



**2018-2019 OGP NAP Public Consultation
Process**
April-May 2018

USAID
Good Governance Initiative in Georgia

2018-2019 OGP NAP Public Consultation Process

April-May 2018

From Wednesday, April 4 through Friday, May 4, 2018, Ministry of Justice of Georgia, with support of USAID Good Governance Initiative (USAID GGI) conducted nationwide public discussion for development of Georgia's OGP National Action Plan for 2018-2019 years.

In total, 13 public consultations were held in 10 different cities of Georgia (*Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Rustavi, Telavi, Gori, Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, Ozurgeti, Zugdidi, Kutaisi*). Nearly 500 individuals attended the above mentioned functions.

OGP delegation was composed of representatives from Ministry Justice of Georgia (MoJ), Data Exchange Agency (DEA/MoJ), State Audit Office, IDFI, GYLA, TIG, Rustavi City Hall, USAID, USAID GGI. Composition of OGP delegation varied from one meeting to another depending on the availability of delegation members.

OGP delegation brought the following key aspects to the attention of participants of public consultations:

- Story of OGP establishment; its values and principles;
- Georgia's participation in OGP;
- Internal handling of OGP/Institutional mechanism/OGP Forum;
- Purpose of the public consultations;
- Georgia's ongoing OGP Chairmanship process/Chairmanship priorities of Georgia and plans ahead including upcoming OGP summit;
- CSO's role in OGP Process;
- Success stories of Georgia's participation in the OGP.
- Tangible results of OGP commitment implementation:
 - ichange.gov.ge
 - data.gov.ge
 - my.gov.ge
 - Budget Monitor
 - Property Declaration system and its monitoring;
 - Just drive
 - E-governance systems for the LGs
- Support of development partners (in particular USAID) to Georgia's successful participation in OGP movement;

Civil Society Organizations (*mostly TIG and IDFI*) presented unified front over one major idea for OGP NAP commitment: *establishment of the Independent Anticorruption Mechanism to fight with elite corruption*. According to CSOs independent anticorruption body must have the following functions:

- Coordination of Anticorruption Policy;
- Investigation of possible cases of conflict of interest and high level corruption;
- Independent investigation including through limiting prosecutor's oversight;
- Monitoring of property declarations;
- Monitoring of party financing;
- Conduct anticorruption preventive measures and raising public awareness;

Participants of the public consultations were requested to voice their ideas and recommendations on how to improve governance in their respective municipalities. Participants of the meetings were also encouraged to communicate their ideas via email or through the online communication web link "OGP Idea" available on the web-site of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

Below are the key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the participants during the nationwide public consultations:

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OGP NAP Public Consultations with Students

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

On Wednesday, 4 April, 2018, with support of USAID GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development was held with participation of students.

Participants (30): (mainly students from GIPA, FreeUni, IliUni, TSU and Caucasus Business School).
OGP Delegation: Zura Sanikidze, Ministry of Justice (MoJ); Gvantsa Meunargia, OGP Secretariat (MoJ); Levan Avalishvili, IDFI; Lina Paneteleeva, USAID; Tsotne Karkashadze, State Audit Office;
Venue: Courtyard Marriot Hotel in Tbilisi.
Media Coverage: N/A

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the students during the meeting:

- Can www.ichange.gov.ge be used to amend existing legislation, e.g. one that regulates retrograde application of the law?.
- It is very difficult to obtain information on implementation/progress of government projects. In this regard, it was suggested to develop a platform that will accumulate information on the implementation/progress of the GoG projects.
- Ongoing pension system reform concerns considerable segment of the population in Georgia. Regrettably, information provided by the Government is hardly intelligible. It is highly advisable to develop clear and easily comprehensible explanatory notes about such important reforms, laws and regulations and spread widely encompassing all relevant segments of the society (*before GoG starts soliciting feedback from the population about initiated reforms/laws/initiatives*).
- What does the Government of Georgia do as an OGP chair internally as well as globally? How do you lead the process of promotion of the OGP values and principles globally? Do you work with non-OGP member countries to get them on board?
- Recruitment process in the public service remains matter of concern for many young people. Concerns were expressed that Selection Commissions never provide an applicant with detailed feedback why he or she has not been selected. It was suggested that involvement of the ordinary citizens in the selection commissions might increase transparency of the selection process in the civil service.
- Are there any commitments envisaged in the new NAP related to the block chains? In general what are the benefits of the using block chain systems?
- It will be worthwhile to create a hotline that will provide detailed information about all services offered by the Government of Georgia.
- It was suggested to create hotline service for the population of high mountainous areas that will provide possibility to the local population to communicate their expectations, preferences and concerns (similar to voice of the customer).
- How protected are electronic services in Georgia from the cyber-attacks?

