
Project:	Good Governance for Local Development Programme in the South Caucasus
PN:	19.2204.6-002.00
Activity:	Assessment of current communication efforts/strategy of selected Armenian municipalities
Period:	July 2020-September2020

1. Background

The “Good Governance for Local Development in South Caucasus” project (GGLD) aims at strengthening the capacities of public institutions in the South Caucasus to the effect that they are better able to provide citizen-oriented services. The project advises partner institutions at national, regional (sub-national) and local levels in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on designing and implementing national reform processes, improving framework conditions and developing standards and guidelines. It supports the capacity development of key actors for citizen-oriented service delivery, primarily at local level. To promote citizen participation in local development processes, the project advises on the introduction of participation and complaint mechanisms and supports respective awareness raising for citizens. The project also supports the elaboration and implementation of strategies and instruments for regional development and local economic development. As a part of the German Caucasus Initiative, the project promotes professional exchange of knowledge and experiences between the countries of the South Caucasus. The Programme is implemented on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in Armenia co-financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It is carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI) as the main political partner.

Back in 2015 the number of municipalities in Armenia was 915 that varied greatly in size of population and capacities; and the municipal landscape of Armenia was highly fragmented. Many municipalities were too small to fulfil their functions effectively. In order to address these challenges, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has launched a large-scale structural change process, the Territorial and Administrative Reform (TARA), the overall goal of which is to reduce the number of municipalities in order to create territorial entities of manageable size, thus more viable and functional local self-government bodies that would be able to provide more effective services to their citizens, make efficient use of their financial resources and support sustainable socio-economic development. As of January 2020, 465 former municipalities have been merged into 52 consolidated municipalities.

One result area of the Programme is the active citizen participation in the decision-making at local level. The Programme aims at further and more targeted engagement in the area of citizen participation with a two-fold approach. On the one hand, the Programme intends to conduct awareness-raising campaigns for citizens on the existing participation tools through dissemination of media and other information materials, social advertisements, etc. The campaign should primarily focus on key local governance processes and thus promote citizens’ participation in the development of annual work plans and programme budgets in order to make the latter more inclusive and representative. On the other hand, the Programme will offer support to partner municipalities to enhance their communication practice and expand the public outreach.

2. Background of the assignment

The Programme aims at increasing public participation in local governance processes and strengthening the linkages between the municipal administration and the citizens. In this regard, the information and communication efforts on local governance processes of the municipality towards its citizens is a crucial leverage for public participation at local level.

Information and communication to the citizens are a cornerstone of transparent, accountable, reliable and inclusive local governance. It is on the one hand a duty of the municipality to pro-actively and constantly inform its citizens about key local governance processes (e.g. local political events, municipal development planning processes, budget hearings, access to municipal services, general news from the locality) for which the Law on Local Self-Government already provides specific standards that municipalities should follow. It is on the other hand a right of the citizens to receive hands-on, reliable information from its municipal administration, without barrier or discrimination, and to feel part of the community in which the citizen can actively engage.

Against this background, the Programme intends to conduct an assessment on the state of play of communication/information efforts and outreach of selected enlarged municipalities. This assessment will help understanding the strengths and weaknesses of current communication efforts deployed by municipal administrations, gaps to be addressed for better, more effective, more transparent and reliable municipal communication. It will also help laying the basis for further support to partner municipalities in improving their communication efforts in the short, medium and long term through more strategic approach towards communication and information to their citizens.

The local governance processes and the transparency of information communicated to the citizens should include and not be limited to:

- Requirements deriving from the LSG law;
- General information on the municipality news, regarding municipal activities;
- Management and steering functions of the local government and the clear communication of these functions to the public;
- Provision of administrative and sectoral services: modes of service delivery and awareness of citizens on the opportunities of receiving these services in the municipality or online;
- Coverage of the political functions of LSGs, including announcement about the council meetings (date, time, live broadcast), dissemination of the decisions of the council and/or mayor (means of dissemination: announcement board, e-mail, website, other);
- Coverage of the financial functions of the LSGs, including convening of budget hearings and public discussions and communication to the public prior to the actual events and post-factum coverage;
- Transparency of information on the opportunities of local economic development;
- Any other important topics related to the governance processes.

