

Transparency: because citizens matter

Conference: Transparency of the Budgeting Process of the Local Government Units – Monitoring, Perceptions, Challenges and Lessons Learnt

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Transparency & accountability– the bread and butter of good governance

- Growing evidence and awareness about the impact of transparency and accountability for citizens to enjoy effective service delivery
- These linkages have been widely acknowledged by all stakeholders addressing the role of effective institutions in fostering economic growth and development effectiveness
- ➤ Hence, transparency and accountability are critical principles of governance that improve institutional effectiveness and thereby development outcomes

Transparency at local level – part and parcel of UNDP's support to the decentralization agenda

- Promoting transparency and accountability in the policy design process at local level
- Promoting transparency and accountability in delivery of public services
- Awareness raising and engagement of civil society and citizens at large in traditional ways and also through new technologies and innovation fostering transparency and accountability

Why transparency at local level?

- Lack of transparency and accountability may lead to:
- misuse of public funds; weak enforcement and ineffectiveness of policies; misinformed citizens; poor services, underdevelopment; risks for corruption; lack of investments and economic growth
- The **benefits** of the decentralization process cannot be reaped unless the system of local government generally and local governance finance particularly is systematically tied to a sound system of citizen involvement in local planning and budgeting

Why transparency in the local budgeting process?

- The municipal budget translates local priorities into actions
- Addresses vulnerabilities
- Reflects the consensus-building processes needed to balance efficiency and effectiveness with the power-sharing aspects of the local reality
- The budgetary process is the way in which political representatives understand citizens' needs

How transparency: tradition or innovation?

• UNDP's approach to promoting transparency and accountability embeds community participation and voice of the citizens in its policy and downstream interventions in

traditional and innovative ways equally

Good old traditional ways

Illustration:

In the municipalities of Jegunovce, Cair, Konce and Krusevo:

➤ Community based planning groups together with municipal employees have worked on preparation of policy proposals for improvement of the local capital investments programming, planning and financing and identification of priority infrastructure interventions focusing on the vulnerable groups

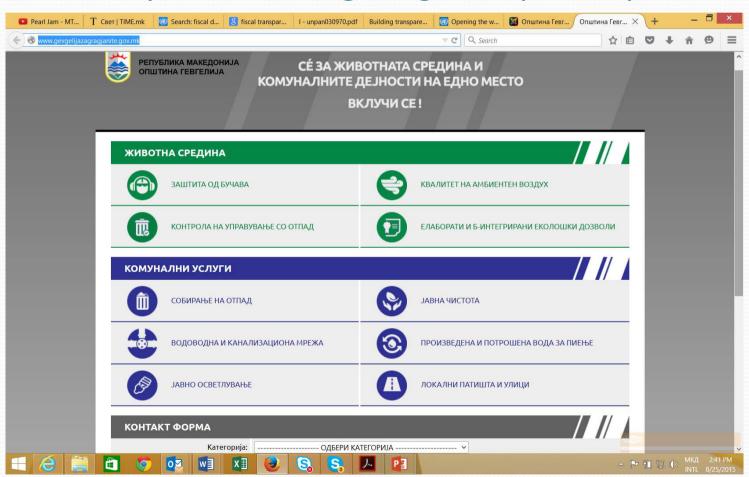
Investing in innovative solutions

- Using IT technologies for enhanced transparency and promoting citizens' participation
- Using data, open data and social media to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability

Innovation efforts/tools

- <u>www.dajpredlog.org</u> interactive web platform for citizens feedback on local services and issues
- http://www.gevgelijazagragjanite.gov.mk The dashboard in the municipality of Gevgelija innovative tool designed to open the window on municipal functions and communal services and facilitate greater public participation in local decision-making
- Integrity efforts and social accountability tools such as "Open Municipality"
- These tools can all be used /modified/upgraded to serve the transparency of the budgeting processes

Why not for budgeting transparency?



Benefits of innovative approaches to citizens' engagement and improved transparency

- Fast and efficient outreach to citizens
- More structured involvement of citizens and civil society organisations
- Electronic data collection and analysis that can feed into policyplanning processes

Ongoing and future plans

- A preparatory phase for a new SDC-funded project aimed to empower Municipal Councils to become more effective and autonomous, by properly fulfilling their constitutionally assigned roles of legislation, oversight and representation
- The entry point will be the budgeting process and public finance management issues
- Promotion of transparency and accountability will be prevailing across all activities in terms of:
- Developing common understanding on accountability and transparency principles
- Increasing transparency and accountability of Mayors towards the Councils, and the municipality towards the citizens
- Better representation of citizens' interests by the municipal bodies and more vibrant relationships of Councils with the citizens
- Improving the budgetary decisions and effective budgetary oversight at municipal level
- Improving citizen satisfaction with municipal service delivery and local governance