OGP NAP Public Consultations in Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region

Friday, April 13, 2018

On Friday, 13 April, 2018, with support of USAID GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held in Mtskheta.

Participants (31): (mainly representatives from Mtskheta, Dusheti, Tuaneti, Khazbegi Municipalities, Mtskheta-Mtianeti Governor's office, 2 CSOs).
OGP Delegation: Zura Sanikidze (MoJ); Salome Sagharadze (GYLA); Levan Samadashvili (USAID GGI), Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI);
Venue: Hotel "Gino Wellness" in Mtsikheta.
Media Coverage:

<https://www.facebook.com/1466638496896071/photos/ms.c.ejw9zMEJADAIBMGOgrITo~;03FID0OywLivgzJD XB4EEDU66lqAxoVOE6kF5wfcD6YfswlgNbvC64RWgB4gM6lhs7.bps.a.2300675263492386.1073742444.1466638496896071/2300675593492353/?type=3&theater>

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Key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the participants during the meeting:

- One of the biggest problem is the low level of public interest and participation. Does OGP NAP has any commitments to make public more active? Local COSs try to engage with population on the ground in order to make them active, however only CSOs' efforts are not enough. Can GoG somehow address the problem of low level of public participation through OGP process?
- Local population thinks that Government does not pay attention to their ideas and suggestions. Therefore it is important to build confidence among local citizens that their opinion matters for the Government and their efforts may bring changes on the ground. In order to build trust and confidence the government should start implementing projects initiated by the local population.
- CSO representatives inquired why only 5 municipalities and Tbilisi are institutional partners of the OGP? Does it mean that other municipalities are not ready to embark on OGP related commitments?
- The author of one of the ichange.gov.ge petitions (*immediately rehabilitate court building in Dusheti where Iliia Chavchavadze served*) described her experience with ichange.gov.ge and highlighted the following concerns:
 - Complicated registration process to the ichange.gov.ge platform;
 - Very high number of required signatures (10 000);
 - Absence of mechanisms for appeal;
- It was stressed that local population is highly unprepared to use electronic tools developed and offered by the GoG.
- CSO representatives stressed that it is very hard for them to operate in Dusheti municipality. Website of Dusheti Municipality does not provide updated information about the laws and decrees adopted by the local government. Thus they have to request information in a hardcopy format and spend money to this end. Concerns were also raised in connection with transparency of Dusheti municipality. Local population does not have information about council meetings. According to the CSO representative, it will be very important if Dusheti municipality takes commitment to proactively inform local population about planned meetings of City Council/government.
- Local CSO representative suggested to amend the decree on establishment of Advisory Council in Dusheti and include CSOs as statutory members of the Advisory Council.
- One participant of the meeting suggested to establish a mechanism through which ordinary citizen will have a direct access to the Mayor.

CSOs promised to provide their additional/consolidated ideas via email.

OGP NAP Public Consultations in Rustavi

Monday, April 23, 2018

On, Monday, April 23, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held in Rustavi.

Participants (37):

OGP Delegation: Ketii Tsanava (Moj); Giorgi Oniani (TIG); Marika Natsvlishvili (SAO) Levan Samadashvili (USAID GGI), Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Mayor of Rustavi, Mayor of Gardabani, Deputy Chair of the City Council of Rustavi and Deputy Governor of Kvemo Kartli Region, other representatives of the local government, CSOs and Media participated in the public discussion.

Venue: USAID CCE.

