoring process has been shown, although challenges remain to be overcome in terms of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness. The monitoring process showed that the problems and regulations caused by Covid-19 were the obstacles in order to fully overcome the challenges and achieve more successful results.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

➢ TRANSPARENCY

In the component of transparency, in order to complete the implementation of Public Administration Reform in Tsageri municipality, the first monitoring in Tsageri Municipality did not specify open consultation days with City Hall and City Council officials, thus the effect of population access was reduced. In the second monitoring phase, this problem was partially corrected and in most cases the open consultation days were posted on the cabinets, information boards, however, it should be noted that the information is not reflected in the e-services - the website and the Facebook page. It should also be noted that a significant change was, the opening of the Citizens' Service Bureau on the first floor of Tsageri Municipality, within the framework of the program "Good Governance for Local Development" implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The monitoring process of the municipal website reveals that a new opportunity has arisen for citizens to request information - a "Request Information" window has been added to the website, a modern information system has been launched to provide timely information to citizens, farmers, entrepreneurs, stakeholders and groups. It is located in a visible place and can be used by any interested party.

The participatory budgeting process is one of the most successful models of good governance that promotes democracy, modernizes the public sector, increases the accountability of the executive branch to the public, and is an effective process of democratic dialogue and decision-making between government and the population. It is one of the models of participatory democracy, in which the population makes decisions about how to allocate municipal and state budget funds for and then to check the effectiveness of the use of allocated resources.

Such an approach to the public budgeting process allows citizens to identify, review, and prioritize projects funded by the public. The monitoring process clearly shows that in order to achieve this, effective steps have been taken in Tsageri Municipality, both technical and content work is underway. The trainings and coaching are held. The monitoring shows, that in 2021 Tsageri municipality will have a well-written budget on these topics. The Fund "Greta" is actively involved in this process, which conducts the preparation process, meetings and trainings with the heads of the Financial Service, Mayors and members of the Gender Council.

The lack of anti-corruption regulations, plans, financial and ethical conduct regulations in the municipality remains a major challenge.

➤ EFFICIENCY

Efficiency in self-government is one of the most important commitments in implementing Public Administration Reform. The second monitoring revealed that 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". City Council officials allocated 3 days for the meetings, but no information was found on the e- services. The main window on the municipality's website visibly presents "Create Petition" report, although it should be noted that the change was not found in the quantitative registration.

There is still no document on the staff development plan. Over the past year, 12 trainings have been conducted on various topics to improve Public Administration. The organization "Active Citizen - Accountable Government" provided training to Tsageri Municipality staff on Public Administration Reform in frames of the sub-grants. Due to the dangers of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of meetings and the number of trainings scheduled under the exchange program have decreased compared to last year. However, it should be noted that online trainings are still conducted in Zoom format. The overcoming challenge is the lack of deadlines and form for monitoring the activities of the City Hall services.

➤ INCLUSIVENESS

There were significant gaps in inclusiveness in the first phase of the monitoring, although no major changes were made in the second phase to regulate ramps and other infrastructure for persons with disabilities. Our recommendation for the municipality is to develop an action plan based on the anti-discrimination principle. The necessary appropriate adapted environment should also be created for persons with disabilities by providing appropriate infrastructure.

During the projects we have implemented, it has been revealed that most of them are not at all informed about the existence and availability of e-services. Our recommendation for the municipality is to develop effective mechanisms to increase citizens' involvement in the process of awareness rising.

The activities of the person, working with the civil society appointed by the City Hall are ineffective, no information about activities of NGOs and civil society is sought electronically. Our recommendation is to facilitate communication and make information available in this area.

This is basically the information that was revealed during the second phase of monitor-

ing. It is noteworthy that the working groups that are actively involved in this process, work effectively to make progress. Together with other members, the officials of the City Hall and City Council are directly involved in this process. Widespread pandemic in the country and the declaration of Tsageri as a risk zone have hampered the process in terms of getting better results.

Changes are visible for the better, but there are still challenges and gaps for the full development of public administration reform.

> ## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Achievements: Under the leadership of the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs, the second monitoring was conducted by representatives of two organizations - the Tsageri Center for Women's Rights and Equality and the Active Citizen - Accountable Government. The results of the second monitoring show that the gaps identified during the first monitoring are progressive steps in terms of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of Public Administration, but there are still challenges to be overcome, which Tsageri Municipality continues to work with. It is quite convenient for the monitoring team to conduct interviews and monitoring with municipality public officials, as they are ready to take into account useful and relevant recommendations of the legislation. As for the changes, they say that they are ready to take into account the recommendations and reflect them in the relevant normative acts, however, it should be noted that the epidemic hinders the activities of the municipality.

Challenges to be overcome: The monitoring process revealed that the budget is general, the City Hall does not have a social, gender and participatory budget, there is no online complaint, or proposal mechanism, no financial regulations, no ethical conduct regulations, no anti-corruption plan-regulations.