The Programme understands information and communication to citizens in a broad sense, including but not limited to:

- Pro-active use of local media (TV channels, radio, newspapers)
- Pro-active use of municipal website
- Use of livestreaming possibilities

- Pro-active use of social media and related networks
- Use of printed information materials such as leaflets and/or announcement boards within the municipal building and/or within the municipality
- Public hearings, town hall meetings or similar events for public discussions organised by the municipality,
- Cooperation of the local self-government bodies with the civil society organisations, local initiatives, private sector, active individuals, and application of their networks for communication with the public,
- Any other form of formal or informal communication

3. Purpose of the assignment

The assignment aims at the following 3 objectives:

1. Development of a baseline assessment methodology to analyse the current state of play and practices of municipal communication and information efforts to citizens;
2. Conduct the assessment based on the above-mentioned methodology in up to 5 enlarged municipalities;
3. Provide detailed assessment reports and recommendations for each of the 5 municipalities.

4. Tasks and deliverables

The assignment comprises of the following components:

Task 1: Development of a baseline assessment methodology on enlarged municipalities' external communication strategy and practices

The approach to be developed is expected to cover at least the following Sections:

- i. Mapping of the **channels** through which enlarged municipalities are informing citizens on local governance processes (see preliminary list set in the part 2. Background)
- ii. Mapping of the **contents** on which enlarged municipalities are communicating upon (see preliminary list set in the part 2. Background)
- iii. Assessment of the **compliance** of municipal communication with the obligations deriving from the Armenian legislation.
- iv. Assessment/Analysis of the **use** of the identified channels to communicate on the identified contents; analysis of the de facto communication strategy of the municipality based on the criteria of transparency, efficiency and impact
- v. Assessment/Analysis of the **PR human and technical capacities** in the given municipalities.

For each of the 5 Sections, the assessment should provide a structured framework to present:

- Identified concrete and specific strengths and weaknesses or gaps in the communication efforts of each of the Armenian municipalities;
- Tailor-made recommendations on improving the communication efforts of enlarged municipalities, regarding:

- Content of communication
- Use and mix of communication channels
- Training needs of municipal staff
- Any other aspect of importance

Task 2: Conducting baseline assessment in 5 Armenian enlarged municipalities

- i. Development of a precise work plan for the baseline assessment in selected enlarged municipalities.
- ii. Conduct the desk-review assessments based on the methodological approach defined under Task 1.

Task 3: Reporting

- i. Prepare draft assessment reports on communication strategy of 5 Armenian municipalities
- ii. Present and discuss the draft report with the Programme and MTAI and other stakeholders during a workshop on this topic
- iii. Finalise the assessment reports based on the gathered feedback and submit these reports to the Programme.

5. Deliverables

Throughout the assignment, the following deliverables are expected:

Task 1:

1. Draft methodological approach delivered until July 15
2. Final methodological approach delivered until July 20

Task 2:

1. Work plan for the assessment

Task 3:

1. Draft assessment report of 5 municipalities delivered until September 10
2. Final assessment report of 5 municipalities delivered until September 18

6. Tentative schedule and level of efforts

The assignment is planned to be implemented between July 2020 and September 2020 for up to 50 expert days.

Task	Deliverables	Dates for submitting	Expert days (up to)
1.	Development of baseline methodology	By July 20	10
2.	Conduct baseline assessment in 5 municipalities	By August 31	30
3.	Findings and recommendations	By September 18	10
	Total		Up to 50

7. Reporting

- The Contractor is obliged to perform the assignment based on these ToRs while ensuring close contact with GIZ throughout the implementation of the assignment.
- The Contractor shall provide all the results directly and in the first turn to GIZ for discussion and further action.
- The Contractor will directly report to the project on the progress and completion of the tasks.

8. Requirement for the consultancy profile

The tender is open to consultancy firms, consortium of consultancy firms, NGOs or consortium of NGOs, or consortium of local experts represented by a Private Entrepreneur; including following expertise:

- At least 10 years of experience in public institution communications
- At least 5 years of experience in the area of local self-governments

Suggested experts should possess:

- University Degree in Law, Public Administration, Political Science, Communication and journalism, or comparable academic background;
- Expert level competencies in the area of local self-government, local democracy, media, freedom of information;
- Strong analytical and writing skills and proven experience in producing policy papers and other materials;

- Good command of written and spoken English is an advantage.

The Technical Proposal must entail:

- Detailed description of the method of implementation, incl.:
 - Outline of a suitable assessment methodology as a preparation of Task 1
 - Proposal for complementing the assessment with additional aspects if seen necessary
 - Implementation methodology esp. regarding the covid-19 situation in Armenia
 - Clear description of the roles of the proposed individual experts and specialists;
- Description of the company's or consortium profile and relevant experience;
- Information on successful projects of similar nature (relevant studies and papers should be attached);
- Description of proposed work schedule;
- CVs of all involved experts.