Media Coverage:

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- <http://rustavi.gov.ge/news/1024>
- <http://kvemokartli.gov.ge/news/society/100413>
- <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/regioni/489539-rusthavshi-sajaro-diskusia-ghia-mmarthveloba-mightsevebi-da-gamotsvevebi-gaimartha.html>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the participants during the meeting:

- One of the participants was interested to learn which recommendations and ideas suggested by the civil society organizations have not been taken into consideration by the Government of Georgia during earlier cycles of the OGP NAP/NAP development.
- It was stressed that Gardabani municipal webpage is built in a way that users cannot copy the content/text from the web page. In this regard, one participant of the discussion was interested to learn if any organization conducts regular monitoring of the Municipal Webpages and commissions assessment reports.
- According to the Deputy Governor of Kvemo Kartli Region:
 - Budget Monitor provides possibility of whistle blowing on possible corruption cases in the civil service. Is the anonymity guaranteed?
 - Required number of signatures of the ichange.gov.ge petitions should differ based on the types of the petition.
 - Deputy Governor expressed his skepticism over the CSOs idea to create independent anticorruption mechanism to fight high level corruption. According to him creation of the new anticorruption body may further complicate the process, in this regard it is prudent to make better use of existing mechanisms.
- Importance of doing RIA before embarking on important reforms such as pension reform has been highlighted from the speakers and well as participants of the meeting (*TIG stressed that current pension reform is not supported by the RIA that in a long-term may create crisis*).
- One of the CSO representatives underlined urgent need for improvement of spending process of public finances.
- Concerns over the bonuses and supplements in the civil service have been also raised. In this regard, participants expressed hope that the new law on remuneration in the civil service will improve the situation in this area. Rustavi Mayor stated that it is important to develop a detailed explanatory guide specifically for the Municipalities in order to ensure that every stakeholder is on the same page while interpreting the above mentioned law on remuneration.
- Participants stressed that, it is absolutely important to include additional (*other than existing 5*) municipalities into OGP. In this regard, one of the representatives of the meeting voiced an idea to include a specific commitment in the new OGP NAP with the goal to develop a mechanism for involvement more municipalities in the OGP movement.
- Participants stressed that more targeted meetings are needed with local population in the municipalities to raise their awareness of OGP as well as initiatives such as ichange.gov.ge.
- Participants (*mostly CIDA*) expressed concerns over the current modalities of the ichange.gov.ge. Very high number of signatures and complicated registration process were named as the key hurdles. Social commercials very often are not intelligible for ordinary citizens due to difficult language. According to the CIDA: citizens are hesitant to register on the ichange.gov.ge web site, because they think that their personal information will not be protected and the government might use this information whenever is needed; several civil servants also indicated their fears that using ichange.gov.ge petition portal may cost them their jobs.
- At the end of the meeting concerns related to transparency and proper use of the public finances by the local municipalities came up again. For example, when municipalities transfer certain amount of funds to the Patriarchate there is no information how this money was spend. In this regard, need for strengthening monitoring of public finance expenditure was particularly emphasized.

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Meeting with Students at Telavi State University

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

On Wednesday, 25 April, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations were held at Telavi State University.

Participants (28):

OGP Delegation: Keti Tsanava (Moj); Nick Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Revaz Barbakadze (Rustavi City Hall); Giorgi Topuria (TIG); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI)

Venue: Telavi State University

Media Coverage: <https://www.facebook.com/tesau.edu.ge/>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the students:

- It is important to improve Government's communication with the local population in Telavi;
- It was suggested to train group of students in Telavi State University on OGP related matters and e-governance so that they could effectively spread information on OGP locally involving different segments of the local population.

OGP NAP Public Consultations in Telavi USAID CCE

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

On Wednesday, April 25, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held in Telavi.

Participants (36):

OGP Delegation: Keti Tsanava (Moj); Nick Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Revaz Barbakadze (Rustavi City Hall); Giorgi Topuria (TIG); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI)

Deputy Mayor of Telavi; Deputy head of Telavi City council, Representatives of Governor's office, Telavi CSOs, interested individuals as well as members of Telavi City Council.

Venue: USAID CCE.