Recommendations:

The following is necessary to improve the transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of the activities of Tsageri Municipality:

Transparency

1. Posting the specific open consultation days for citizens with public officials of Tsageri Municipality and City Council, on the website;

2. Development of anti-corruption plan and anti-corruption regulations of the municipality and posting on the website;

3. Improving e-services and establishing feedback from citizens.

Efficiency

1. Development of forms required for the evaluation of municipal services;

2. Increase competence on gender budgeting and write a separate gender budget;

3. Introduce participatory budgeting, promote citizen and civil society involvement;

4. Posting information about meetings, trainings and gained experiences, on the website;

5. Defining topics and raising the qualification of employees.

Inclusiveness

1. Full informing of public officials about the state legislation on inclusion;

2. Facilitate the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process;

3. Adaptation of Tsageri Municipality building according to the needs of persons with disabilities.

LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY

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

➢ INTRODUCTION

The introduction of e-governance systems in the regions, especially in remote locations, in rural areas, is significantly hampered by the lack of Internet delivery and / or low quality, high cost of Internet services, limited access to technical facilities (computers, smartphones, etc.) and technologies, weak skills in technology consumption. Low awareness and involvement of civil society and the general public in the monitoring process is an additional obstacle to the successful implementation of Public Administration Reform. Consequently, strengthening civil society in the regions, initiating political dialogue through its active involvement, and participating in the reform monitoring and observing process are particularly important.

AIM OF MONITORING

This is the second monitoring of the Public Administration Reform in Lanchkhuti Municipality. In general, the aim of monitoring is to study the degree of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of local government, to identify strengths and weaknesses in e-governance practices on the ground, and to develop and suggest relevant recommendations to local governments based on evidence-based information and findings. Specifically, the aim of the second monitoring is to identify the quality of the recommendations made on the basis of the findings of the first monitoring, to identify current progress and to draw new conclusions, to provide relevant recommendations to local government representatives and executive bodies.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The second monitoring in Lanchkhuti Municipality was carried out in August 5-13, 2020. The evaluation of the reform was carried out on the basis of monitoring of the official website of the municipality and the application www.lcman.ge, created within the project, as well as the analysis of public information requested from local government officials and observations of citizen participation practices on the ground. As additional means of finding and verifying information, telephone communication with municipal officials, personal meetings, and official online sources were used, which contained the information needed to evaluate a particular issue.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

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

➢ TRANSPARENCY

Access to public information is one of the main indicators of transparency in the activities of the municipality. There is a special application on the official website of the municipality, which can be used to request information from both The City Council and the City Hall, but, despite the note "Rule for Requesting and Appealing Public Information" in the search engine, the relevant record is not available on the municipality's web platform even in the second monitoring period.

The section "Announcements about vacancies" is interesting. The online application section for vacancies is available on the municipality's website; however, there is only one application there, dated October 29, 2019. The current situation does not meet the established rule, according to which information on vacancies, to be filled in under the rules of announced competition in the municipality, is published on the next working day after the announcement of the competition. Despite the recommendation, no new vacancies were published even after the first monitoring. As the availability of internet and computer technology in rural areas is still problematic, it is important that both City Council and City Hall vacancies are announced in the local print media as well (4 newspapers).

There is an online complaint or proposal mechanism in the municipality. According to the information obtained, two complaints were submitted, although they are not posted on the website.

A register of incoming questions is produced in the municipality, where the time of receiving the question, the content of the question, the addressee, the name of the public institution are given. At the same time, in the case of each question, it is indicated when the answer was given. Observations have revealed that the average response time to incoming emails is 4-5 days.

Online financial reports are posted on the website of the municipality: approved budget, budget implementation reports for 3, 6, 9 months, annual report, procurement plan and report.

The website of the municipality includes comprehensive public information in the following areas: Biographies of the officials; Agenda of the City Council / City Hall ses-

sions; Normative acts adopted by the City Council; City Council resolutions; Reports of various departments / divisions. Unlike the City Council, almost no reports are obtained on the activities of the City Hall.

The second monitoring revealed that open office hours for citizens have been determined for: the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor. Unlike the first monitoring, the Chairman of the City Council, the Deputy Chairman of City Council, MPs, Deputies of the Departments have not already set an open consultation days and the citizens can visit them immediately.

After the first monitoring, a new application www.lcman.ge was launched within the project of the Georgian Rural Hall, where the full contact information of the City Council members, Commissions and Factions, as well as the staff, is publicly posted.

➢ EFFICIENCY

Civil budgeting was not introduced during the first monitoring in Lanchkhuti municipality. However, preparatory work in this direction was underway in the municipality and, consequently, the civil budgeting has already been developed during the second monitoring. City Council has approved the participatory budgeting regulation, the participatory budgeting management website www.idealanchkhui.ge has been created. A competition of ideas has been announced, which will end on August 21, 2020, after which it will be possible to organize the voting process and identify the winners through participatory rule.

Prior to the second monitoring, training on participatory budgeting was conducted in Lanchkhuti for local government officials and local media representatives. The training was aimed at teaching local budget planning models and forms with the participation of citizens. Information on the receipt of project ideas is intensively published through mass media and social networks.

According to the information received from the Financial Service, at least 70,000 GEL will be allocated for the participatory budget in 2021. As for the social budget, it is 5% of the budget. According to them, the municipality has allocated gender costs with the amount of 5000 GEL. However, it should be noted that Lanchkhuti budget has clearly defined gender programs, which are broken down in other areas, and in case of studying them with a gender index, they will have quite high score. For example, rehabilitation program for women with breast cancer, funding for the Women's Football Club.

According to the information obtained from the City Hall and City Council members, during the monitoring process, no anti-corruption measures have been taken in the

municipality during the second monitoring. The website does not search for anti-corruption plans, anti-corruption regulations, financial regulations, regulations on ethical conduct.

During the monitoring, an interview was conducted with the Deputy Mayor, a specialist of the service center, the head of the City Council staff. According to the information received, the number of open consultation days during the month in the City Hall and City Council is determined: 4 days with the Mayor, 12 days with the Deputy Mayor. During the second monitoring, meetings with the Chairman of City Council, the Deputy Chairman, the MP, the Heads of the Services - without any restrictions for the whole month.

According to the information obtained, the average number of days for receiving a response to complaints is 10 days. There were 2 complaints last year. The response took up to 7 days on average. It is noteworthy that there is a relevant column on the website, but no information is searched.

In addition to the "Complaints" section, other electronic services are posted on the municipality's website: submission of letters, petitions. One petition "Gurian Horsemen's Square in Lanchkhuti" is posted on the website. At the time of the second monitoring, the request for this petition had already been fulfilled. The square was named after Gurian horsemen.

Specially should be mentioned the application "Electronic Manager of Lanchkhuti Municipality City Council" created by Georgian Rural Hall after the first monitoring with City Council of the Municipality, through which the residents of Lanchkhuti Municipality can: receive information about Lanchkhuti Municipality City Council meeting and any other activities in advance; Write a letter to the council member and receive a response; Search and get acquainted with the documentation of the City Council session; Observe the statistics of the activity and responsibility of the City Council members; Seek contact information of the City Council members, commissions, factions, staff.

After the first monitoring, within the framework of Lanchkhuti Information Center project a mid-term training strategy for public officials was developed, which will be approved by the City Council at the next meeting.

According to the interview with the head of Lanchkhuti HR department, the importance of this issue is understood in the municipality. The trainings for MPs, City Council and City Hall staff were attended by 100% of City Council members, 70% of City Council apparatus, 45% of City Hall representatives. The topics of the trainings were: program budgeting, public relations and communication, local self-government and local development groups. The last trainings were conducted by Lanchkhuti Information Center. Also a training on internal tourism development was conducted for the City Council

members, and training on www.lcman.ge application management was conducted for the members and the apparatus.

In order to share best practices / experiences with self-governments, the municipality representatives could remember only a few meetings with other local self-governments over the past year, which were mainly organized by non-governmental organizations.

According to the monitoring, there is an annual, quarterly plan for holding meetings in the municipality. The sessions are held in accordance with the regulations. Announcements about the scheduled sessions are posted on the website and www.lcman.ge. In addition, customers registered on www.lcman.ge receive information about the activities to be done in advance, via e-mail.

The application www.lcman.ge has an intranet function. Accordingly, all members and apparatus of City Council can communicate with each other electronically.

According to the monitoring materials, the terms and form of studying the activities of the City Hall services in Lanchkhuti Municipality have been established.

The Internal Audit Service of the City Hall is authorized to conduct systematic, compliance, efficiency, financial and information technology audits in the structural subdivisions of the City Hall and legal entities established by the municipality, through which it will be possible to find out whether their activities are in line with the planned goals and objectives. How legally, purposefully and effectively the funding is used, how well the management and control mechanisms are introduced, and more.

➢ INCLUSIVENESS

According to the interview with the head of the HR department, the head of City Council apparatus, the percentage of women employed in the local self-government of Lanchkhuti municipality is quite high: 54% in the City Hall, 78% in the City Council. The situation has not changed since the first monitoring.

In leading positions (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairperson of the City Council, Deputy Chairperson of the Commission) only one Deputy Mayor and one Chairperson of one Commission of the City Council, the Chairperson of one Faction and the Head of the Apparatus are women

Ethnic minorities living in the municipality are represented in small numbers and they are fluent in the state language.

There is a contact person in the municipality for relations with vulnerable groups (women, socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons IDPs), people with disabilities (hearing, vision, mobility problems). These issues are supervised by the Chairperson

of the Gender Council in City Council, and a Social Service specialist in the City Hall.

Only on the first floor of the administrative building of the municipality, ramps are arranged at the entrance. On the first floor there is a Citizens' Service Center and a Social Service, where in most cases visitors have to come. However, attending City Council sessions and visiting the Mayor / Deputies is limited, as City Council sessions are held on the third floor and reception to the Mayor is on the third floor. Due to the fact that the building was built 40 years ago, its reconstruction is connected with problems.

There is a resolution of Lanchkhuti Municipality City Council of 27 April 2018 (№24) approving the Statute of the Council for the Work on the Issues of Persons with Disabilities in Lanchkhuti Municipality. In this regard, the latest information provided on the website of the municipality is only the agenda of the meeting of the Council for Persons with Disabilities (January 30, 2020). However, the relevant provision on the website, information about the council, its members is not available. The session was held neither after the first monitoring. It is noted that the council was set up within the framework of a Civil Society Organization project, and after the completion of the project, as it often happens, the municipality suspended its activities in this regard.