Media Coverage: N/A

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced by the participants during the meeting:

- Platform of the Telavi City Hall web-site is very complicated that makes program support difficult. MSDA is doing very impressive work, therefore their involvement with municipalities will be very important.
- It is clear that advisory council is created as a consultative body for the City Mayor. Based on existing domestic as well as international practices, what are other mechanisms that support and promotes civic engagement and participation?
- Concerns were raised about low public participation in Telavi, therefore participants were interested to learn experience of other cities on how to boost public interest towards participation and engagement. Representative of Rustavi City Hall shared experience of Rustavi as well as ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening public participation and engagement.
- Head of the Kakheti Governor's administration requested Moj to consider possibility of holding OGP related campaign/meeting in Kakheti Region with participation of leadership of Kakheti municipalities in order to raise their awareness of OGP and its benefits.
- Issues related to ichange.gov.ge web platform were also addressed during the meeting. While praising the tool itself, concerns were expressed over the required number of signatures that significantly reduces efficiency of the platform. In this regard, it was suggested to allow to collect petition signatures through alternative forms (*other than electronic signatures*), since not everyone has access to the internet or use emails.
- Participants stressed that it is important that government uses innovative methods and tools to promote e-governance, however, public understanding of e-services offered by the

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government is extremely low. In this regard, need for development of GoG's e-services communication strategy has been underlined.

- One participant suggested to use Swedish experience to promote public engagement and participation, most specifically it was recommended to use open spaces such as: recreational parks, bus stops.....to inform public about ongoing processes/developments/initiatives of the Government and to request their participation and engagement.
- One participant stressed that Telavi City leadership must improve communication with the local population. In this regard, Tbilisi Mayor was brought as an example, since he regularly communicates with Tbilisi City population using different forms, most importantly face to face meetings.
- One participant expressed concerns that Telavi City Hall as well as municipality does not involve public in budgetary processes, most specifically in the priority definition and budget planning process. As a result, she never attends City hall meetings on budget execution since she feels that the budget does not reflect her needs.
- Participants stressed that considerable resources should be spent on building e-capacities of the population of rural and remoted areas in order to ensure their engagement and participation through the e-services offered by the government. In this context the role of international donors has been particularly underlined.

OGP NAP Public Consultations in Gori

Thursday, April 26, 2018

On, Thursday, April 26, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held in Gori.

Participants (50):

OGP Delegation: Ketii Tsanava (MoJ); Tamar Oniani (MoJ); Salome Sagaradze (GYLA); Rusudan Arveladze (MoJ); Tengiz Chumburidze (USAID GGI); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Mayor of Gori, Deputy Mayor of Khashuri, members of Gori City Council and representatives of City Hall of Gori, CSOs and Media participated in the public discussion.

Venue: USAID CCE.

Media Coverage: <https://www.facebook.com/CityHallofGori/>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- Issues related to the ichange.gov.ge was in the center of public discussion.
- Can government measure users of the ichange.gov.ge web site? Significant majority of population in rural area do not know how to use e-platforms as well as do not have email accounts, therefore this very important e-petition platform remains largely unused. What is the best strategy to include those population who are unable to use this tool?
- Concerns were expressed over the number of needed signatures for ichange.gov.ge petitions as well as one month deadline. It was suggested, either to reduce the number of required signatures or to prolong the deadline.
- Questions were raised on how to increase engagement of youth through the e-governance tools;
- Mayor of Gori proudly informed the OGP team that City Hall regularly livestreams government meetings enabling local population to watch meetings in live mode and submit questions instantly. *According to Gori City Hall representative, new web page of the Gori Municipality will become operational shortly and incorporate important instruments for the civic engagement including electronic petition portal.*

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OGP NAP Public Consultations at Akhaltsikhe USAID CCE Monday, April 30, 2018

On Monday, April 30, 2018 with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Akhaltsikhe USAID CCE.

Participants (48):

OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (Moj); Saba Buadze (IDFI); Tengiz Chumburidze (USAID GGI).

Venue: USAID CCE

It is notable that Guram Melikidze, First Deputy Mayor of Akhaltsikhe attended the meeting and actively contributed to the discussion.

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- Concerns related to the homeless dogs have been raised during the meeting from the participants. Deputy Mayor informed the audiences that Akhaltsikhe municipality is exploring possibility of building shelter for homeless dogs in partnership with other adjacent municipalities.
- Concerns were raised that ethnic minorities in Akhaltsikhe municipality possess very limited knowledge and information about duties and responsibilities of the local government. Later, discussion revealed that the above mentioned problem can be generalized to entire population of Akhaltsikhe Municipality.
- Concerns were expressed over the dire situation with employment of the youth. It was suggested to conduct comprehensive survey in order to identify needs of the youth at the regional as well as municipal levels.
- Poor conditions of the roads were also highlighted by the participants.