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 the provision of public services to them. There is no such regulation in the municipality and it is not planned in the future.

There is a section on the website "Infrastructure Arrangement Service for the Persons with Disabilities", "Special Infrastructure Arrangement Service for Children and the Elderly", where the relevant record of the search word is not found. In general, this applies to many other services in this section as well. The fact is that the official website of the municipality is created according to a specific template, where this section is given, but it does not exist in practice.

The monitoring revealed that there are different councils in the City Hall and City Council: the Advisory Council, the Gender Council. The website provides information on the Gender Equality Council, in particular, a list of members, job position is searched, but no contact information is specified.

Despite the fact that 4 settlements of the municipality have common assemblies and have favorites, the communication of the City Hall with these people obviously needs to be improved, as it is not formal.

There is no contact person in the local self-government, in particular in the City Hall, for relations with civil society organizations / working groups. This issue is supervised by the Head of the City Council Apparatus.

The relevant column of the website does not search for information about any of the partner NGOs.

Working groups are established periodically by City Council. For example, a working group was set up last year to develop the coastline of the village Grigoleti. This group prepared and after the first monitoring City Council approved the mid-term strategic plan for the development of Grigoleti.

> ➢ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

■ It is important that the municipality develops a communication strategy so that the population is fully informed about the Public Administration Reform. The most important function of the communication strategy should be to raise public awareness on the perception of the effectiveness of the electronic delivery of municipal services. The municipality should involve the non-governmental sector and media as stakeholders in the strategy development process;

■ As the population believes, that it receives information mainly from the non-governmental sector, its role as a communicator in this process, which will be financed by the local budget to achieve more transparency, should be strengthened through specific projects;

■ Print media should be added to the main sources of information, as it plays an important role in informing the population;

■ Municipality should activate such online services as: construction permission, registration of agricultural and non-agricultural land, registration to one-time assistance and other municipal services, which will ensure not only transparency, but also real improvement of the service;

■ It should be simplified to find information, ask questions and provide feedback electronically. Stakeholders should have the opportunity, to raise the skills and knowledge in getting information even through video files. The level of public awareness about existing sources of information should be increased. These activities should be carried out by the municipality together with qualified experts in the field and NGOs;

■ Due to the fact that there are 54 settlements in the municipality, 60% of which, according to official statistics, do not have access to online services, it is important that the municipal leadership advocates to provide Internet services in the villages;

- As the classified budget, financial reports are significantly incomprehensible to ordinary citizens, it is important that they are published in the form of info graphs;

- In order to increase the efficiency of e-services, it is necessary for the municipality to develop a specific plan for the implementation of full informing and, at the same time, simple and easy-to-understand e-governance software. In order to increase the awareness of citizens on the electronic application forms, it is important to actively provide them with information about this service through the representatives of the Mayor and local media;

- It is important to create electronic support for the publicity and accessibility of the existing social programs of the municipality;

- It should be mandatory to register general meetings of the settlements in all villages. This will qualitatively increase accountability and participation;

- It is important for specific specialists to study local solutions, find corruption holes in them and create appropriate anti-corruption regulations;

- In order to improve the service, it is necessary to conduct periodic surveys on the quality of satisfaction with the services provided;

- More communication with the Georgian National Association of Self-Governments is needed;

- It is necessary to establish a specific schedule for monitoring City Hall services;

- It is necessary to allocate funds for equipping the municipality building with ramps;

- It is necessary for the City Council and the City Hall to develop a strictly written and executable schedule of meetings with the population, which will be focused on the involvement of the population, as well as the permanent reporting of the government in the specific settlement;

- Public officials should be trained to understand the importance of citizen involvement, to realize expected results and gain skills, which will increase their competence and skills in communication, facilitation and presentation;

- It is important for the municipality to set up general meetings of settlements. This will dramatically increase the involvement of the population as well as the accountability of public structures. There should be permanent communication with the General Assembly of 4 existing settlements and their leaders, as defined by the Self-Government Code;

- Platforms and opportunities for providing online services to the population should be developed;

- Local NGOs should continue the population advocacy projects with local and central government;

- Local governments should pay more attention to social programs when planning the budget, especially the regulation of infrastructure for people with disabilities;

- It is important to increase the allocations for the civil budget from 0.47% to 5%.

OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY

THE SECOND REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR)
ROADMAP MONITORING
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
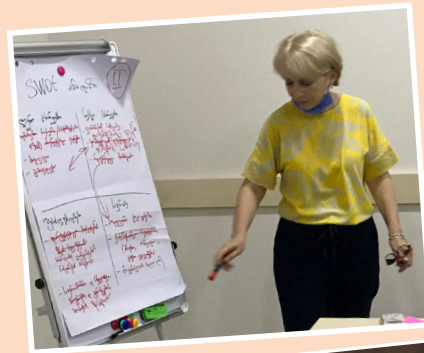
➢ INTRODUCTION

The main feature of a modern democratic state is accountability to the public, which has led to the establishment of a high standard of freedom of information in democratic countries in recent years.

The state is obliged to serve and be accountable to the people. It is therefore important that the citizen has access to any public information and knows how the state budget is spent, how state property is managed, how public policy is defined. This will enable the public to participate in the development of public policy.

One of the most important components of Public Administration Reform (PAR) is Local Government Reform. Its aim is to facilitate the decentralization process and ensure better governance at the local level. PAR has two main directions in its new action plan for 2019-2020:

1. Expanding the right of local authorities to strengthen self-government;

2. Ensure access to e-services in the municipality in order to improve access to e-services in local self-governments.

THE AIM OF MONITORING

The project "A common forum for CSOs from Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi for PAR Roadmap monitoring"aims to establish and strengthen the Civil Society Forum of Western Georgia, to ensure public involvement and control in 8 municipalities of Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Guria on the process of monitoring the Public Administration Reform.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

Within the framework of the project, it is planned to conduct this monitoring in three stages. The first stage was held in January-February 2020, and the second stage - in July and August of the same year.

The level of efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of local government was assessed by the project partners on the basis of a pre-designed monitoring mechanism and questionnaire that combined 32 different criteria and indicators of evaluation. The assessment of the reform was carried out on the basis of monitoring the official websites of the municipalities, as well as the analysis of public information requested from local government officials.

Additional means of information receiving and verification were: telephone communication with representatives of municipal authorities, personal meetings, and official online sources that contained information needed to evaluate a particular issue.

This report reflects the results of the monitoring conducted in Ozurgeti Municipality by the "Center for Education and Equality" and the "Young Teachers' Union" with the support of the organization - Union of Scientists of the Imereti "Spectri".

ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

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

➢ TRANSPARENCY

The second phase of the monitoring carried out within the project revealed that:

1. At this stage, the vacancies announced by Ozurgeti Municipality and City Council are not posted on the website.

2. Some positions in the table of the structure of the City Hall are vacant, but no information is sought in the vacancies field (https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3646700?publication=0 http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/? cat = 86).

3. It is already possible to find the organizational structure of the municipality, contact persons, their telephone numbers, e-mails on the mentioned pages, the mentioned information was not possible during the previous monitoring.

PROGRESS MADE AFTER THE FIRST MONITORING:

- So-called "Structural tree" is published with hierarchy names and visual icons;

- There is an online complaint or proposal window on Ozurgeti Municipality website. This space is effective and citizens can use it freely. There are visible results in terms of live broadcasts of online sessions, electronic petitions, submission of proposals in the process of "Be a co-manager". It is also planned to install an online complaint submission module on the website.

(http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?da_image=173;http://petition.lsg.ge/ozurgeti/;https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfO0L3newl3Q-m6NZLu-1W3qDHXRMiMZFP9Ix-8OvXBGYZe-rQ/viewform;https://votes.oz.gov.ge/) -

Information about procurement plan and report is available on the municipality web pages. Information on the budget implementation report for 3, 6, and 9 months can be found at the following link: http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?cat=67. This information is published in compliance with the norms and deadlines established by Law.

- Ozurgeti City Hall and City Council have a hotline: +995 577309925.

1.PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

The amount of the participatory budget in the 2020 budget of Ozurgeti Municipality has been increased and is 300,000 GEL. The platform operating on the website ensured maximum involvement of citizens, which was expressed by e-voting on individual projects (see link http://votes.oz.gov.ge/).

2.SOCIAL BUDGET

One of the priorities in the budget of Ozurgeti Municipality is health care and social security, there are 15 health care programs. The budget for social and healthcare for 2020 is 1,800,000 GEL. The City Council has approved a resolution approving the rules for issuing and receiving social assistance envisagedby 2020 budget.

3. GENDER BUDGET

20 000 GEL is allocated for gender projects in the current year budget. Funding for vulnerable groups has increased in comparison with the last year.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED:

The innovative project "Be a co-manager" is a form of participatory budgeting based on the principles of direct democracy and is implemented within the administrative boundaries of Ozurgeti. The project aims to fund projects with e-voice vouchers. The platform https://votes.oz.gov.ge/ was created especially for this project, where the voters registered in Ozurgeti made the decision on financing the infrastructure projects by voting online with e-voting vouchers.

(https://votes.oz.gov.ge/dadgenileba_2020_1.pdfhttp://oz.gov.ge/pictures/dadgenileba_2020_1.pdf/dadgenileba_2020_1_dn.pdf).

During the monitoring conducted in January-February 2020, Ozurgeti Municipality City Hall was working on anti-corruption regulations and financial regulations. City Council of Ozurgeti Municipality approved the Transparency and Good faith Strategy and Action Plan. With the active involvement of the City Council representatives, work on an anti-corruption plan, regulations and financial regulationsis underway. See thelink:

http://ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/ge/pages/view/sakrebulos-gankargulebebi-2?fbclid=IwAR3ehoTsnCEozH2zYg2fE4QxDvSOffRry0tKJX2Ir6C2xTynUNcxgqx_ft4

Ozurgeti Municipality, together with partner NGOs and the National Parliamentary Library, created a working group to prepare and approve the "Good faith and Transparency Strategy and Action Plan of Ozurgeti Municipality". Also, with the support of

USAID GGI, a strategy monitoring framework and evaluation methodology were developed and approved. Ozurgeti Municipality is the first to have a similar guideline, an anti-corruption document. See thelinks:

http://oz.gov.ge/pictures/gankarguleba_2019_90.pdf

http://oz.gov.ge/pictures/gankarguleba_ 2019_90_dan.pdf

➢ EFFICIENCY

The monitoring revealed the efficiency of the activities of Ozurgeti Municipality local government according to several indicators. The high degree of public involvement ensures the correct and effective use of local resources.