OGP NAP Public Consultations at Batumi State University Tuesday, May 1, 2018

On, Tuesday, May 1, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Batumi Shota Rustaveli University.

Participants (40):

OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (Moj); Saba Buadze (IDFI); Nikoloz Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Lina Panteleeva (USAID); Levan Samadashvili (USAID GGI); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Venue: Batumi State University

Media Coverage: <https://www.facebook.com/BSUBatumi>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- Batumi municipality has too much red tape. It takes a lot of efforts for residents of Batumi to resolve even a very simple issues on the ground.
- Local population is in a very limited way involved in political coexistence in Batumi. In this regard, one of the vivid example relates to budgetary discussions - e.g. definition of budget priorities. Law says that this process should be inclusive, however the consultations took place not in a public space and only 8 individuals participated in the discussions. Regrettably definition of budget priorities in Batumi is not happening through involvement of the local citizens.
- It was stressed that Batumi city hall through social media and other means duly informs the local population about upcoming public consultations on the local budget. However the students rarely attend such meetings. Batumi city hall cannot be blamed for not informing them ahead of time about such possibilities – unfortunately, most of the students are indifferent to the ongoing governance related processes in Batumi.
- It is important to gain trust and confidence of local population including students. Local population must feel confident that their opinion matters for the local government. To this

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end it is absolutely important to promote success stories of implemented projects that originated from the ideas of the local population.

- Why Georgia has different positions in various anticorruption rankings?
- Does my.gov.ge web portal includes personal data such as information on credit history of a person?
- One student expressed its criticism over CSOs suggestion to create independent anticorruption mechanism stressing that establishment of new anticorruption bodies will only increase bureaucracy and create redundancy. It is much better to effectively use the existing mechanisms to intensify fight against corruption.
- Every segment of local society requires individual approach. When it comes to the inclusion, the government must identify (*may be using comprehensive survey*) main channels through which local population receives information and should try to use these channels effectively.
- In addition, different segments of the society should be offered multiple choices for inclusion. For example, an individual who lives in adjusted villages to Batumi may not be able to attend budgetary discussions that are held in Batumi. Such segment of local population should be offered an alternative ways to contribute to the budget planning process.

OGP NAP Public Consultations at Batumi USAID CCE Tuesday, May 1, 2018

On, Tuesday, May 1, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Batumi USAID CCE.

Participants (30):

OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (Moj); Saba Buadze (IDFI); Nikoloz Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Lina Panteleeva (USAID); Levan Samadashvili (USAID GGI); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Venue: USAID CCE

Media Coverage: <http://tv25.ge/news.php?lang=ge&id=6736#.WuhFHolZfiw.facebook>

It is notable that Lela Surmanidze, Deputy Mayor of Batumi Mayor attended public consultations and delivered opening remarks. During her remarks she highlighted the following key aspects:

- Georgia can be proud for its successful participation in the OGP process;
- Batumi is part of the OGP platform and successfully implements its OGP commitments. To this end she highlighted program budget as well as citizens' guide;
- Currently city hall spares no efforts to introduce electronic services;
- City Hall is also working on introduction of the new web site which will be equipped with tools to promote civic participation and inclusion.
- She also laid particular emphasis on engagement of public in budgetary processes to this end she stressed that institutionalization of participatory budget is one of the priorities of the city hall.

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- Concerns were expressed over the required 10 000 signatures to move forward the petitions on the ichange.gov.ge portal. It was strongly recommended to reduce required number of the signatures. Alternatively, one month deadline for collection of 10 000 signatures might be considerably prolonged.
- Journalist from the news agency “Batumelebi” expressed concerns that Ministry of Justice does not respond positively on Fol requests of the Agency. As a result, the agency normally goes to the court and wins the cases against the Ministry of Justice.
- GYLA expressed the similar concern in connection with the Fol. GYLA representative stressed that the government agencies very often wrongly refer to the personal data and refuse to release public information. Similar to the above mentioned news agency, in such circumstances GYLA normally goes to the court and wins the case. GYLA thinks that the staff

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of the government agencies working on FOI issues might require capacity building in order to make better distinction between personal data and public information.

- Concerns were also raised that there is no unified standard and government agencies have their own interpretation of the current laws that regulate release of the public information.

OGP NAP Public Consultations at Ozurgeti USAID CCE Wednesday, May 2, 2018

On, Wednesday, May 2, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Ozurgeti USAID CCE.