In order to communicate with the citizens, the number of days per month is defined in the City Hall and the City Council of Ozurgeti Municipality for open consultation days: with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairperson of the City Council, Deputy Chairperson, MP, Heads of Departments. In 2019, more than 4,000 citizens who came to the open consultation days were served. In addition, citizens have the opportunity to communicate directly with City Hall officials any day of the week.

Ozurgeti Municipality City Hall annually approves the schedules of open consultation days for the citizens with City Council members, the schedule is published on the website of the municipality and on the information board in the administrative units.

 (http://oz.gov.ge/pictures/brzaneba_2020_2_dan.pdfhttp://oz.gov.ge/pictures/brzaneba_2020_3.pdf

http://oz.gov.ge/pictures/brzaneba_2020_3_dan.pdf)

The average number of days to receive a response to complaints is 3-10 days. Citizens have the opportunity to receive information both online and directly.

The monitoring of the website shows a list of available e-services, there are sections: Request public information, annual report, legal acts, minutes of the meetings, departmental archive, municipal procurements, municipal property, municipal programs, priorities, work plans and reports, public services, information, administrative complaints, number of employees, vacancies.

It should be noted that the information about the employees is given in gender prism on the web site.

In order to manage the quality of activities in the municipality, in agreement with the Civil Service Bureau, a system of evaluation of professional public servants has been introduced, which is carried out in full compliance with the procedures.

Trainings are available to all employees without restrictions. 85% of the staff, which is 170 people, have passed the training. During the pandemic, online trainings are conducted in conditions of limited mobility.

Various electronic, digital mechanisms have been introduced and used in Ozurgeti Municipality City Council in order to conduct effective activities. Electronic case management is used in the internal work process, which ensures the efficiency of the activity in terms of time and quality. Also, the three divisions operating in the City Council apparatus ensure effective working process in a coordinated manner, with working meetings.

Interim and final evaluation of municipal services is carried out in accordance with the Georgian legislation. According to the job description, the competencies and skills appropriate for each employee were determined, special forms were prepared, which were presented to each employee electronically. The HR department monitors the interim and final evaluations.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED:

The Rules of Conducting Sessions in Ozurgeti Municipality are regulated by Resolution N4 on Amending the Resolution №1 of November 27, 2017 of Ozurgeti Municipality City Council on: "Approval of the Rules of Ozurgeti Municipality City Council Procedures" - the (see link http://ozovge?).

The activities of the services in the municipality are monitored through monthly, quarterly, as well as an annual reporting system, for which there is a special form and concrete deadlines.

The terms and forms of monitoring the activities of Ozurgeti City Hall are set within the framework of the anti-corruption strategy.

➢ INCLUSIVENESS

One of the most vulnerable groups in the municipality is a group of people with disabilities. According to the Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Social Security, 4,487 people with disabilities live in Guria. Most of them - 2119 people live in Ozurgeti municipality. In order to study the quality of envisaging the needs of the disabled group, the City Hall and the City Council buildings were inspected at this phase. The building has only an external ramp. Wheelchair users can move only on the first floor.

The current legislation (Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities) instructs the self-government to satisfy specific issues addressed to the needs of persons with disabilities (Articles 9 and 11 of the Law). The social program of the municipality envisages 213,900 GEL for a certain category of persons with disabilities.

It should be noted that the column on the website - "Service of Adapted Infrastructure for Persons With Disabilities" - is empty. It is included in the "Important Municipal Ser-

vices" section of the website, which also lists services for other vulnerable groups, such as "Special Infrastructure Services for Children and the Elderly", "Services Providing Shelter for Homeless people", where relevant records of search keyword are not found.

There are different councils in Ozurgeti City Hall and City Council: Advisory Council, Gender Council, Council of Persons with Disabilities, Youth City Council, Youth Gender Council. It should be noted that there is no information about most of them on the website.

The monitoring identified the percentage of women employed in the local self-government of Ozurgeti. 38% of public servants employed in the City Hall are women, and 62% - men. 45% are women in the City Council and 55% are men. It should be noted that the website contains gender-disaggregated data, generally as well as about the officials: 1 out of 13 City Hall officials is a woman, 1 out of 13 City Council officials is also a woman.

Only one woman - Marina Japaridze the head of the Education, Culture, Sports, Youth, Health and Social Services works as the head of service in Ozurgeti Municipality, 12 women work in different departments. 1 woman is the head of the commission, the City Council apparatus is headed by 1 woman, and 2 women work on the position of the Deputy Chairperson of the faction.