Participants (49):

OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (Moj); Salome Sagaradze (GYLA); Nikoloz Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Venue: USAID CCE

Media Coverage: <http://www.ozurgeti.org/ge/ge/news/view/ghia-mmartveloba-mightsevebi-dagamotsvevebi>

It is notable that David Darchia, Chairman of Ozurgeti Sakrebulo attended the meeting and contributed to the discussion.

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- e-petitions were in the center of discussion. In this regard, Char of Ozurgeti City Council inquired about how many municipalities do e-petitions. He also informed the audience that several days ago City Council of Ozurgeti voted in favor of lowering the threshold for filing petition from 1 % to 0.5 %. He also stressed that Ozugeti Municipality leadership spares no efforts to introduce e-petition platform asap.
- Representative of Ozugeti City Council stressed that Ozugeti municipality is committed to continue its participation in the OGP movement and highlighted several commitments Ozurgeti municipality plans to include into the OGP NAP for 2018-2019 (*these commitments have been already communicated to OGP secretariat of Georgia*).
- While discussing the deficiencies of the ichange.gov.ge, several participants stressed that in order to make sure that ichange.gov.ge remains in the radar screen of the local population it would be very important if the individuals already registered on the ichange.gov.ge petition portal permanently receive e-mail, sms or Facebook notifications about the new petitions submitted to the portal.
- Concerns were expressed over the required 10 000 signatures to move forward the petitions on the ichange.gov.ge portal. It was strongly recommended to reduce the required number of signatures. Participants of the meeting also recommended to increase deadline for collecting signatures on e-petitions, before ichange.gov.ge petition portal becomes sufficiently well-known and popular nationwide.
- One participant of the meeting complained that my.gov.ge web portal does not provide possibility to obtain certificate on narco registration (ცნობა ნარკოლოგიური აღრიცხვის შესახებ) and requested the panelists (Moj, DEA) to consider possibility of adding such function.

OGP NAP Public Consultations at Zugdidi USAID CCE Thursday, May 3, 2018

On, Thursday, May 3, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held in Zugdidi.

Participants (42):

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OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (MoJ); Giorgi Oniani (TIG); Nikoloz Gagnidze (DEA); Eka Gordadze (DEA); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Mostly, representatives from local governments of Zugdidi, Mestia, Martvili, Chkorotsku, Tsalenjikha, Poti, Senaki (*Mayor and Deputy Mayor*); Abasha (*Deputy Mayor*); Khobi (*Deputy Mayor*) were in attendance. Several CSOs, students and representatives of academia and media also participated in discussion.

Venue: USAID CCE

Media Coverage: Odishi TV

<https://www.facebook.com/zugdidi.gov.ge/>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- One participant complained that my.gov.ge web-portal cannot retract information from all basis (e.g: *information about taxes that he owed to the Government several years ago, information about cars this individual owned....*).
- One individual requested more information about open data in general and data.gov.ge web portal.
- Head of Zugdidi Office of Public Defender of Georgia stressed that during OGP NAP consultations in 2016 Government made a lot of emphasis on the new law that will regulate freedom of information in Georgia as well as establish an independent institute to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the provision of the law (*Fol commissioner*). He requested MoJ representative to provide information about the status of the Fol legislation.
- Head of Zugdidi Office of Public Defender of Georgia stressed that proactive disclosure of information still remains problematic in the region. Web pages of the local municipalities in Samgrelo-Zemo Svaneti region does not include all information that fall in the interest of population.
- Significant number of municipalities do not have approved list of information for proactive disclosure (*in this regard representative of the Zugdidi City hall informed audience that Zugdidi Sakrebulo approved list of information for proactive disclosure as well as basic guidelines. Zugdidi city hall follows the guidelines and releases information at the end of the year*).
- It was also stressed that it is absolutely important to develop unified standard for proactive disclosure for all municipalities that should include type of the information, format and timing.
- One representative stressed that it would be very helpful if the local governments introduce hot-line service that will enable local population to receive comprehensive information where to get different government services; including what kind of supporting documents are needed to receive various services.
- It turned out, that despite the OGP NAP commitment, e-petition portal of Zugdidi municipality is not operational. E-petition portal is added to the webpage of Zugdidi city hall however there is no legal framework yet to make petition portal functional.
- It is commendable that Zugdidi City Council informs population about planned sessions, however it will be much better for civic engagement if the Sakrebulo also shares in advance all documents to be discussed at the meeting.
- It was also suggested that members of the City Councils should be equipped with tablets/ipads in order to avoid waste of paper needed to print out lengthy documents.
- Mestia City Hall representative complained about poor quality of internet that creates significant problems to the Municipality to operate DES System (*დოკუმენტბრუნვის ელექტრონული სისტემა*).

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OGP NAP Public Consultations at Kutaisi A. Tsereteli State Uni. Friday, May 4, 2018

On Friday, May 4, 2018, with support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Kutaisi State University.

Participants (37):

OGP Delegation: Lana Morgoshia (MoJ); Zaal Goglidze (GYLA Kutaisi Office); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Venue: Kutaisi State University

Media Coverage:

- <https://megatv.ge/news/11858-ria-mmartveloba-mirwevebi-da-gamowvevebi.html>
- <http://rionitv.com/index.php?newsid=5844>

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- What were the main preconditions for Georgia to become an OGP chair and what countries are in the OGP?
- Local citizens do not have information about available tools and mechanisms for civic engagement and participation.
- Do the relevant civil servants at central and local levels go through special trainings in order to promote and facilitate civic engagement and participation?
- At this stage, local population, including students do not have a confidence that local government will pay due attention to their ideas and concerns.
- It will be very important to conduct project/robust campaign to increase awareness of the local population on how can they engage and what tools they can use for participation.
- One student expressed her concerns over the excessive cases of nepotism in Samtredia City Hall that negatively affects quality of the governance and service delivery on the ground. According to her, Samtredia City council conducted pro forma competition and filled vacant positions with very incompetent staff.
- One student inquired about the general level of corruption in the country. She asked speakers to provide information about the efforts of the Anti-Corruption Council of Georgia. She also voiced her interest to get involved in the activities of ACC and requested an advice on how to do it.
- Students highlighted importance of civic engagement in budgetary processes. In this regard, one student expressed concerns over the limited amount of money transferred from the central budget to the local budget of Kutaisi which is not sufficient to the need of Kutaisi municipality.
- GYLA is conducting campaign and collecting signatures against construction of the Namakhvani HPP Cascade on the Rioni River that is the territory of historical Lechkhumi. One student inquired how well local population is informed about GYLA's efforts and the possibility to sign the petition.

OGP NAP Public Consultations at Kutaisi USAID CCE Thursday, May 4, 2018

On Friday, May 4, 2018 with technical support of USAID/GGI, public consultations for OGP NAP 2018-2019 development were held at Kutaisi USAID CCE.

Participants (26):

OGP side was represented: Lana Morgoshia (MoJ); Zaal Goglidze (GYLA Kutaisi Office); Mikheil Darchiashvili (USAID GGI).

Venue: USAID CCE

Media Coverage: <http://www.radiodk.ge/akhali-ambebi/politika/article/16888-rasnishnavsghiamarthvelobadaraevalebathmunicipaliteteb>

2018-2019 OGP NAP Public Consultation Process

April-May 2018

Key messages, questions and ideas voiced from the audience during the meeting:

- Participants complained that Kutaisi City Hall very poorly responds to the letters and FOI requests of the local citizens. Getting information from the City Hall is very difficult at the same time Kutaisi City Hall very often disregards deadlines set for the release of the public information.
- GYLA expressed concerns that 18 days ago the organization sent an official letter to the City Hall and requested permission to put 16 stencils in order to promote ichange.gov.ge. So far, GYLA has not received any response from the City Government on such simple issue.
- In this regard, several participants questioned the merits of transparency award to Kutaisi City Hall from the IDFI.
- Participants also complained that communication and responses from the Government agencies at the central level is even more complicated. In this regard, it was highlighted that adoption of the laws is important, however precise implementation of the provisions of the law is even more important.
- One representative underlined the importance of conducting comprehensive analysis how the law will affect things on the ground - RIA.
- Participants of the meeting also complained that Advisory Council established in support to the City Mayor is not functional at all.
- Participants stressed that they are regularly receiving information about upcoming meetings/sessions/discussions in the Parliament of Georgia (from TIG). According to them it will be very helpful if they also receive information on the results of the above mentioned discussions/sessions/meetings.

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