Like the monitoring conducted in January-February 2020, translator service for non-Georgian speaking citizens living in Ozurgeti is still available like existing practice. The municipality does not have this service, but it cooperates with the regional administration where this service exists.

Natia Vashalomidze, Head of the Health and Social Services Department, is the contact person for relations with vulnerable groups (women, socially vulnerable, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities) (hearing, sight, movement problems) (Tel: 595 30 50 98).

Ozurgeti Municipality City Council and City Hall do not have a normative act / regulation on the involvement of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process at the local level or the provision of public services to them, however, its implementation is determined in the near future.

CONTACT PERSONS FOR RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS / WORKING GROUPS IN OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY, ARE:

- For relations with civil society organizations and working groups of Ozurgeti Municipality City Hall: Ekaterine Mgeladze (Tel: 599 068200);

- For relations with civil society organizations and working groups of Ozurgeti Municipality City Council: Natia Zedgenidze (Tel: 599 00 8959).

➤ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The word "vacancy" or "vacancies" is not searched in the search engine of the site, which is not convenient for the user. Preferably, the appropriate column is added to the title page and vacancies are posted.

2. An innovative visual budget model has been added to the updated website of Ozurgeti Municipality, which is not functioning properly and requires optimization of content materials, which will help to load the data on the page faster.

3. The day and time of open consultation days are determined at the City Hall, however, it is possible that this service will also become electronic and a meeting will be booked through the website.

4. A special form is posted on the website for electronic request of public information, which needs to be downloaded, filled in and then sent by the citizen to the official e-mail of the municipality. It would be nice if a search filter could be added to the system, where the user could specify the receiving authority, year, month, keyword in the title, document number, etc. Adding this function will make it easier to access public information and also make communication easier. It would also be appropriate to indicate the contact information of the person, responsible for providing public information.

5. The hotline number is indicated in the contact information category. It is better if it will be displayed on the home page, as well as in the main menu.

A P P E N D I X

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 first monitoring	Basic indicators	Monitoring Results/Indicators	Progress achieved since the first monitoring In case progress is not observed, describe whether any changes are being planned
1. Are vacancy announcements available online?	Analyzing the following websites: -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)		10 days	Yes/No	

3. Does the municipality website provide *information about organizational structure including the contact persons, their telephone numbers, emails and their tasks and responsibilities?*	Analyzing the municipality website		------	Yes/No If not, an interview should be conducted to clarify how a citizen can communicate with the contact persons	
4. Is there a mechanism/form for online submission of complaints or proposals?	Analyzing the municipality website		-------	Yes/No If not, an interview should be conducted to clarify why this mechanism is not available.	
5. Are the financial statements published online? – Adopted budget? – Budget reports for 3, 6, 9 months and annual report? – Procurement plan and report	Analyzing the municipality website		------	Yes/No; The Date of the last report; If not, an interview should be conducted to clarify where citizens can find these reports, for example, on TV, radio, in newspapers, etc.	
6. Does the municipality website include public information, for example, – the biographies of officials, – the agendas of the Sakrebulo / Mayor's Office meetings, – normative acts adopted by the Sakrebulo, – decrees, reports from various departments?	Analyzing the municipality website		-----	Yes/No The date of the last update	

7. Do the following officials have fixed open office hours for receiving and consulting citizens?
  - the Mayor,
  - Deputy Mayor
  - Sakrebulo Chairperson
  - Deputy Sakrebulo Chairperson,
  - Sakrebulo members,
  - heads of departments
If yes, is this information published on the municipality website?
	1. Analyzing the municipality website
	2. Calling the municipality hotline
			-----	Yes/No
				
				Frequency: How many days per week?
				How many hours?	

Do the municipalities have:
  -Participatory budget?
  -Social budget?
  -Gender budget
	1. Interviewing a representative of the Mayor's Office (Finance Department)
	2. Analyzing the municipality website
			-----	Yes/No
				Yes/No
				Yes/No
				
				The date of the last budget
				Proportion of participatory / gender /social budget in total budget (%)	

1. 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.
	Interviewing representatives of the self-government		------	Yes/No
				Yes/No
				
				When was it last updated?	

Effectiveness	How will the monitoring be conducted/ what documents have to be analyzed	Indicators/ data of the first monitoring	Basic indicators	Monitoring Results/Indicators	Progress achieved since the first monitoring In case progress is not observed, describe whether any changes are being planned
1. Number of days per month for open office hours in the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo for -the Mayor, -Deputy Mayor -Sakrebulo Chairperson -Deputy Sakrebulo Chairperson, -Sakrebulo members, -heads of departments	-Interviewing Public Relations Department representatives of the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo -Scheduling an appointment with an official in the capacity of a regular citizen		Number of planned days	Actual number of days	
2. Average number of days for answering complaints	- Interviewing the Mayor's Office and/or Sakrebulo representatives - Submitting a complaint from a citizen		10 days	Actual number of days	
3. Number of services available electronically: - submitting letters; - petitions; - complaints; - scheduling meetings, -receiving replies, etc.	- Analyzing the municipality website - Interviewing the self-government's Public Relations Department representative		-----	Number of electronic services provided	

4. Do the municipalities have a professional development plan for the staff?	- Analyzing the municipality website -Interviewing a representative of the self-government 's Human Resources Management Department		-----	Yes/No	
5. Number of trainings conducted for the representatives of local self-government, including - 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	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department		-----	1.Total number of trainings 2. Number of trainings over the last year	
6. Percentage of the local self-government representatives who have participated in trainings (total and over the past year)	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department		------	1.Percentage of training participants in total 2. Percentage of training participants over the last year	
7. Does the local self-government use any tools and techniques, such as: trainings, workshops, exchange of information between various departments for ensuring the quality of its activities (for example, for managing competencies)?	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department		-----	Yes/No If yes, which tools and techniques are used: regular meetings, exchange of information between various departments, trainings?	
8. Have the forms for evaluating municipality services been developed?	Interviewing the municipality representative		-------	Yes/No	

9. 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	
10. Is there an annual/ monthly plan for conducting Sakrebulo sessions?	Analyzing the information on the municipality website\n\nInterviewing a municipality representative		-----	Yes/No	
11. Are the timeframes and forms for monitoring the activities of the departments of the Mayor's Office determined?	Interviewing the municipality representative		-----	Yes/No	

Inclusiveness	How will the monitoring be conducted/ what documents have to be analyzed	Indicators/ data of the first monitoring	Basic indicators	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	
2. Are the municipality vacancy announcements non-discriminatory	Analyzing the vacancy announcements			Number of restrictions for the applicants (for example, by age, sex, status, etc.)	
3.What is the percentage of women employed in the local self-governance staff	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department			%	

4. What is the percentage of women working in senior positions in local self-government (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Sakrebulo Chairpersons, Heads of commissions)	Interviewing a representative of the Self-government's Human Resources Management Department			%	
5. Is the translation service available for non-Georgian speakers?	Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative			Yes/No	
6. Does the municipality have a focal point for relations with vulnerable groups: -women -socially disadvantaged -IDPs -persons with disabilities (with hearing, sight, mobility issues).	Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative			Yes/No	
7. 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 - The Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities; - legislation on labor rights; - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Interviewing a municipality representative			Yes/No If yes, please list the documents and programs	

8. 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?	Interviewing a municipality representative			Yes/No If yes, please list of documents and programs	
9. Is gender budgeting practiced at the local level? Are they aware of its functioning?	Interviewing the local Self-government's Finance Department representative			Yes/No	
10. Does the municipality have a focal point for cooperation with civil society organizations/working groups?	Interviewing the Self-government's Public Relations Department representative			Yes/No	
11. It should be clarified who is appointed as a focal point for cooperation with civil society organizations.	To be clarified in the interview			The Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Deputies, etc.	
Do - an advisory board, - a gender council, - other councils and working groups operate in the Mayor's Office and Sakrebulo?	Interviewing a representative of Human Resources Management Department			Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No	

MEETING IN VANI MUNICIPALITY

MEETING IN AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY

MEETING IN TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY

MEETING IN TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY

MEETING IN BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY

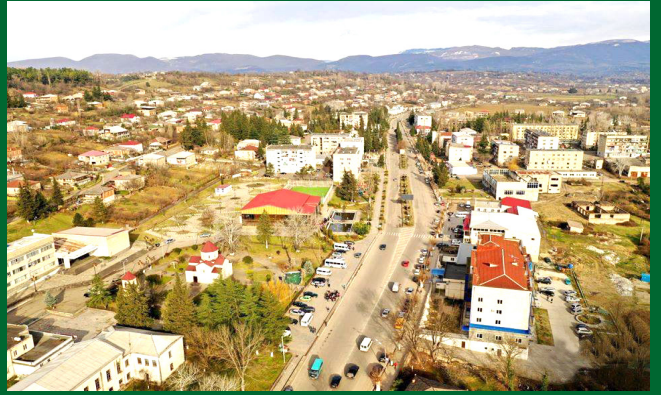## MEETING IN LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY

MEETING IN KHONI MUNICIPALITY
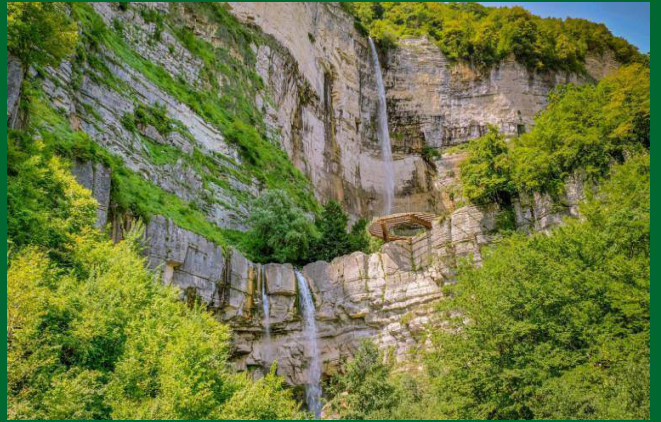

MEETING IN OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY

VANI MUNICIPALITY

TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY

BAGDATI MUNICIPALITY

KHONI MUNICIPALITY

TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY

AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY

LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY

OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY