TOOLKIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMMES

This Toolkit has been developed particularly for National Associations of local authorities in Eastern Europe. However, it draws on capacity-building programmes with origins in a number of member states and is relevant to any member state seeking to build capacity in local government.

The Council of Europe wants to see effective democratic local government in all its member states. This is our challenge. It wants to see every National Association using a range of capacity-building programmes to raise the standards of performance in all local authorities.

Good local government is not just a matter of creating the right legal, political and institutional framework. It is also about actively building local authority capacity – particularly the understanding and skills, and the ability and desire to learn. Framework and capacity – these are two sides of a coin. That is why the Council of Europe has established a local government capacity-building service alongside its legislative assistance programmes.

Over the last few years, many member states have developed innovative capacity-building programmes. Why not seek these out, adapt them and share them more widely? In every member state, one finds good practice. Why not identify it, disseminate it as a case-study, turn it into a training vehicle and invite other local authorities to see what they can learn from it?

These programmes do have an impact. But some of them are more complex than others. National Associations may need help in introducing them for the first time. The Council of Europe and other international organisations can usually offer assistance.

Effective local government requires good leadership and strategic management, good service provision, good community participation. This Toolkit brings together some of the capacity-building programmes in these areas that the Council of Europe has adapted and piloted. They can also be found on the Council of Europe website.

This Toolkit will be the first in a series. There are many other such programmes that member states and international organisations have found useful, ones that the Council of Europe will continue to seek out and develop.

Philip Blair
Director of Co-operation for Local and Regional Democracy
Council of Europe
Strasbourg
September 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE CAPACITY-BUILDING TOOLKIT

SECTION 1 - THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S APPROACH TO CAPACITY-BUILDING

SECTION 2 - NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY

SECTION 3 - LEADERSHIP

SECTION 4 – SERVICE PROVISION

SECTION 5 - COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE CAPACITY-BUILDING TOOLKIT

This Toolkit is about building local government capacity. It is about making local government more effective and democratic.

The Toolkit brings together a set of tools, case-studies and concept papers that the Council of Europe and its partners have drawn from the wider European experience of local government reform and have been adapting for use particularly in countries of Eastern Europe. The tools will support capacity-building programmes that aim to improve the competence of local government officials and elected representatives and of the collective leadership of local authorities. Each one can be extracted for use in a relevant programme.

The aim is to make such tools available to all National Associations of local authorities and other national and international organisations so that they can be used more widely. National Associations and training organisations in particular are invited to identify which tool(s) they feel might be relevant for meeting current capacity-building needs and to make use of them as appropriate. They might want to seek assistance from relevant partners to implement such programmes.

This Toolkit contains three types of documents: a) concept paper, b) model, and c) case-study. The *concept paper* sets out the thinking and methodology behind a capacity-building tool or activity. The *model* is a suggested tool that may be widely used, but will need to be adapted for any particular circumstances. The *case-study* is an example of capacity-building activity from a particular country[1]; it is not automatically replicable but should stimulate further ideas.

The Toolkit is available in hard-copy (ring-binder) and on the Council of Europe's website - http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_regional_Democracy/

The contents of the Toolkit include:

- **Introduction to the Capacity-Building Toolkit**
- **Section 1:** **The Council of Europe's approach to capacity-building**
- **Section 2:** **National Training Strategy for Local Government**
- **Section 3:** **Leadership**
- **Section 4:** **Service provision**
- **Section 5:** **Community Participation**

---

[1] We are grateful to those authorities concerned for giving permission for the use of the case-studies in this Toolkit.

These tools are not necessarily easy to use for the first time; indeed, some (e.g. the Leadership Benchmark) carry a degree of risk if they are not used properly. The Council of Europe and other national and international organisations have access to expertise and, subject to resources, would be willing to provide assistance. National Associations should seek to build their own capacity to manage a range of capacity-building programmes that make use of such tools. This is the mark of sustainability.

This is the first of a series of Toolkits. There are many such tools and case-studies that have been developed by local government and national and international organisations throughout Europe. The intention is to build up a stock of proven materials (giving credit where appropriate), adapt them as necessary, and make them available in future Toolkits. They might include such policy areas as financial management, performance management and public ethics, for example. The international community is encouraged to cooperate in their use. This will help them avoid duplication and re-inventing the wheel. Their investment in local government will then go further.

The Council of Europe and its partners will create opportunities at regional level to exchange experience on the use of these tools and develop appropriate regional standards and best practice.

The context in which this Toolkit is published is set out in three documents which are included in Section I:

The European Charter of Local Self-Government (see CoE website)	The Charter provides the basis for establishing effective democratic local government. It was agreed by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and opened for signature by member states in 1985. The Charter sets out the fundamental principles of local government from which the Committee of Ministers' recommendations have been developed. Their implementation is monitored by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. They provide Ministries responsible for local government and National Associations of local authorities with a benchmark against which they can measure their own progress. The Toolkit will support the implementation of the European Charter.
The Policy Environment: Establishing Effective Democratic Local Government	This concept paper provides a framework for the Council of Europe's approach to capacity-building. This brings together the approaches to creating the right legislative and institutional framework for local government with the building of the capacity of local authorities to operate efficiently and effectively within that framework. The Toolkit will help build that capacity.
Template for Local Government Reform	This Template lists the main issues facing local government in transition countries and suggests objectives for meeting the challenge. It provides Ministries of local government and National Associations of local authorities with a basis for preparing National Work Programmes and Action Plans to deliver effective democratic local government. The Toolkit will support their implementation.

SECTION 1

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S APPROACH TO CAPACITY-BUILDING

I.   European Charter of Local Self-Government

II.   The Policy Environment: Establishing Effective Democratic Local Government

III. Template for Local Government Reform

European Treaty Series - No. 122

EUROPEAN CHARTER
OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Strasbourg, 15.X.1985

Preamble

The member States of the Council of Europe, signatory hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Considering that one of the methods by which this aim is to be achieved is through agreements in the administrative field;

Considering that the local authorities are one of the main foundations of any democratic regime;

Considering that the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs is one of the democratic principles that are shared by all member States of the Council of Europe;

Considering that it is at local level that this right can be most directly exercised;

Convinced that the existence of local authorities with real responsibilities can provide an administration which is both effective and close to the citizen;

Aware that the safeguarding and reinforcement of local self-government in the different European countries is an important contribution to the construction of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and the decentralisation of power;

Asserting that this entails the existence of local authorities endowed with democratically constituted decision-making bodies and possessing a wide degree of autonomy with regard to their responsibilities, the ways and means by which those responsibilities are exercised and the resources required for their fulfilment,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The Parties undertake to consider themselves bound by the following articles in the manner and to the extent prescribed in Article 12 of this Charter.

Part I

Article 2 – Constitutional and legal foundation for local self-government

The principle of local self-government shall be recognised in domestic legislation, and where practicable in the constitution.

Article 3 – Concept of local self-government

1   Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.

2   This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them. This provision shall in no way affect recourse to assemblies of citizens, referendums or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute.

Article 4 – Scope of local self-government

1   The basic powers and responsibilities of local authorities shall be prescribed by the constitution or by statute. However, this provision shall not prevent the attribution to local authorities of powers and responsibilities for specific purposes in accordance with the law.

2   Local authorities shall, within the limits of the law, have full discretion to exercise their initiative with regard to any matter which is not excluded from their competence nor assigned to any other authority.

3   Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy.

4   Powers given to local authorities shall normally be full and exclusive. They may not be undermined or limited by another, central or regional, authority except as provided for by the law.

5   Where powers are delegated to them by a central or regional authority, local authorities shall, insofar as possible, be allowed discretion in adapting their exercise to local conditions.

6   Local authorities shall be consulted, insofar as possible, in due time and in an appropriate way in the planning and decision-making processes for all matters which concern them directly.

Article 5 – Protection of local authority boundaries

Changes in local authority boundaries shall not be made without prior consultation of the local communities concerned, possibly by means of a referendum where this is permitted by statute.

Article 6 – Appropriate administrative structures and resources for the tasks of local authorities

1   Without prejudice to more general statutory provisions, local authorities shall be able to determine their own internal administrative structures in order to adapt them to local needs and ensure effective management.

2   The conditions of service of local government employees shall be such as to permit the recruitment of high-quality staff on the basis of merit and competence; to this end adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects shall be provided.

Article 7 – Conditions under which responsibilities at local level are exercised

1   The conditions of office of local elected representatives shall provide for free exercise of their functions.

2   They shall allow for appropriate financial compensation for expenses incurred in the exercise of the office in question as well as, where appropriate, compensation for loss of earnings or remuneration for work done and corresponding social welfare protection.

3   Any functions and activities which are deemed incompatible with the holding of local elective office shall be determined by statute or fundamental legal principles.

Article 8 – Administrative supervision of local authorities' activities

1   Any administrative supervision of local authorities may only be exercised according to such procedures and in such cases as are provided for by the constitution or by statute.

2   Any administrative supervision of the activities of the local authorities shall normally aim only at ensuring compliance with the law and with constitutional principles. Administrative supervision may however be exercised with regard to expediency by higher-level authorities in respect of tasks the execution of which is delegated to local authorities.

3   Administrative supervision of local authorities shall be exercised in such a way as to ensure that the intervention of the controlling authority is kept in proportion to the importance of the interests which it is intended to protect.

Article 9 – Financial resources of local authorities

1   Local authorities shall be entitled, within national economic policy, to adequate financial resources of their own, of which they may dispose freely within the framework of their powers.

2   Local authorities' financial resources shall be commensurate with the responsibilities provided for by the constitution and the law.

3   Part at least of the financial resources of local authorities shall derive from local taxes and charges of which, within the limits of statute, they have the power to determine the rate.

4   The financial systems on which resources available to local authorities are based shall be of a sufficiently diversified and buoyant nature to enable them to keep pace as far as practically possible with the real evolution of the cost of carrying out their tasks.

5   The protection of financially weaker local authorities calls for the institution of financial equalisation procedures or equivalent measures which are designed to correct the effects of the unequal distribution of potential sources of finance and of the financial burden they must support. Such procedures or measures shall not diminish the discretion local authorities may exercise within their own sphere of responsibility.

6   Local authorities shall be consulted, in an appropriate manner, on the way in which redistributed resources are to be allocated to them.

7   As far as possible, grants to local authorities shall not be earmarked for the financing of specific projects. The provision of grants shall not remove the basic freedom of local authorities to exercise policy discretion within their own jurisdiction.

8   For the purpose of borrowing for capital investment, local authorities shall have access to the national capital market within the limits of the law.

Article 10 – Local authorities' right to associate

1   Local authorities shall be entitled, in exercising their powers, to co-operate and, within the framework of the law, to form consortia with other local authorities in order to carry out tasks of common interest.

2   The entitlement of local authorities to belong to an association for the protection and promotion of their common interests and to belong to an international association of local authorities shall be recognised in each State.

3   Local authorities shall be entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to co-operate with their counterparts in other States.

Article 11 – Legal protection of local self-government

Local authorities shall have the right of recourse to a judicial remedy in order to secure free exercise of their powers and respect for such principles of local self-government as are enshrined in the constitution or domestic legislation.

Part II – Miscellaneous provisions

Article 12 – Undertakings

1   Each Party undertakes to consider itself bound by at least twenty paragraphs of Part I of the Charter, at least ten of which shall be selected from among the following paragraphs:

– Article 2,
– Article 3, paragraphs 1 and 2,
– Article 4, paragraphs 1, 2 and 4,
– Article 5,
– Article 7, paragraph 1,
– Article 8, paragraph 2,
– Article 9, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3,
– Article 10, paragraph 1,
– Article 11.

2   Each Contracting State, when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, shall notify to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe of the paragraphs selected in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article.

3   Any Party may, at any later time, notify the Secretary General that it considers itself bound by any paragraphs of this Charter which it has not already accepted under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article. Such undertakings subsequently given shall be deemed to be an integral part of the ratification, acceptance or approval of the Party so notifying, and shall have the same effect as from the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of the receipt of the notification by the Secretary General.

Article 13 – Authorities to which the Charter applies

The principles of local self-government contained in the present Charter apply to all the categories of local authorities existing within the territory of the Party. However, each Party may, when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, specify the categories of local or regional authorities to which it intends to confine the scope of the Charter or which it intends to exclude from its scope. It may also include further categories of local or regional authorities within the scope of the Charter by subsequent notification to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Article 14 – Provision of information

Each Party shall forward to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe all relevant information concerning legislative provisions and other measures taken by it for the purposes of complying with the terms of this Charter.

Part III

Article 15 – Signature, ratification and entry into force

1 This Charter shall be open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe. It is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2 This Charter shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date on which four member States of the Council of Europe have expressed their consent to be bound by the Charter in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

3 In respect of any member State which subsequently expresses its consent to be bound by it, the Charter shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

Article 16 – Territorial clause

1 Any State may, at the time of signature or when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, specify the territory or territories to which this Charter shall apply.

2 Any State may at any later date, by a declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, extend the application of this Charter to any other territory specified in the declaration. In respect of such territory the Charter shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of such declaration by the Secretary General.

3 Any declaration made under the two preceding paragraphs may, in respect of any territory specified in such declaration, be withdrawn by a notification addressed to the Secretary General. The withdrawal shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of six months after the date of receipt of such notification by the Secretary General.

Article 17 – Denunciation

1   Any Party may denounce this Charter at any time after the expiration of a period of five years from the date on which the Charter entered into force for it. Six months' notice shall be given to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Such denunciation shall not affect the validity of the Charter in respect of the other Parties provided that at all times there are not less than four such Parties.

2   Any Party may, in accordance with the provisions set out in the preceding paragraph, denounce any paragraph of Part I of the Charter accepted by it provided that the Party remains bound by the number and type of paragraphs stipulated in Article 12, paragraph 1. Any Party which, upon denouncing a paragraph, no longer meets the requirements of Article 12, paragraph 1, shall be considered as also having denounced the Charter itself.

Article 18 – Notifications

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall notify the member States of the Council of Europe of:

a   any signature;

b   the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval;

c   any date of entry into force of this Charter in accordance with Article 15;

d   any notification received in application of the provisions of Article 12, paragraphs 2 and 3;

e   any notification received in application of the provisions of Article 13;

f   any other act, notification or communication relating to this Charter.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Charter.

Done at Strasbourg, this 15th day of October 1985, in English and French, both texts being equally authentic, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each member State of the Council of Europe.

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT:

ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local democracy – but only so far

It is right that, in the early phases of transition, the emphasis is on the creation of a strong national government. This is necessary not only to build the appropriate organs of State in a new political, economic and social environment but also to manage the pressures for and against change. Early priorities must be to establish the rule of law, judicial reform, effective public administration, human rights and an effective Parliament.

But once the national government is established, the development of local democracy is essential to avoid tendencies to authoritarianism and to better meet the real needs of local people. Effective, democratic local government both delivers better local public services and gives local people a real say in the services they receive and in the way they are governed. It means that people in power locally become accountable to the people they serve, rather than to central government.

But in a number of transition countries, the development of local democracy has only gone so far. Competences have been transferred, but in some cases not sufficiently or without sufficient resources. Public services are being provided, but not always to the standards to which local people are entitled. Local leadership is there, but not always sensitive to the needs of local people. Local people may vote, but they may not do much more than that.

A vision of local democracy

The development of effective, democratic local government is a fundamental change from the old ways of governing. To go down this path, people need a vision of what real local democracy might be.

Local democracy means that local authorities provide effective leadership for their communities. They work with civil society to introduce joint projects, to develop longer term plans for their community, to meet the challenges of the future. They focus on delivering results that improve the quality of life for local people. They provide public services that meet recognised standards and respond to the needs of local people.

Local democracy means that local people are engaged with their local authority not only through elections but in the setting of priorities, in the design of public services and in the decisions that affect those services. Local people understand their local authority's

plans and celebrate their achievements. They are able to hold the local authority to account in the delivery of those plans and in the use of resources.

Local democracy means that local people need to be represented by men and women who themselves aspire to this vision, who understand how national and local government work, who care about the needs of the people who elect them, who communicate well and who encourage wider democratic participation.

Local authorities need to be staffed by professional men and women who take pride in their work of public service, who are trained to do a competent job, who look to an attractive career in the public sector.

Ministers and civil servants also need to share this vision. Their will and their competence determine the quality of the legislative framework and the constructiveness of their working relationship with local authorities and their associations.

This vision of local democracy should be set out in a strategy to which the Government and its partners are seriously committed.

Role of the international community

How does the international community help member states bring this vision about? The Council of Europe is well known for establishing the standards agreed by the member states. The European Charter of Local Self-Government sets out the principles that underpin local democracy. There are numerous Council of Europe Ministerial recommendations that establish complementary standards.

But the journey from these principles and standards to the full flowering of local democracy is long and beset with difficulty. The Council of Europe is developing programmes to help member states and national associations of local authorities to move along this road.

Many international and national organisations have provided assistance in their own way. Each of them in their turn has moved the development of local democracy forward. They have helped strengthen local authorities; they have introduced programmes that have brought improvement to local public services; they have created examples of excellence.

The challenge is to build on what these organisations have achieved, to learn from good practice, to develop standardised approaches, to reach out to all local authorities, to ensure longer term sustainability when external funding is reduced.

Legislative framework

The Council of Europe and other organisations have assisted member states with the development of the necessary local government legislation. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has monitored the implementation of the European Charter and other standards.

Reports of the Congress and other organisations have helped identify the issues but this has not necessarily led to their resolution.

In some member states, the legislation is good but falls short on implementation. In other member states, advice from the Council of Europe may have been ignored for one reason or another, and the legislation remains weak or incomplete. The will and capacity of governments and their Parliaments to fully transfer competences and resources to local government has fallen short of expectations.

Capacity-building

But there is another dimension to creating the necessary framework for effective, democratic local government. The will and capacity of central government may be there. But that is not enough.

A frequent reason given for the delay in transferring competences and resources is the inability of local authorities to manage such responsibilities. Where are the trained staff to do the work? How well do the national associations help local authorities strengthen their own capacities to deliver good public services? How well do national associations stand up for strong local government in the national debate?

Central government concerns about the lack of local capacity may be justified. They need the confidence that local government will work well. They need to be sure that basic standards will be achieved, that public money will be properly accounted for. For that reason, capacity-building programmes are essential. They are the other side of the coin to the legislative framework.

National associations need the capacity to represent local government and to deliver effective services to their members.

Local authorities need the capacity to attract committed elected representatives and a cadre of competent staff and train them to deliver good local public services, to become organisations that foster good leadership and management, that engage local people, that meet high standards of public service.

Two sides of the same coin

Legislation sets the framework for local government; capacity-building programmes build the institutions needed for effective local government. There can be good legislation but, without capacity-building programmes, poor local government. But capacity-building programmes cannot make up for weak legislation. Legislation and capacity-building programmes are two sides of the same coin.

Training is a key part of capacity-building programmes. But if local authorities do not have the legal competences or public resources to deliver local services properly, training will be without purpose. If staff fear they will lose their job when the next Mayor is elected because they have no legal protection, training will be inefficient. If staff are recruited without sufficient basic understanding and skills because there are no proper entry requirements into the public service, training will be wasted.

Other capacity-building programmes can complement training. Local public services can be improved by learning from best practice and by using techniques like fundamental performance reviews. Local leadership can be improved through peer assessment against a leadership benchmark. Community participation can be improved through networking. Performance management programmes can be used to introduce the discipline of continuous improvement in service delivery.

Good legislation and capacity-building together are key elements in the way Ministries of local government and the national associations can support the local authorities themselves and their elected representatives and staff.

Ministries can ensure that the legislation reflects the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the standards of the Council of Europe. They can work with other Ministries to ensure the proper transfer of competences and resources and in the development of good legislation on public service.

National associations can seek to ensure that the legislation responds to the needs of local authorities; they can also provide a wide range of capacity-building programmes to local authorities to help them deliver local leadership and local public services to high standards.

With such support, local authorities themselves – their staff and elected representatives - will develop their own capacities to provide good local government and make best use of the services provided by national associations and other national and international organisations.

A shared endeavour over time ...

The development of effective, democratic local government is not something done by Governments alone. It is a shared endeavour. It is about national governments and national associations of local authorities working to plan and implement the process together. It is about other national and international organisations supporting this endeavour.

The development of local democracy is not something done in one go. It takes time; it evolves. Further competences can be devolved as local authority capacity develops. Whereas a typical member state in SE Europe might now be spending around 5% of its total public expenditure through local authorities, other member states of the Council of Europe may be spending 25%.

Nor does the development of local democracy mean that the central government no longer has a stake in local government. Central government will have an interest in a number of local authority functions, such as the standards achieved by children at school. They will want to express that interest by establishing standards and targets and by monitoring performance and encouraging improvement.

...with immediate priorities...

The development of effective, democratic local government may take time, but there are always immediate priorities. In post-conflict areas for example, community groups need to both live and work together. Local democracy means that all groups participate in community affairs. Women and young people have key roles to play. Where they are excluded, local democracy is less democratic.

Working together is much more difficult where there may be unemployment levels reaching 50%. Unemployed people feel they have no function in modern society. There is little income for the family. Anti-social behaviour feeds on bored young people. Unemployed people lose confidence in the authorities.

But it does not have to be like that. Creating jobs can be a real priority.

For example, Governments and local authorities – with international support as necessary – can focus on local economic development programmes. Business training, micro-credit and other local initiatives allow people to get a foot on, or move up, the enterprise ladder. Cross-border cooperation increases the size of the local market and the opportunities for trading. Municipal development programmes allow local authorities to exploit local job opportunities. Public works programmes provide low cost jobs and create community benefit. Programmes that attract inward investment introduce new ideas and increase both job opportunities and levels of confidence.

To promote such programmes, central and local authorities need to work together in partnership. Central authorities need to review their spending priorities to assess how effectively they are meeting the real needs of their people. They need to remove administrative and legal 'red tape' so that they can respond promptly to such needs and release the necessary resources. They need to give local authorities powers to develop their own resource base.

In such a case, local government needs the capacity to act as an effective partner to central government, to design and implement local economic development programmes, to harness support from local organisations and bring the various groups in the community together in a common endeavour. Where this happens, this is local democracy 'made good'.

...based on understanding and professionalism

The development of effective, democratic local government starts with a clear understanding of the value of local democracy. Strong local government is not a threat to central government. Rather it reinforces central government by enabling local people to participate more closely in government and by providing local public services more efficiently and effectively. It allows central government to focus on its priorities, while local authorities focus on what they do best.

To do this, central governments need to understand that local authorities need the competences, staff, finance and assets to be effective.

National associations need to be strong enough to work in partnership with central government and to provide valued services to local authorities. Local authorities need to build their capacity so that they can properly carry out the tasks entrusted to them. Elected members need to have sufficient vision and competence to fully serve the needs of local people. Local authority staff need a professional structure so that public service becomes an attractive career, and they develop the motivation, understanding and skills to deliver high quality local public services.

TEMPLATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

This Template for Local Government Reform lists the mains issues facing local government in transition countries and suggests objectives for meeting the challenge. Its main value is to provide Ministries of local government and National Associations of local authorities with a basis for preparing Action Plans to deliver effective democratic local government.

CHALLENGES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Understanding local government *The vision of what local government might be is often unclear to officials and elected representatives at national, regional and local levels, and to local people themselves. A shared vision is hard to find.* *Reforms are not integrated in an agreed overall strategy.*	• Strong local government shall be seen as a key element in the stability and sustainable development of the region and be recognised as such by all state bodies. A national debate on the benefit of decentralised government shall be stimulated. • A comprehensive decentralisation strategy shall be developed, based on a clear definition of the role of local and regional government shared by all stakeholders (government, parliament, local authorities...).
Assignment of competences and resources *Experience shows that most frequent drawbacks in basic legislation are related to the following situations:* *Responsibilities* *Unclear distribution of responsibilities between central, regional and local government.* *Inadequate decentralisation of functions related to policy implementation at local level.* *Undetermined and / or unrealistic scope of local government mandatory functions.* *Resources* *Inadequate assignment of resources by central government to local government (including property, finance, staff) which lead to unachievable mandates and poor service delivery.* *Little room for manoeuvre both in raising own revenues at local level and in allocating available resources.* *Imbalances between local authorities in different areas and insufficient equalisation (which create great disparities in development potential and accentuate migration trends).*	Specific targets are set which shall guide the drafting of new legislation, including the following: Responsibilities • Reduce overlapping responsibilities and vest, whenever possible, the local authorities with exclusive tasks; • Increase decentralisation of responsibilities in the provision of utilities and basic social services at local level; • Fix clear boundaries to mandatory tasks, avoiding long lists of "broad" responsibilities which are assumed to be mandatory as a whole; • Set clear standards in service provision, which shall be consistent with the resources available. Resources • Ensure that all properties needed for the delivery of local services are transferred to local government. • Increase the local government share in public expenditure, consistent with their responsibilities. • Improve the local taxation system, especially land / property taxation which shall become a pillar of this system, and ensure the conditions for its effective enforcement. • Consolidate, whenever possible, earmarked grants, to increase both the room for manoeuvre and the effectiveness in the allocation of resources • Increase the level of equalisation to achieve within a given timeframe a target level [at least 80%].

Implementing legislation *In some countries, important changes in basic laws on local government fall short of implementation or remain ineffective because there is insufficient will at national level and because there are inconsistencies in the legal framework.*	• Conduct an in-depth analysis of the local government legal framework to identify possible internal inconsistencies and point to changes required in basic and sectoral legislation. • Plan legislative reforms in a rational and comprehensive manner and introduce them with timely implementation measures.
Professional structure for elected and appointed officials *The legal status of local elected representatives does not encourage the emergence of a local political elite.* *The legal status of local government staff does not encourage a professional career.*	• Enhance the status of local elected representatives and set out clearly what is expected of them. • Enhance the professional status of local government staff and set out standards for their recruitment, training and promotion.
Relationship between state authorities and local government *Deconcentrated state administration may not support in practice the development of local self-government.* *Excessive administrative supervision by central government may leave insufficient scope for local initiative or for the development of local responsibility / accountability.*	• Reassess and redesign the role and operation of de-concentrated state administration to foster decentralisation. • Ensure that supervisory mechanisms and procedures have a clear rationale and are established by law. • Reduce automatic control of local decisions which do not have a national interest and do not entail sizeable costs.
Institutional dialogue *There is a lack of institutional dialogue and insufficient recognition of local government as a partner.* *The National Association of Local Authorities may not have sufficient capacity for effective dialogue with the Government*	• Facilitate the strengthening of independent national associations of local authorities. • Develop mechanisms of on-going dialogue to ensure full involvement of local government representatives in the reform process.

Transparency and accountability *Standards on transparency, accountability and public ethics are not developed.*	• Set minimum standards for transparency and communication with local communities by law. • Establish standards of public ethics at local level and processes for their enforcement. • Establish mechanisms for the participation of local people at critical points in the affairs of local authorities. • Develop national and local audit processes.
Local economic, social and environmental development *Local development affects the quality of life of local people. But local authorities may lack the necessary powers to take the action needed or they may fail to use existing powers. They may not have the vision or the initiative to see what is possible. They may lack specific expertise.* *The challenge of local development requires a joint approach by the local authority and other stakeholders. But there may not be the culture of partnership working.* *Understanding local development begins with dialogue with local people and organisations about their needs. But communications with the local community may be weak.*	• Encourage local authorities to: - Create Local Forums of senior representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors to consider local development challenges and find shared solutions; - Prepare local development policies and strategies, based on local needs analisys, to harness the energies of local stakeholders towards development programmes; - Work with neighbouring local authorities and with district / regional authorities to prepare regional development strategies and programmes. • Introduce provisions and funding mechanisms to enable local authorities to play a stronger role in local development. • Commission guidance in local economic, social and environmental development for local authorities. • Encourage best practice programmes and relevant training (eg project design and management) to help local authorities improve their approach to local development and learn from each other. • Encourage better use of information and communications technology by local authorities to support local development.
Leadership and strategic management *The longer-term vision of the community and of the role of the local authority is usually unclear.* *Local officials and elected representatives are not fully engaged in the core work of their local authority.*	• Work hand in hand with the national association and offer concrete political support, financial incentives and technical/logistical assistance to their initiatives designed to: - Assess leadership and strategic management in each local authority against an agreed Benchmark as a platform for an Improvement Programme; - Introduce a requirement that each local authority should draw up a 3-5 year Strategic Plan, and monitor its implementation through annual performance reports against annual plans;

The local authority fails to engage civil society in partnership in the development of the community.	- Introduce models and standards for the effective management of the human resources and finance functions in every local authority;
The local authority fails to communicate effectively internally and externally.	- Develop training and communications strategies in each local authority;
	- Facilitate the development of partnerships between local authorities and with civil society;
The local authority fails to use training effectively to improve performance.	- Support the development of information and communications technology in each local authority.
Service provision *The quality, quantity and accessibility of service provision vary considerably within and between countries.* *Insufficient use is made of examples of good practice to promote widespread improvements.* *There are few systematic programmes to deliver better performance.* *National associations may not have the capacity themselves to introduce capacity-building programmes for local authorities.*	• Work hand in hand with the national association and offer concrete political support, financial incentives and technical/logistical assistance to their initiatives designed to: - Introduce Best Practice Programmes in priority internal and external service areas; - Explore the introduction of innovative approaches to service provision learnt from other countries; - Introduce Fundamental Performance Reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses in particular services as a platform for service improvement; - Introduce Performance Management Programmes for all main services with clear objectives, performance indicators and targets to guide service improvement.
Training *Training is not sufficiently available to all staff and elected representatives.* *Training is frequently of low quality, not focusing on priorities and failing to use interesting and interactive methodologies.* *Much training investment is wasted by not making best use of existing capacity, by not building on examples of good training practice, by frequent turnover of staff, by lack of co-ordination and cooperation between training providers.*	• Offer concrete political support, financial incentives and technical/logistical assistance to the National Association for the development of a National Training Strategy based on a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis in collaboration with all major stakeholders. • Contribute to the identification or establishment of the appropriate institutional arrangements for delivering the National Training Strategy. • Play an active role in ensuring that the National Training Strategy is used to: - Develop training priorities; - Develop standardised curricula in core topics; - Make arrangements for course accreditation where appropriate; - Assist training providers in raising their standards

	and co-ordinating their approach;
There are insufficient qualified trainers.	- Ensure provision of sufficient qualified trainers;
	- Increase the range of training methodologies in use (eg use of media, best practice etc);
Training budgets are often insufficient to achieve impact.	- Develop training capacity within each local authority;
	- Increase national and local resources devoted to training;
Training is excessively supply-driven rather than demand-led.	- Ensure longer-term sustainability in the provision of training.
Understanding of democracy and community participation *A deeper understanding of local democracy and community participation is needed among both local authorities and local people.* *There are insufficient mechanisms for cytizen participation and the role of civic society is undervalued.* *A lack of clarity in the legislative framework and the over-regulation of certain procedures do not encourage local authorities to use existing mechanisms of community participation and hinder innovation and experimentation.* *Local democracy and community participation at local level have not sufficient profile within the education programmes.* *Social networks needs to be developed.* *The role of women and youth needs to be better recognised and enhanced.* *Communication within multi-ethnic communities is often inadequate.*	• Prepare, in co-operation with the national association, publish and disseminate a Guide to Local Democracy, setting out the rights and obligations of local and central government and the opportunities for community participation. • Support the organisation of local and regional forums to develop a common understanding of democratic participation among local authorities, political parties, NGOs and the media. • Encourage local authorities to establish an active communication policy, tailored to the community's needs and expectations. • Launch, in co-operation with the national association, targeted programmes for local authorities to promote "best practice" on citizen participation. • Support the creation of "learning networks" of local authorities engaged in experimentation and innovation. • Encourage local authorities to work with civic society to deliver more effective services for local people, and support those that launch initiatives to develop a common longer-term vision of the community. • Promote civic education in schools and universities and through local cultural events in a way that fosters participation. • Help develop and implement training programmes for citizens' groups. • Support the more dynamic NGOs, especially those active in promoting the participation of women and youth in local politics and decision-making and in developing mutual understanding within multi-ethnic communities.

Transfrontier cooperation	• Ratify the Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation.
Legal framework	• Remove the legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border co-operation in accordance with the "check-list" of measures established by the Council of Europe.
The legal framework for cross-border co-operation between territorial communities or authorities is unclear or non-existent.	
The conclusion of cross-border agreements or the establishment of cross-border co-operation bodies is subject to previous authorisation by central government.	• Introduce domestic legislation to enable local authorities to conclude agreements with local authorities of neighbouring countries having similar competences and establish joint bodies, with adequate legal capacity.
Euroregions or similar forms of co-operation cannot work due to inadequate legal framework and funds.	• Provide information, guidance and assistance to local authorities wishing to engage in cross-border co-operation.
Capacity-building	• Use National Training Strategies for local authorities' staff and elected representatives to promote cross-border co-operation.
Local authorities lack the necessary capacity for implementing cross-border co-operation initiatives and assessing their effectiveness.	• Ensure that local finance regulations and equalisation mechanisms cater for the specific needs of border areas.
Cross-border co-operation is hampered by lack of funds for social and economic development.	• Encourage schools, the media, youth movements to establish partnerships, exchange experiences, arrange mutual visits and present the "neighbour" in an objective way.
Prejudices and mutual indifference prevail between communities across the border.	• Promote the learning of the neighbour's language in schools; enable local authorities' staff and elected representatives to learn the neighbour's language to help implement cross-border projects.
Practical arrangements	• Negotiate bilateral and multilateral agreements aiming at the suppression of visas, the use of identity cards, the improvement of cross-border facilities, and the opening of the labour market to their neighbours.
Visa requirements and lack of adequate cross-border facilities limit the number of contacts, the volume of exchanges and the working opportunities for would-be cross-border commuters.	

SECTION 2

NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

EXPLANATORY NOTE
NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY

Introduction

A key element in capacity-building is the provision of the right training at the right time to the right people. This does not often happen. Yet there are many examples of good training programmes, often based on the best international experience. But training is often wasted because:

(i)   the trainee may lose his/her job following the next election (as there are no professional career prospects) or seek a better paying job elsewhere;

(ii)   the trainee cannot put the learning into practice because the competences and resources have not been fully transferred from central to local government;

(iii)   training standards may be low, methodology traditional, manuals not well prepared.

In practice, many staff and elected representatives in transition countries receive little training because they work in smaller, more remote local authorities or there is no training budget.

Yet an effective democratic local authority needs well-trained staff and elected representatives. The provision of training courses is not enough. There needs to be the supportive training environment. This needs a supportive legislative framework.

A National Training Strategy can provide the supportive training environment if the legislative framework is right. This is its purpose.

A National Training Strategy has to be owned by local government itself – it is their Strategy. But there are other stakeholders, particularly the local government Ministry, training providers and donors. A National Training Strategy needs the support of all stakeholders if it is to be effective, as it sets the framework of all training.

The National Training Strategy has to be properly informed. That requires a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis. The data from the Training Needs Analysis can be an important source of information to the stakeholders and can be used as background information for other projects.

Typical objectives of a National Training Strategy might include:

- raise the standards of training (eg through standardised materials for core courses, accreditation etc)
- increase the number and quality of trainers
- ensure a sharing of training information and materials
- develop local training capacity within each local authority
- introduce modern training methods.

Who will be responsible for implementing the National Training Strategy? A National Association of all local authorities could do this. Or it may be necessary to adapt an existing institution or to establish a new one. This will need the necessary political will and funding sources. Local government itself will be the principal 'owner' of such an institution, but it will be important to ensure that all stakeholders are appropriately represented.

One model being developed in several countries is a Training Co-ordination Agency or Facility. These may not in themselves be direct training providers; rather they will support existing (and new) training providers in a pluralist environment. The results should be better value for local government investment, more cooperation and co-ordination among the stakeholders, and more competent staff and elected representatives leading to better managed local authorities, better services and better citizen participation.

> ***This section sets out the rationale for a National Training Strategy, identifies the underlying principles and methods and provides model questionnaires for a Training Needs Analysis. Case-studies of a Training Needs Analysis (Armenia) and a National Training Strategy (Albania) are included. The first step in developing a National Training Strategy is for the National Association and the local government Ministry to organise a Roundtable for all stakeholders to agree on the need for, and approach to, a National Training Strategy, to establish a Steering Group and to draw up an Action Plan.***

Article 6 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government provides the basis for developing a National Training Strategy:

> *"Without prejudice to more general statutory provisions, local authorities shall be able to determine their own internal administrative structures in order to adapt them to local needs and ensure effective management.*
>
> *The conditions of service of local government employees shall be such as to permit the recruitment of high-quality staff on the basis of merit and competence; to this end adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects shall be provided."*

TOOL	PROCESS
National Training Strategy	The development of a National Training Strategy is a long term and intensive exercise. It needs extensive consultations with the key stakeholders throughout the process.
(i) **Discussion Paper: Towards National Training Strategies for Local Government in SE Europe and the Caucasus**	**Stage 1**: Organise a Roundtable of stakeholders to agree the concept and the approach; prepare an Action Plan.
(ii) **The Training Needs Analysis (TNA): Principles and Methods**	**Stage 2**: Establish a national Steering Group of stakeholders, chaired by the local government Ministry at senior level, with agreed Terms of Reference.
(iii) **Sample Questionnaire for Local Authorities**	**Stage 3**: Appoint a local consultant supported by an international expert to carry out the work on behalf of the Working Group.
(iv) **TNA: Sample Questions for an Interview / Roundtable**	**Stage 4**: Plan and carry out a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis, based on (i) the views of local authorities (reflected in sample surveys and interviews), (ii) the views and experience of stakeholders and (iii) the training implications of local government legislation.
(v) **Example: Training Needs Assessment, Armenia**	
(vi) **Example: National Training Strategy for Local Government in Albania**	**Stage 5**: Draft and seek consensus on the National Training Strategy (including arrangements for its implementation), based on the findings of the Training Needs Analysis and the views and experience of stakeholders.
	Stage 6: Where necessary, prepare a detailed project proposal for the implementing body; seek funding commitments in principle.
	Stage 7: Seek formal approval, as appropriate, for the National Training Strategy and the implementing body.
	Stage 8: Launch the National Training Strategy; establish the implementing body as an organisation in law, if necessary; begin operations.

TOWARDS NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SE EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS

1. Introduction

A National Training Strategy for local government develops capacity. It will only be effective if it clearly responds to the range of decentralisation challenges faced by central and local government. New requirements are being placed on local authority staff and elected members. The **capacity** of local government to manage decentralisation is crucial.

But a National Training Strategy by itself is not enough. The legislative framework for decentralised local government needs to be in place. Decentralisation needs the proper transfer of competences, staff, finance and assets. It needs to give staff a professional structure and a career that they see as attractive. Central government must be committed to strong local government.

Similarly, decentralisation needs effective institutions, particularly a strong national association of local authorities that can both represent local government to central government, e.g. through consultations on planned legislation, and also can deliver needed services to local authorities.

The real challenge is to move from a **culture** of central control to one of partnership and local accountability. Local authorities must want to improve the services they provide and listen to what local people are saying. Local people must learn how to participate.

Changing culture takes time and effort, but can be supported by a National Training Strategy. A National Training Strategy must not only deliver knowledge and skills; it must also lead to changed attitudes in staff and elected representatives. It must help shape the leadership and management of local authorities.

2.   The need for a National Training Strategy

> **"Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population."**
>
> **(Article 3: European Charter of Local Self-Government**)

Decentralisation is a policy of government. It means that a range of public services are delivered by local authorities because they are close to the people who use the services. This does not mean a weakening of central government. Local and central authorities need each other to be strong. There will be a national interest in some local services – e.g. in the standards of education and in the quality of child care. It is public money that is being used and must be accounted for. Central government must have confidence in the ability of local

authorities to give local leadership and deliver good quality local services. Central and local authorities must therefore be ready to work together.

Decentralisation does not happen as a single event. It is an on-going process that takes years, and the balance between central and local competences will always be shifting. But while local authorities may seek to acquire more competences and resources, they will need to have the knowledge and skills to take them on.

Decentralisation therefore assumes the development of local capacities to manage properly the new functions and responsibilities of local authorities. A National Training Strategy implies that the central government and local authorities are committed to an investment in local staff and elected representatives to develop those capacities.

Training local authorities to exercise competences and manage resources that have been transferred to them is only half the story. A local authority also has to give leadership to the community. It has to be well managed. It has to engage local people. It will want to achieve high standards in service provision. It will want to find effective solutions to the problems faced by the community it is elected to serve.

All this requires training in the broadest sense of the term – not just one-off courses, not just training to the minimum levels necessary to do the job, but rather the development of a training culture and an on-going commitment to improved performance by both the organisation and by its staff and elected representatives.

Some training programmes may be mandatory for local government officials. However, training can offer value beyond the mandatory programmes. It needs to reach all local government staff and elected representatives. It needs to go beyond minimum levels. Through promoting a range of training programmes, through using different training methodologies and a variety of training providers, through developing capacity within local authorities themselves, a National Training Strategy should help local authorities deliver better local government.

This needs the combined efforts and support of all stakeholders:

- The Government and Parliament continue to establish the right legislative framework for local government in consultation with local government representatives.

- Local government articulates its training needs and uses training to help deliver better local government.

- Training providers deliver relevant training within agreed priorities to high standards using modern methodologies.

- International organisations ensure that their investment in local government builds on current experience and products, raises training standards, develops longer term training capacity, and achieves sustainable results.

3. Performance Management Framework

A National Training Strategy should support local authorities in developing effective democratic local government. There are certain characteristics of a good local authority. It:
- focuses on delivering results that affect the quality of life for local people;
- its senior staff and elected members show good leadership;

- establishes and communicates its policies and strategies both internally and externally;
- communicates effectively with local people;
- promotes effective management throughout the organisation and recognises the changes necessary to deliver improvement;
- encourages innovative solutions tailored to specific circumstances;
- uses the full potential of its staff; makes the best use of resources and partnerships;
- looks across the whole organisation, and not just service by service;
- is ready to work with partners to seek the best way of delivering services;
- all its processes are efficient;
- it satisfies those who use its services as well as the wider community;
- it achieves good results.

Training should lead to a better performance, but it would need to be targeted. This can be done through a good *performance management framework*. This means that a local authority will know what its objectives and priorities are; agree key performance indicators and set standards and targets in consultation with local people; measure progress towards its objectives; publish past performance and future plans annually; and subject the way it delivers services to fundamental performance review.

A performance management framework will set out how a local authority might go about securing real improvement in, for example, the delivery of local transport services or the quality of learning in primary schools.

Where local authorities are delivering high quality services that respond to local needs, these should be recognised. They can become '*best practice authorities'* and can be helped to pass on good practice to others through specific programmes.

A National Training Strategy should support the performance management framework that local authorities need to deliver better local government.

4. Local Training Capacity

At the level of the local authority, the status of staff and the kind of staff management practices can promote or constrain training. It is important that staff are subject to good personnel disciplines (job descriptions, clear responsibilities, good team-working, career opportunities, performance review etc). This should motivate them and will help to identify personal training needs, which should be linked to the objectives and priorities of the local authority.

Each local authority will want to develop its own capacity to promote in-house training. This will require: (a) a competent senior staff member with corporate training responsibility and a training budget, (b) corporate training plans and programmes, and (c) processes for making sure that training starts with identified training needs of both the local authority and its staff and elected members, and ends with improvements to leadership, service provision and community engagement.

5. The purpose, objectives and elements of a National Training Strategy

That is why a National Training Strategy is important. A National Training Strategy should be built on a clear set of objectives and activities.

A *The purpose* of the National Training Strategy is to:

- harness the energies of all stakeholders towards a set of common goals;
- help local authorities deliver the highest standards in leadership and strategic management, in public service provision and in democratic participation by improving the performance of staff and elected representatives;
- encourage more investment in training and give central authorities and national and international organisations more confidence in the ability of local authorities to deliver effective local government;
- develop a more demand-driven system of training, whereby the needs of local authorities begin to dictate the training agenda.

B *The objectives* of the National Training Strategy include:

- identify training requirements and opportunities for specific groups of staff and elected representatives;
- create a framework to help training providers deliver training more effectively;
- raise the standards of training and introduce a training culture;
- develop local training capacity and make better use of existing capacity at national, regional and local levels.

C **A National Training Strategy might introduce a** *range of training elements*, **such as:**

- an inventory, indeed an actively-managed library in hard copy and electronic form, of training materials and best practice case-studies;
- the training and establishment of a core team of practical professional trainers who can call on a number of associate trainers for particular training events;
- a range of introductory, core and supplementary programmes for both staff and elected representatives;
- an accreditation process for the core courses delivered by approved training providers that can be recognised as being fundamental to the different levels of training requirements of local government staff;
- the identification and training of a certain number of managerial and operational staff in each local authority who can be accredited as associate trainers to provide basic training in their particular specialisation;
- a programme to train all local authority managers to provide on-the-job training and act as mentors to other staff;
- a leadership programme for mayors, chief executives, managers and elected representatives;
- a programme of internships and training exchanges;
- a programme of self-learning through the use of distance learning materials, tutors and occasional seminars (with the possibility of accreditation);
- a programme of leadership and service reviews by local authorities supported, perhaps, by trained teams of peers, to assess performance and identify areas

of improvement, making use of such tools as the Council of Europe's Leadership Benchmark and Fundamental Performance Review model;

- a programme to identify and award services or projects run by local authorities that provide examples of good practice, and the organisation of study visits to learn from that practice and to exchange experience;
- a network of institutions ready to support training activities, and a mechanism that brings them together regularly (perhaps linked to the ENTO[1] and NALAS[2] networks);
- a programme to disseminate training and training information through websites and other electronic means;
- a communications programme, e.g. through newsletters and publications, to make staff and elected members both aware of their training needs and opportunities and also publicise projects and activities that display best practice, from which others can learn;
- a service providing research and policy advice to support the delivery of the national training strategy;
- the development of professional organisations (e.g. for finance officers or human resource managers) to promote standards and provide continuing training in their specific functions;
- a Training Code setting out the rights and obligations of public servants to give and receive training, and a commitment to put training into effect in the pursuit of improving public service provision.

6.   The principles of a National Training Strategy

- **Ownership** – *A National Training Strategy belongs to local government itself*. Local authorities are the main beneficiaries. They, and the Associations that represent their interests, are the principal owners.

  But local authorities are not the only stakeholders. The Government itself wants local government to be efficient, effective, accessible to local people and financially accountable. NGOs and private companies work with local authorities to provide services or to offer training and support. Donors have provided, and will continue to provide, significant investment in local government. Other organisations provide relevant academic training or other kinds of support. Local people and local organisations expect public services to be managed and delivered by competent staff. There should therefore be a widespread sense of ownership of the National Training Strategy.

- **Sustainability** – *in the longer term training provision must be funded by central and local government*, with help from external sources, if necessary, in the medium term. Local authorities must develop the capacity to identify local sources of funding to support their own training needs as far as possible.

- **Learning from best practice** – There is best practice both within any country and outside. There is much to learn from best practice. This can lead to better training methodologies and more relevant training content. *Using best practice as a training vehicle can be more motivating and effective than purely theoretical courses*.

- **Cooperation between stakeholders** – *Each stakeholder has some relevant experience*. Between them they have developed good training materials and

---

[1] European Network of Training Organisations
[2] Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe

programmes. Some of this, for example, can form the basis of standardised training materials and programmes.

- **Career development of staff** – staff need to be motivated to be trained. They need to see the benefit that they will receive from the investment of their time and effort in training. *Training should both improve their competence and promote their careers*.

7. The process of development of a National Training Strategy

The development of a National Training Strategy is a long term and intensive exercise. It needs extensive consultations with the key stakeholders throughout the process.

Stage 1   Organise a *Roundtable* of stakeholders to agree the concept and the approach; prepare an Action Plan.

Stage 2   Establish a national *Steering Group* of stakeholders, chaired by the local government Ministry at senior level, with agreed Terms of Reference.

Stage 3   Appoint a local consultant supported by an international expert to carry out the work on behalf of the Steering Group.

Stage 4   Plan and carry out a comprehensive *Training Needs Analysis*, based on:
a. the views of local authorities (reflected in sample surveys and interviews),
b. the views and experience of stakeholders, and
c. the training implications of local government legislation.

Stage 5   Draft and seek consensus on the *National Training Strategy* (including arrangements for its implementation), based on the findings of the Training Needs Analysis and the views and experience of stakeholders.

Stage 6   Where necessary, prepare a detailed project proposal for the implementing body, i.e. facility; seek funding commitments in principle.

Stage 7   Seek formal approval, as appropriate, for the National Training Strategy and the implementing body.

Stage 8   Launch the National Training Strategy; establish the implementing body as an organisation in law, as necessary; begin operations.

A   Steering Group on the National Training Strategy

A Steering Group should be established to oversee the planning, development, agreement and launch of a National Training Strategy. It would be representative of the Ministry responsible for local government, the National Association(s) of local authorities, NGOs, local and international partners. The Steering Group would be co-chaired by the Ministry or and the National Association.

The Steering Group would be supported in its work by a local expert and by an independent international consultant, with administrative support provided by the National Association. The Steering Group would engage the various international partners and NGOs to secure their support and make best use of their various contributions.

B   Training Needs Analysis

A National Training Strategy should start from the Training Needs Analysis. This should be set out in a comprehensive report based on representative surveys and interviews of local authorities, from assessments of the current experience and programmes of training providers, the views of all major stakeholders and the training implications of local government legislation.

Terms of reference for the Steering Group

The Steering Group would be formally responsible for:

i)   commissioning and agreeing a Training Needs Analysis;
ii)   designing, commissioning and agreeing the National Training Strategy in the light of the Training Needs Analysis and any other assessments;
iii)   securing the agreement to the National Training Strategy of the responsible Ministry and the National Association(s);
iv)   drawing up an associated Implementation Plan and Budget, and identifying the required resources;
v)   launching the National Training Strategy in ways that secure maximum impact;

The Steering Group would identify, and secure agreement to, the institutional roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the National Training Strategy. The Steering Group would provide regular progress reports to the responsible central and local authorities.

It should take account of:
- the existing status of *knowledge and experience* of key groups of local government staff;
- the *scope and type of training* needed for improved knowledge and professional skills;
- local authorities' *willingness* to participate in training and their *ability to pay*;
- *external constraints* threatening the successful implementation of a National Training Strategy.

A good Training Needs Analysis will justify the scope and contents of a National Training Strategy.

C   Training Facility

In order to fully implement a National Training Strategy, a Training Facility may need to be established as a small operational unit in collaboration with all stakeholders. Such a facility will have responsibility for delivering the objectives of the National Training Strategy in partnership, as appropriate, with other institutions. The facility can act as a broker between international organisations, national institutions, training providers and local authorities, and ensure that the training environment for local government is developed appropriately. The facility should not be a direct training organisation itself.

Such an agency should be under the control of local government itself with a key role for the local government Ministry and an advisory role for other stakeholders. It could be a not-for-profit organisation or a Foundation. It may need to depend on external funding in the medium term, but a clear goal should be self-sustainability.

NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGIES

CoE Model	Process	Elements of a Professional Training Environment	Direct Outcomes
	By National Association / Ministry:	• Standards, accreditation and quality assurance	
	National Steering Group ↗	• Standardised and supplementary programmes	➤ Systematic approach to quality training of local government
Guide to National Training Strategies ↗	Training Needs Analysis ↗	• Number and quality of Trainers	➤ Effective support for training providers
	National Training Strategy ↗	• Modern methodologies	➤ Training culture in local authorities
	Training Co-ordination Facility	• Resource centre of materials and databases	➤ More effective investment in training
		• Information and communications	
		• Advisory services	
		• Training needs analyses	
		• Local training capacity	

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS: PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

I. Introduction

A National Training Strategy (NTS) should be seen as a local government tool for improving the economic and social situation of local communities. It does this by creating an environment of local government training standards, policies and information that facilitates more effective training for staff and elected members.   Its starting point is therefore (i) the existing training needs of staff and elected members, and (ii) the training implications of the legal framework for local government.

An NTS should therefore be based on:

- an independent and reliable **Training Needs Analysis** that will allow training providers to focus training in a way that takes account of the expectations and experience of staff and elected members;

- an analysis of the **legislative framework** that will help determine the scope and framework of future training;

- a proposal for the necessary **institutional arrangements** for delivering the NTS that should be based on an assessment of existing institutions and agreement on whether new institutional arrangements are necessary.

II. The goals

The goal of the TNA is to determine the training needs of the various groups of staff and elected members in local government. This should be set out in a report based on (i) a comprehensive **Survey** of most local authorities and (ii) **interviews** of key people within a representative group of local authorities.

Because local authority staff and elected members are not necessarily aware of all their training needs, especially those derived from, for example, national policies, the TNA should also include:

a. assessments of the current experience, programmes and perspectives of different training providers,
b. the views of all major stakeholders, and
c. the training implications of local government legislation.

A TNA is a systematic exploration of the current state of local government performance and the level where it should be. This is to a large extent associated with organisational and individual performance. The TNA seeks to identify the gaps and considers if training could fill them.

A TNA will help determine if training will change the situation and what training would improve performance. It will help distinguish training needs from other issues (e.g. problems requiring organizational or political solutions). A TNA is part of a planning process focusing on identifying and solving performance problems.

A TNA will also help identify several important elements such as:

- the topics to be covered by the training programmes and to what depth;
- the specific training objectives to obtain the required skills and knowledge;
- the participants for specific training programmes and appropriate training methodology and materials;
- the proportion between training and other forms of support to local government.

III. Principles and methodology of TNA

Key decisions on the TNA should be made by a representative Steering Group, supported by local and international experts as appropriate. The Steering Group should agree project goals and activities and the TNA methodology necessary to achieve them. It should establish rules of cooperation and the exchange of information and resources.

The methodology will depend on the resources available (personnel, funds), existing training assessments and other relevant reports. A Knowledge Matrix (see below) could be developed that would include such information.

Knowledge Matrix

Areas of TNA study	From stakeholder reports, databases etc.									
	National Association	Training institute	UNDP	EC	COE	Other organisations				
Training										
Information network										
Accreditation										

Four steps in the preparation of a comprehensive TNA are recommended:

Step 1: Perform a "gap" analysis
The first step is to make an assessment of the actual performance of local authorities against existing standards. This will involve an analysis of the current state of skills, knowledge, and capabilities of local authority staff. It should also take account of the objectives and culture of local authorities and identify internal and external constraints.

The first step should produce a list of actual needs for training and institutional development and/or other interventions.

Step 2: Identification of priorities and importance
Priorities should be established. The identified needs should be analysed to identify their importance for achieving effective democratic local government within existing constraints.

Step 3: Identify obstacles that causes performance problems
After critical organisational and personal development needs have been prioritised, specific problems and opportunities of local authorities need to be identified. Performance requirements need to be understood, if appropriate solutions are to be applied. There are three important questions for every identified need:
  i.   Are the right people doing the right jobs?
  ii.   Are they doing their jobs properly?
  iii. What more do they need to do their jobs effectively?

This requires detailed investigation and analysis.

Step 4: Identify possible solutions and development opportunities
If local authorities are not effective -

- Training may be the solution, where there is a knowledge problem.
- Organisation development activities may provide solutions when the problem is not based on a lack   of knowledge but is primarily associated with organisational change. These interventions might include, for example, better leadership, better strategic planning, organisation restructuring, the introduction of a performance management system and/or effective team building.
- Legislative development may be necessary if the constraint is in the hands of central government.

IV. TNA tools

A TNA requires extensive research. This could be based on:

- a qualitative investigation based on a series of in-depth individual interviews with local government representatives;
- a quantitative Survey conducted on a representative sample of local authorities.

1) Qualitative research

The main justification for using qualitative research techniques (the key component of the TNA) is the need for in-depth information on both the scope and the kind of knowledge needed by key officials in local authorities.

Individual in-depth interviews can be carried out by trained interviewers according to a pre-designed, detailed scenario that defines the objectives and general guidelines for the discussions. The main objectives of these interviews are to:

- recognise the most problematic areas in the everyday performance of local authorities;

- describe existing practices of dealing with those problems;

- define important areas of training and development in relation to existing problems and practices;

- define the most common attitudes toward service provision and community engagement on the one hand as well as attitudes toward personal development and participation in training;

- determine how the effectiveness of training might be evaluated;

- learn about key sources of information in topical areas related to local authority performance.

The use of an in-depth individual interview creates the opportunity to examine carefully the way the interviewee thinks and acts. It provides a better understanding of the interviewee's position, their thoughts and attitudes. In-depth interviews enable researchers to <u>understand</u> better the issues in question. Through the in-depth individual interview, it is possible to grasp the real situation, to see the motives behind particular actions and to assess the knowledge of an individual.

In-depth interviews should be conducted in different regions of the country, with individuals from selected local authorities characterised by the same function (eg Mayor, Leader of main opposition party, Head of Administration, Director of Finance). Average time for each individual interview could be about one hour.

The results of the qualitative research should be presented in a form of a summary report and transcripts of the interviews.

2) Quantitative research

The main argument for using a representative survey method is the need to obtain independent, credible, solid and verifiable results.

The importance of National Training Strategy requires the use of appropriate tools that can guarantee the "fine-tuning" of the final product to the trainees' needs and expectations as well to the legal and institutional requirements. The <u>quantitative research</u> could be carried out by means of a Survey of:

a) <u>a representative sample of all local authorities</u>; and/or
b) <u>representatives of the key local authority staff</u>.

The main goals of the Survey are to:
- verify the findings of the qualitative interviews;
- learn about the training received so far by local authority staff;
- obtain representative, credible data on the demand for training programmes and their subject content;
- assess the local authorities' level of development and the more significant problems.

The results of the quantitative research should be presented in a form of a Survey Report that makes use of graphs and tables to present the data and sets out an interpretation of that data.

The methodology of the Survey, the types of questionnaires and the in-depth interview scenarios should be agreed by the Steering Group of the NTS. Expert assistance is required to manage a robust TNA.

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS: SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Training Needs Analysis should take account of the existing status of knowledge and experience of key groups of local government staff, the scope and type of training needed for improved knowledge and professional skills, the local authorities' willingness to participate in training and their ability to pay as well as the external constraints threatening the successful implementation of a National Training Strategy. This Questionnaire helps collect basic information; it should be completed by the leadership of the local authority.

TNA survey

Basic information:		
Local government type (*please tick one*):	**Name of municipality/ district:**	**Region**
❑ Rural municipality ❑ Urban-rural municipality (population smaller than 15,000) ❑ Urban municipality (population smaller than 15,000) ❑ Rural district		

S A M P L E   TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

Please fill out the below questionnaire which will extend our knowledge on the needs and problems of municipalities. Information obtained from you will help us to design an appropriate training plan and adjust it to the need of municipalities. Thank you for your cooperation.

I. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE MUNICIPALITY/ DISTRICT OFFICE

1	How many people are permanently employed in the municipality/district office and how many in the municipality/district organizational units? Number of employees in the municipality/district office: ✍ ……………………………… Number of employees in organizational units: ✍ …………………………………

2	How many members is the municipality/ district council composed of: ✍

3	What departments are there in the office? Name all the departments and independent divisions: ✍ ……………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………………

4	What is your office space (in m^2) ✎ .... m^2

5	Is this office space sufficient? ❑ - Yes ❑ - No

6	How many computers (workstations) are there in the office? ✎

7	Does the office have access to the internet? ❑ - Yes ❑ - No ➔ *go to question 10*

8	How does the municipality/district connect to the internet? ❑ By means of an external modem (telephone line) ❑ Fixed radio line ❑ Isdn modem ❑ other (how?) ✎....................................... ❑ Fixed cable line ❑ I don't know

9	Does the municipality/ district have its own website? ❑ - Yes ❑ -No

10	Does the staff have access to e-mail? If so, how many (number of employees of the municipality/district office and employees of organizational units)? ❑ - Yes ➔ (*how many municipality/district office employees?*) ✎ .... (*how many in its organizational units*?) ✎.......................... ❑ - No ➔ *go to question 10*

11	Do the office staff use e-mail in their official duties? ❑ - Yes *(estimated percentage of employees using e-mail)* ✎................... % ❑ - No

12	And is the municipality/district prepared to receive applications via e-mail? ❑ - Yes ❑ - No

II. FINANCE

13	What is the municipality's budget this year? *(give the most up-to-date amount approved by the municipality council)* ✎ ....(currency)

14	What are the municipality's/district's own-source revenues? ✎ (currency)

15	Have these revenues increased, or decreased, or remained at the same level as in the previous year? ❑ They have increased (*by how much? – in percent*) ✎ .... % ❑ They have remained the same ❑ They have decreased (*how much? – in percent*) ✎ .... %

16　What is the size of the municipality/district budget deficit this year? ✍ ％ of the budget

17　What is the municipality's debt? ✍ ……………………………….(currency)

18　What percentage of the municipality/district budget do capital expenditures represent this year?
✍……………………………….% of the budget

19　Is there a separate category of funds in the budget allocated for training the officers and/or council members?
　　　　1. Yes　　　2. No

20　How many percent of the budget have been allocated this year for the training of staff/council members?
✍ ……………………… % of the budget

III. CLIENT SERVICE/ CONTACTS WITH RESIDENTS

21　Does your office have any specific administrative procedures for contacts with clients/client service?
❏ Yes *(describe them)* ✍ ……………………………………………………………………………………………
❏ No ➜ *go to question 21*

22　Are these administrative procedures available to residents (are they available to the public)? If so, in what form (where are they available)?
❐ - Yes *(in what form and where are they available?)* ✍
❐ - No

23　Is there a book of complaints and comments available to residents in the office? If so, where is it available?
❐ - Yes *(in what form and where is it available?)* ✍
❐ - No

24　Do the residents have full and free access to: (tick all the relevant answers and answer the question in the same row of the table)

Municipality/district budget	❏ yes ➜ *(in what form and where is it available?)* ✍ ……………………………………………………
	❏ no
Minutes from meetings of the municipality/district council	❏ yes ➜ *(in what form and where is it available?)* ✍ ……………………………………………………
	❏ no
Resolutions of the municipality/district council	❏ yes ➜ *(in what form and where is it available?)* ✍ ……………………………………………………
	❏ no

Minutes from meetings of the municipality/district executive board	❏ yes ➔ (*in what form and where is it available?*) ✎ ....
	❏ no	
Decisions made by the municipality/district executive board	❏ yes ➔ (*in what form and where is it available?*) ....
	❏ no	

---

25 Is there a client services desk in the office?
     1. Yes   2. No

---

26 Are there any specific "anti-corruption" procedures in the municipality/district that go beyond the existing legal provisions – i.e. Established at the local level?
   ❏ - Yes (*describe them*) ✎ ....
   ❏ - No

IV. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT, MUNICIPALITY MANAGEMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

---

27 Does the municipality/district have a general development strategy?
   ❏ - Yes (*name the areas of the municipality/district activity in which the fact of having a development strategy is visible?*)
      ....
      ....
   ❏ - No

---

28 Does the municipality/ district have a strategy for individual sectors (e.g. Development of education, economic growth, etc)?
     ❏ - Yes   ❏ - No

---

29 Does the municipality/ district use the following management and planning instruments?		
Task-based budgeting	❏ yes	❏ no
Multi-year financial planning	❏ yes	❏ no
Multi-year capital investment planning	❏ yes	❏ no

30 Does the municipality/ district collect information necessary for the management (analyses and forecasting) and operation of the municipality/ district?
   ❏ - Yes ➔ (*what kind of information is it?*) ✎ ....
      ....
   ❏ - No

---

31 Is there a scope of work for every position in the office?
     ❏ - Yes   ❏ - No

32	Is there an employee performance evaluation system in place in the office (i.e. A document which defines evaluation procedures)? ❏ - Yes ❏ - No

33	Are officers members of any professional organizations or associations (e.g. Association of treasurers, etc)? If so, what organizations/associations? ❏ - Yes (name the organizations/associations) ✍.. ❏ - No

34	Does the municipality/district establish any task forces to deal with a specific project? If so, for what project has a task force been established recently? ❏ - Yes (*for what project recently?*) ✍... ❏ - No

35	Does the municipality/district have clear bidding procedures for municipal services providers? ❏ - Yes – for all bids ❏ - Yes – for some bids ❏ - Not at all

36	Are these procedures generally available to the public? ❏ - Yes (*in what way are they available to the public?*) ✍....................................... ❏ - No

37	Is there a procedure for appointment (election) of members of bidding commissions? ❏ - Yes ❏ - No

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ INVESTMENT

38	How many days, do you think, it takes for someone to set up a business in your municipality/district – i.e. How many days pass from the moment of submitting an application for registering a business entity to the moment when the business can actually start operating? Number of days: ✍ ....

39 How do you assess the state of local infrastructure from the point of view of running a business? :					
	Present state of the infrastructure from the point of view of economic development opportunities				
	Very good	Rather good	Medium	Rather poor	Very poor
Legislative background	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Roads	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Sewerage and water systems, wastewater treatment plant	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Waste dumps	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Electricity and gas network	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Local gov. dependable categories (3-4)					
Telecommunications infrastructure	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

40 Does the municipality/district use the following methods to support economic development? (tick all used)

- ❑ Abated taxes / local fees for businesses based in the municipality/district
- ❑ Subsidies for business entities
- ❑ Free training for entrepreneurs
- ❑ Local development agency
- ❑ Business support center

- ❑ Guarantee fund
- ❑ Loan fund
- ❑ Business incubator
- ❑ Information and consulting unit for entrepreneurs
- ❑ Other (*please name what*) ✍.................

---

41 Is the municipality/district involved in any promotion activities targeted at potential investors? If so, what kind of activities are they?
❒ - Yes (*what kind of promotion is it?*) ✍...
❒ - No

---

42 Has the municipality/district obtained any off-budget funds for stimulation of local, regional and economic development projects in the past year? If so, what kind of projects were they, what were the sources of funding for them and the amount of subsidies, grants, or subventions? Name five recent projects and the years when they were implemented.

	Project (name and focus)	Source of subsidy, grant, or subvention	Amount of subsidy, grant, or subvention	Implemented in (years)
1.				
2.				
3.				

VI. INFORMATION ON THE MUNICIPALITY/ DISTRICT

43 Size of municipality/district – population: ✍ ....

---

44 What is the demographic tendency in the municipality/ district, i.e.:
What is the annual population growth?   ✍..................... %
What is the annual level of internal migration?   ✍.....................%

---

45 What is the municipality's/district's major economic sector? (*please tick one*)
❒ - Agriculture   ❒ - Tourism   ❒ - Industry   ❒ - Services

---

46 What is the distance (in km) between the municipality/district and ...?
The region capital (new system)   ✍ ....km
The region capital (previous system)   ✍ ....km
The district capital (*except districts*)   ✍ ....km

47 How many businesses entities are registered in the municipality/district?
✍ ……………………………..

48 What is the unemployment rate in your municipality/district?　✍ ………………………%

49 Are there any local media in the municipality/district, i.e. Local press, radio, or television?
❒ - Yes *(what media?)* ✍ …………………………………. 　❒ - No

50 Is the municipality/district a member of an association, union, or organization of local governments?
❒ - Yes (*what associations / unions/ organizations?*) ✍ …………………………………….
❒ - No

51 Does the municipality/district cooperate on a permanent basis with any local governments, or associations of local governments in other countries?
❒ - Yes *(please name)* ✍………………………………………………….. 　❒ - No

PERSONAL DATA

Finally, please give us some information about yourself. These information is needed for statistical purposes only!:

52 Sex: 　❒ - Female　　❒ - Male

53 Age: 　✍ ………………

54 Education
❒ - Elementary school　　❒ - College
❒ - Vocational school　　❒ - University
❒ - High school

55 What is your current position in the municipality/district?
❒ - Mayor　　　　　　　　　　　　❒ - Chairperson of municipality/district council
❒ - Deputy mayor/member of the executive board ❒ - Treasurer
❒ - Secretary　　　　　　　　　　❒ - Other (what?) ……………………………

56 How many years have you been working for the local government? ✍................. years

57 How many years have you held the present position? ✍.......................... years

58 Have your participated in any training/course this year? If so, what kind of training was it (name no more than the recent 5 courses):
❐ - Yes → (*in what training?*) ✍...
❐ - No

These are all the questions in this survey. Thank you for completing it, should you have any other comments on the issues raised during our conversation, or in the survey, please describe them below.

Comments:

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR AN INTERVIEW / LOCAL ROUNDTABLE

1. <u>Individual in-depth interviews</u> can be carried out by trained interviewers with key staff of a sample of local authorities (e.g. Mayor, Leader of opposition party, Head of Administration, Director of Finance, etc.) according to a pre-designed, detailed scenario that defines the objectives and general guidelines for the discussions.

   The main objectives of these interviews are to:
   - recognise the most problematic areas in the everyday performance of local authorities;
   - describe existing practices of dealing with those problems;
   - define important areas of training and development in relation to existing problems and practices;
   - define the most common attitudes toward service provision and community engagement on the one hand as well as attitudes toward personal development and participation in training;
   - determine how the effectiveness of training might be evaluated;
   - learn about key sources of information in topical areas related to local authority performance.

   a) The following questions are suggested to help interviewer get a picture of problems in the local authority management and of ways to overcome them

1	What are the key problems present within the local authority?
2	Which of these problems are the most important ones from the residents' every day's life perspective,? Which ones are burdensome mainly to the local authority itself?
3	How does the local government try to solve these problems? What activities have been undertaken already, and what others have been planned for?
4	Which of the above problems can be solved through action to be taken by the local authority itself, and which ones are only slightly within or completely beyond the capacity of the local authority to be able to solve them?
5	What is the main reason for possible effective action on the part of the local authority to solve the above-mentioned problems? (*question about the perceived possible activities within the context of <u>feeling responsible for one's fellow citizens</u> (irrespectively of the relevant legal provisions) and within the context of the <u>effective management concept</u>*).

| 6	How does the local authority handle solving key problems within its jurisdiction? Are there clearly defined, specific objectives to undertake action? Is there a relevant action plan developed? *(the ad hoc vs. planned activities)*.
7	Which are the key problems present in the operation of the local government office? What kind of problems are these and how are they solved?
8	Does the municipality have procedures concerning their contact with the local residents in place? What are these procedures? Does the local authority take into account opinions of representatives of their local community while taking decisions (*what decisions?*), and how often does it happen?

b)   The following questions are suggested to help the interviewer get a picture of the local authority's training experience and attitude towards training.

1	Have local government employees and councillors taken part in any training during the last twelve months? What was the topic of the training? How was their participation in the training initiated (where the initiative came from), where did they gather information about the training, and what was the main reason to take part?
2	What kind of training do the employees and councillors attend most often? Who attends such training?
3	Are training sessions most often attended by employees and councillors pre-planned in some way? If this is the case, who designs such a plan? Who approves the plan?
4	Why do employees and councillors attend training sessions? Where does their motivation come from?
5	Does their attendance in the training actually contribute to a better operation of the local government office, and, as a result, does it contribute to a better living in (*name of the city or village*)?
6	What kind of training is the most valuable to the employees and councillors to contribute the acquired knowledge to a better management of the local authority?
7	What are the most important training needs of the local authority? What kind of knowledge is missing from the perspective of an efficient and effective local authority?

2. <u>Local Round Tables</u> are ways of sharing the experience of local authorities to help understand the issues for which training might be a solution and those which may require organisational or political solutions. Facilitators may bring together on local round table senior staff and elected representatives of selected groups of municipalities, and use the questions below to facilitate a discussion.

1	What are the major problems the local government is facing?
2	Which of the above mentioned problems may be resolved through actions taken by local authorities and which problems are solved with little or no influence of local authorities?
3	Does the respondent think it is possible to enhance the effectiveness of the management and financing of public services? Which are the ways to achieve greater efficiency?
4	What management mechanisms (procedures) are used by the local authorities with respect to the property, human resources, social and municipal services?
5	Do the local authorities have incentives to support business activity? How do they do it? Have they taken any actions to support the establishment of new business entities? What were the most serious problems encountered?
6	Is there local government development strategy and financial planning available? How effectively this strategy/planning has been translated into work plans?
7	Has the staff of the local government office and councilors participated in any training over the past year? How effective have these trainings been? Why these trainings have not been effective?
8	What are the most important training needs of the local government? What training for local government employees and council members is the most valuable in terms of using the acquired knowledge to improve local government management?
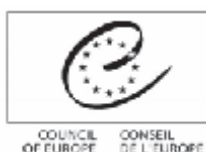
Training Needs Assessment

for the National Training Strategy for Local Government in Armenia

Prepared for:
The Working Group on the National Training Strategy for Local Government in Armenia

January - August 2004

Yerevan 2005

This Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was carried out in 2004 as the first stage in the development of the National Training Strategy for local government in Armenia. The data derives particularly from representative quantitative and qualitative surveys of local authorities (95% confidence level). It also takes account of the views of the main stakeholders in local government: the Ministry for Coordination of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Operations; the Communities Finance Officers' Association; the Communities Association of Armenia; the Association of Municipal Councillors of Armenia; and other national / international organisations. Its findings inform the draft National Training Strategy.

But the TNA is also a stand-alone document. The data gives an insight into the state of local government in Armenia and can be used to support other local government programmes.

The Working Group is grateful to the local authority Associations, the Council of Europe and GTZ for their help in carrying out the Training Needs Analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Key Assumptions and TNA Implementation Method

The Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was conducted as a preliminary stage of the development of the National Training Strategy for local government in Armenia. It was assumed that:

- an independent and reliable TNA will allow training to be developed that responds to the existing expectations of the municipalities' staff and their existing training experiences.

- the results of TNA should present a solid and credible foundation to plan the scope and content of training courses (the results should make it possible to indicate the level of interest in a given training subject matter and to identify the target customer groups).

TNA GOALS

The objective of the TNA was to determine the training needs of the key groups in the local government system in Armenia and to identify the elements needed for a supportive training environment.

The training needs of staff and elected members were distinguished. Separate assessments were made of:

- those in leadership and strategic management positions;

- those with financial responsibilities;

- those with responsibilities for direct service provision.

The most important issues that the TNA took into account included:

- the existing status of <u>knowledge and experience</u> of key groups of local government staff;

- the <u>scope and type of training</u> needed for improved knowledge and professional skills;

- local authorities' <u>willingness</u> to participate in training and their <u>ability to pay</u>;

- <u>external constraints</u> threatening the successful implementation of the National Training Strategy (NTS).

Several important areas have been identified for further consideration:

- Which topics should be covered by the training programmes and to what extent?

- Who should be the target of specific training courses?

- What new training methodologies should be introduced?
- What should be the proportion between training and other forms of support to communities?
- What should be the institutional arrangements for the delivery of the NTS?
- What external factors should be changed to ensure the effectiveness of the NTS?

TNA IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The TNA comprised relatively extensive research consisting of three components:

✓ An explorative **qualitative investigation** based on a series of in-depth individual interviews with local authority representatives.

✓ A verifying **survey** conducted on a representative sample of local authorities in Armenia.

✓ Bilateral discussions with the principal local government stakeholders.

Qualitative Research

The rationale for the use of qualitative research techniques was the lack of <u>in-depth</u> knowledge of both the scope and the kind of knowledge and skills needed by key officers and elected representatives of local authorities and the need to understand and define individual training requirements.

*The most important goals of **the individual in-depth interviews** were to:*

✓ recognise the most problematic areas in the everyday operations of local government in Armenia;

✓ describe existing practices in dealing with those problems;

✓ define important areas of training in relation to existing problems and practices;

✓ define the most common attitudes toward local governance and citizen participation on the one hand, as well as attitudes toward personal development and participation in training on the other;

✓ determine how individual training needs might best be assessed;

Individual in-depth interview is carried out by a specially trained interviewer, according to a pre-designed, detailed scenario that defines the objectives and general guidelines for the conversation.

The use of an in-depth individual interview allows to carefully examine the way the interviewee thinks and acts. Thanks to this method it is possible to grasp the specific, unique self-presentation of a selected fragment of the reality, motives behind specific actions, and the knowledge of an individual. The technique is especially useful in case of surveys examining phenomena (things, processes, services) being subject to individual evaluation.

In-depth individual interviews are usually done on groups of individuals characterised by the same, important for the research objectives, feature. An individual interview usually takes about one hour.

It should be emphasised that the findings of in-depth interviews are <u>not</u> usually <u>representative for the entire population.</u> However they do provide a better understanding of the interviewees' positions, their thoughts and attitudes. In-depth interviews enable researcher to <u>understand</u> the issues in question.

✓ learn about key sources of information relevant to training needs.

Individual in-depth interviews were carried out by trained interviewers, according to a pre-designed, detailed scenario that defined the objectives and general guidelines for the interview.

In-depth interviews were conducted in four different regions of Armenia: Gegharqunik, Yerevan, Syunik, and Tavush.

They were conducted with 24 individuals in a way that reflected the research objectives (see table below). The average time for each individual interview was about one hour.

Interview Implementation Scheme

Region	Respondents and number of interviews:				
	President /Mayor	Councillors	Chiefs of Staff	Treasurers	Heads of Departments
Gegharqunik	1	1	1	1	2
Yerevan	1	1	1	1	2
Syunik	1	1	1	1	2
Tavush	1	1	1	1	2

The results of the qualitative component are available in a form of a summary (see Annex I) and transcripts of the interviews (not attached to this report).

Quantitative Research - Survey

The rationale for the use of a representative survey method was the need to obtain credible, robust and verifiable data of the current situation.

The National Training Strategy will need to create a training environment in which training can be "fine-tuned" to the recipients' needs and expectations as well to the legal and institutional requirements.

The framework for the quantitative research was designed:

✓ on the basis of a representative sample of all local authorities, and

✓ with representatives of the key sections of local government staff.

The **goals of the survey** were to:

▪ verify the findings of the qualitative interviews;

▪ learn about training experiences to date of local government officials;

▪ obtain representative data on the demand for training courses and their content and methodology;

▪ assess the level of the development of Armenian local authorities and the challenges they face.

Survey Implementation

The survey was conducted on a representative, country-wide sample of local government offices of village and town communities. Because of the large disproportion in size between the two groups of local authorities (873 villages and 57 town communities), the final survey sample consisted of two sub-samples:

- For the 873 offices of village communities, the size of a representative sample of the offices in this category was 288 (with a confidence interval of 5 and recommended confidence level=95%). The representative sample was identified by alphabetical sampling.

- Because of the relatively small number of offices of town communities (57), the sample size had to be large and <u>could not</u> be reduced. A sample of 50 offices was adopted (with a confidence interval of 5 and confidence level=95%).

> **The confidence interval** is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in newspaper or television opinion poll results. For example, if we use a confidence interval of 4 and 47% percent of our sample picks an answer we can be "sure" that if we had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 43% (47-4) and 51% (47+4) would have picked that answer.
>
> The **confidence level** tells us how sure we can be. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 95% confidence level means we can be 95% certain; the 99% confidence level means we can be 99% certain. Most researchers use the 95% confidence level.

1352 questionnaires were sent out to three different groups of respondents:

- operational staff (received back 284)

- financial officers (received back 283)

- management staff (mayors and chiefs of the councils) (received back 593)

Questionnaires sent out and received
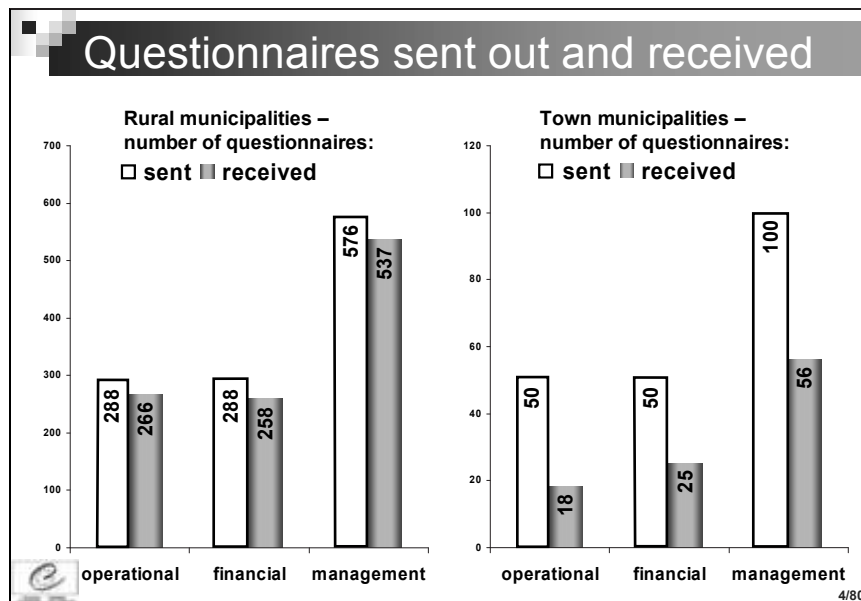
The outcome of the Survey was:

✓ objective and verifiable knowledge of the needs, problems and training expectations of the local government community in Armenia;

✓ representative data on the interest in specific training courses.

In addition, the survey obtained large amount of statistical data which can be used for other parallel objectives of the Armenian Local Government Reform programme.

The results of the quantitative analysis are available in form of a Power Point Presentation, supported by selected statistical graphs and tables and by the originals of the completed questionnaires.

The Most Important Findings of TNA

1. Municipalities in Armenia – Main Problems and Their Impact on NTS

Territorial structure of Armenian municipalities is very fragmented. As much as 63% of all municipalities fall below 2000 of inhabitants. Naturally such a disproportion in size causes the small municipalities to suffer an extensive range of problems. It is natural that their budgets are smaller but their economic situation is getting much worse comparing to the situation in bigger municipalities – there is much less development in smaller municipalities. Modern management tools are being used more rarely, promotion of municipality is seldom, there is less money for training of employees and they less often belong to professional organisations.

		Small municipalities (less than 2000 inhabitants)	Big municipalities (more than 2000 inhabitants)
Mean budget size (in 1000s of AMD)		9031	75036
Change in revenues last year	Increase	39,4%	58,4%
	Same	45,3%	32,6%
	Decrease	15,3%	9%
Is there a deficit? (% of "yes" answers)		44,5%	39,8%
Use of modern management tools	Task-based budgeting	58%	82,6%
	Multi-year financial planning	15,1%	19,4%
	Multi-year capital investment planning	13,2%	24%
	Collection of data for management	45,7%	67,2%
Staff membership in professional organisations		14,9%	23,5%

Office conditions seem to be satisfactory in most of the municipalities. However, in some regions (Shirak, Tavush, Lori, Armavir) ¼ of the municipalities face office space problems.

Access to internet is virtually **non existent** in Armenian municipalities. Only in Yerevan does the situation seem to be slightly better. In smaller municipalities, the lack of office infrastructure is dramatic – only a few municipalities have more than one computer, and there is no internet access at all in municipalities below 2000 inhabitants.
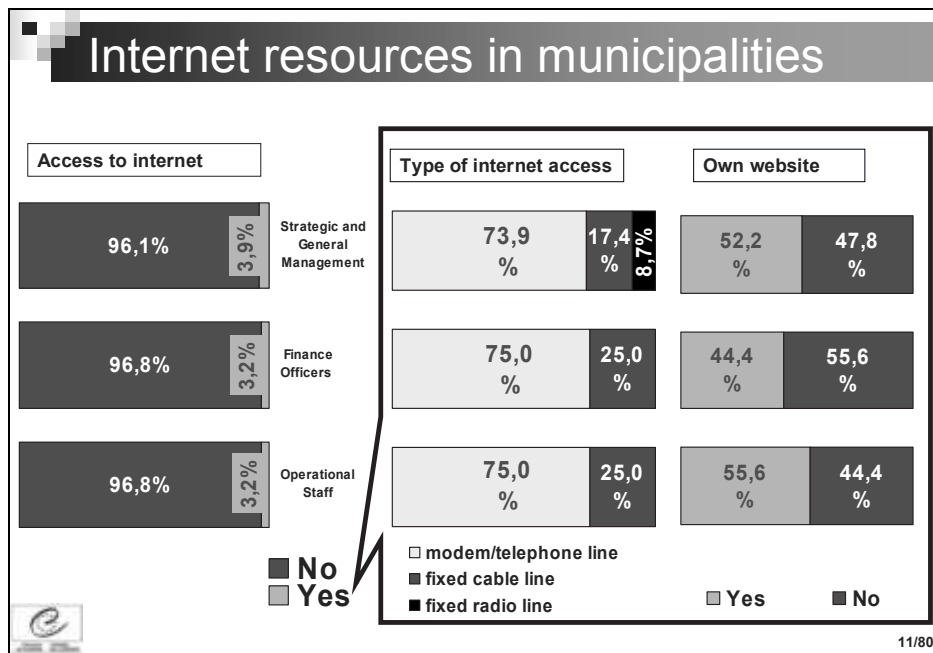
The economic situation of municipalities in Armenia is poor but data gathered about municipalities' budgets in Armenia do not indicate any particular irregularities.

Almost half of municipalities indicated an increase in their own revenues last year. Also almost 50% admitted that there was a deficit in their financial operations. This generally comes to 30% but varies across regions.

The data shows clearly that the business sector is weak. In almost 40% of municipalities in Armenia the number of business entities does not exceed 40; in 30% the number does not exceed 10. The number of days required to set up a business varies among regions. It is a clear indication of differences in procedures and of the services supplied. The longest it takes in Yerevan (36 days), while in Lori a period of just two weeks seems enough.

Among most popular methods to support local economic development are guarantee funds and abated taxes. Methods applied vary among regions. More than half of Armenian municipalities do not undertake any promotional actions targeted at potential investors.

Biggest infrastructure problems in Armenian municipalities are related to road infrastructure, telecommunication system, sewage infrastructure and waste dumps.

Assesment of local infrastructure
from the point of running a business

	very poor	rather poor	medium	rather good	very good
Telecommunications infrastructure	29,3	28,9	28,6	11,3	1,9
Media availability	13,6	29,5	39,4	16,8	0,7
Electricity and gas network	8,1	18,6	50,4	19,6	3,3
Waste dumps	19	30,9	43,1	6,3	0,7
Sewage systems	17,5	31,2	40,4	10,2	0,7
Roads	13,2	44,8	33,7	7,8	0,5
legisative background	5,9	17,8	52	22,9	1,5

56/80

2. Management Practice in Armenian Municipalities

Human Resources Management

There is no clear pattern of employment structure (number of employees, number of councillors) among municipalities from different regions. It seems that the number of employees and the structure of the office depend mostly on individual decisions undertaken in each municipality.

Region	Average number of departments
Gegharquniq	2,77
Aragatsotn	2,04
Ararat	3,45
Armavir	3,00
Lori	2,97
Syuniq	2,48
Tavush	3,27
Vaik	,32
Kotaik	2,66
Shirak	2,30
Yerevan	7,00

This situation obviously indicates a lack of an established personnel policy; it also shows that the planning of the office's structure is not based on performance evaluation or on a clear division of tasks. Also, the non-existence of human resources departments may indicate a lack of systematic and transparent personnel management.

Departments:	Occurrence (in %)	Departments:	Occurrence (in %)
Finance-economic	72,5	Healthcare	3,5
Agricultural	51,8	Trading services	3,0
Sports	28,3	Social welfare	2,2
Secretariat	15,7	Revenue	1,0
Architecture and urban development	12,3	Internal relations and forecasting	1,0
Education	11,0	Transportation	0,7
Utilities	9,6	Information center	0,5
Legal	9,3	Construction control	0,5
Administrative	5,7	Economic development	0,3
Municipal development	5,1	**Human resources**	**0,2**
Taxation	3,5	Assets management	0,2

Despite the fact that 92.5% of respondents indicated that they have their scope of work assigned to them, the work itself is rarely controlled and assessed. About 72% of respondents indicated that an employee performance evaluation system does not exist. This can lead to arbitrary HR decisions and

unfair treatment of selected employees. In many local authorities, up-to-date job responsibilities are rarely provided to employees. This makes performance difficult to manage.
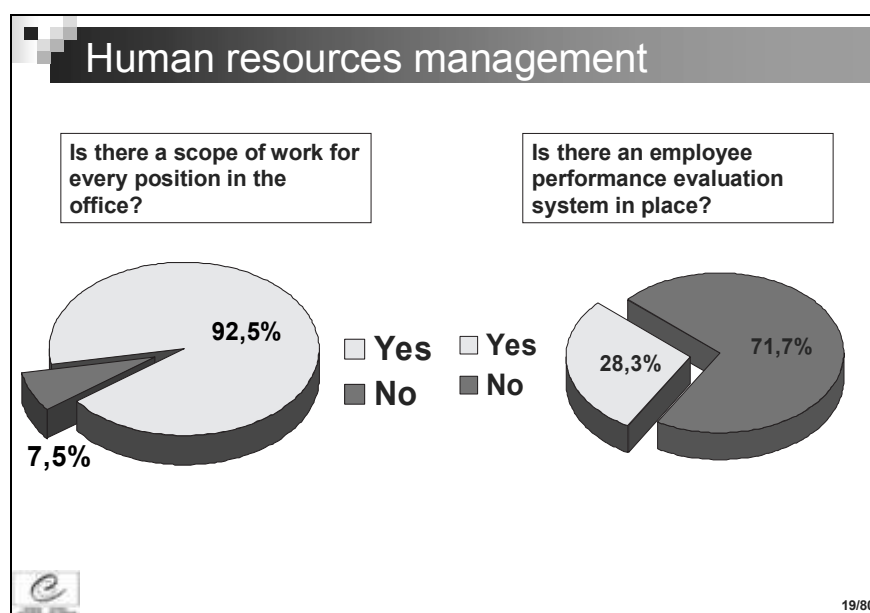
Partnership Working

Partnership working operates at a moderate level. As a matter of fact 62% of municipalities have created joint commissions to deal with certain tasks; but where a joint team is created, it is primarily for the purpose of tender procedures. Therefore, there is little experience of teamwork on the implementation of projects. Partnership working is more popular in some regions than in others. It is more popular in bigger municipalities. The question remains as to whether it is demand-driven or just a fulfillment of a requirement.

Does the municipality establish any task forces to deal with specific projects?		
	yes	no
Municipalities up to 2000 inhabitants	56,4%	43,6%
Municipalities with over 2000 inhabitants	73,9%	26,1%

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is minimal. Although there are no particular obstacles and citizens can obtain information if they are motivated enough to do so, over 60% of respondents said that there are no clear procedures for involving the population in their Community affairs. And even among those who declared
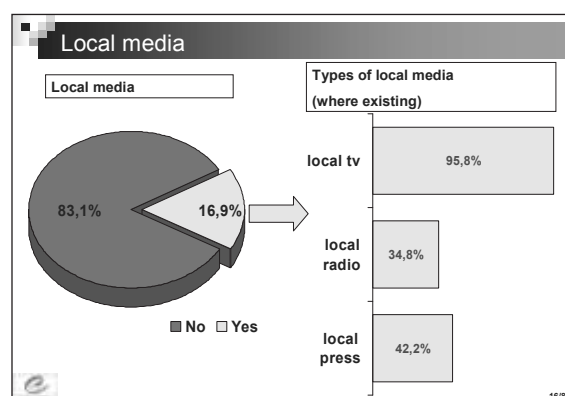
applying specific procedures many admitted that such procedures are limited to irregular, on-demand, meetings.

Citizen participation is limited to the passive availability of information. Municipalities are not inclined to undertake efforts to actively inform the population. Only in a small number of municipalities does any local mass media exist.

Almost half of the municipalities indicated that there is no book of complaints in their office. Over 70% of Communities mentioned that there is a Client Service desk, but in 62% of the cases this desk is located at the Mayor's office, which questions the accessibility of this instrument.

Most of the respondents (around 70-80%) declared that the residents have full and free access to the municipality budget (67,4%), minutes from the meetings of the municipality council (79,4%), resolutions of the municipality council (71,3%) and decisions made by the municipality executive board (80,4%). However, it does not mean that those documents are provided to residents in a public places (on announcement boards for example) or are published in the press. Again, in many cases, the citizen has to express his/her direct interest to obtain information.

Cooperation between Municipalities

Such cooperation is virtually non-existent. Over 90% of respondents indicated that there was no cooperation with other municipalities.

Transparency / Control of Operations

More than 80% of municipalities mentioned that there were no specific internal control procedures that went beyond the existing legislative requirements. Again, this makes performance difficult to manage.

In over 50% of municipalities in Armenia there are no clear bidding procedures and in 44.8% existing bidding procedures are not available to the general public.

Use of Management Tools

Strategic development planning is a part of Armenia's local government reality and most of the municipalities have a general development strategy. But the implementation of the

Strategic management instruments

Management and planning instruments

☐ Yes   ■ No

task-based budgeting: 67,3 / 32,7
multi-year financial planning: 16,6 / 83,4
multi-year capital investment planning: 16,9 / 83,1

Collection of data for strategic management purposes

☐ Yes 54%   ■ No 46%

demographic 55,1%
social welfare /security 49,3%
social-economic 38,9%
finance 30,6%
legal 26,7%
suggestion, advice 26,1%
agriculture 25,2%
management problems 10,6%
education 9,1%
construction 7,5%
forecasting 1,8%

39/80

strategy is weak. Data shows clearly that modern management ends with three-year general development plans that are required by law.

Other management techniques and tools are used rarely. Furthermore, the use of multi-year financial and capital expenditure plans is undermined by the relatively short mandate of Community Heads (three years). Only a small number of municipalities collect demographic, social-economic and financial data for strategic management purposes.

3. The Existing Training Experience

The local government associations play an important – perhaps the key - role in providing training for local government. They include, for example, the Communities Association of Communities, the Association of Municipal Councillors of Armenia, the National Association of Condominium Owners, the Communities Finance Officers' Association, Information Systems Development and Training Centre. They provide a range of training courses for Mayors, elected representatives, finance officers and other officials.

The Academy of Public Administration has also played a key role in the development and provision of training courses.

During recent years a number of international donors have provided both technical and financial assistance to Armenia in the area of public service training. For example, TACIS implemented its Public Administration Project from which the Armenian School of Public Administration (ASPA) was created and maintained for some period of time. ASPA has survived the termination of the TACIS funding and, since late 1997, the state budget has replaced donor funding in covering ASPA's operating expenditures (see below). TACIS has also sponsored seminars/workshops on the machinery of government and the issues of local administration, as well as training programmes for particular groups of ministerial staff. Currently, it is funding the Civil Service Reform Project (CSRP) and recently the Project on Strengthening Regional Development in Lori Marz, both of which include training components. The more recent projects include Regional Development projects in Ararat and Armavir Marzes.

USAID also supported civil service reform in various ways including training programmes and study tours for public employees from different levels of government. The International City and Council Management Association (ICMA) provided training and technical assistance to officials in Central Government, the National Assembly and the municipalities. Under its Municipal Reform Project, ICMA delivered a 7-month-long training programme for Deputy Mayors and Chief Financial Officers from 8 selected municipalities. The training programmes were oriented towards equipping trainees for resolving practical problems, such as managing the municipal budget, implementing housing allowances, competitive procurement, property registration and appraisal, and others. In the period from 1996 to 1997, 901 persons were involved in the ICMA training and a mobile team of qualified local trainers was formed to provide training both on site and in Yerevan.

In 2000, USAID made a dramatic change to its approach and began a more intensive training effort by working in only a select group of cities. Between 2000 and 2003, work was focused in nine cities, and since 2003, a total of twelve are included. With the Urban Institute as its implementing partner, direct intensive training has been provided to hundreds of municipal employees and elected officials in budgeting and financial management, municipal property management, performance management for municipal services, citizen participation, capital improvement planning, public relations, economic development planning, and apartment building management. In several instances, Armenian associations were sub-contracted to provide specialised training, such as the Association of Municipal Councillors of Armenia (training of Council members), Communities Finance Officers' Association (training budget officers), Information Systems Development and Training Centre (training for staff in Citizen Information Centres, property management offices), and the National Association of Condominium Owners (training residents in apartment buildings). Finally, the American University of Armenia performs annual monitoring of citizens' attitudes toward local government in these twelve cities.

UNDP sponsored a $300,000 project entitled "Strengthening the Management Structure of the Ministry of Environment", designed to develop the management capacity of the Ministry by refining its organisational structure, equipping the Ministry with modern equipment, and training the Ministry's staff in computer skills and English. Among other relevant UNDP activities is a "Leadership and Management Training Programme" that was delivered in 1998-2000 for Marzpetaran and Municipality staff in 4 Armenian regions as a part of the Project entitled "Integrated Support to Sustainable Human Development". In parallel, a series of consultations and training sessions on budgeting and financial management were provided to Finance Officers of Village Communities of selected regions.

GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) Project on Promotion of Local Authorities, in addition to its assistance in drafting amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government, organised monthly seminars on related issues and sent a group of Armenian local and central government officials on a study tour to Germany.

The World Bank and Eurasia Foundation sponsored a series of seminars and workshops for government officials in different fields of public administration. Joint Vienna Institute (JVI) delivered several short-term training programmes to the staff of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and other agencies. The British Government department DFID is currently providing financial and technical support to the Secretariat of the Armenian Public Sector Reform Commission. The latter is currently working in the area of structural and financial reforms in the system of public administration and its transformation to a civil service.

One of the notable trends in overall donor strategy towards the provision of training is the more extensive involvement of local providers. Some organisations provide direct support to educational institutions (UNDP, DFID,

TACIS, US State Department), others prefer work through specialised non-governmental institutions (USAID, Eurasia Foundation, GTZ, British Council). As an example of most frequently donor-targeted educational institutions one could mention Armenian School of Public Administration, State Institute of Economy, Yerevan State University.

4. Expressed training experiences and need for training

Duplication of training - training activities offered by different training providers are often overlapping and do not necessarily build on past experience. There is 'reinvention of the wheel'. There is no national training framework to encourage a more systematic and sustainable approach.

Preparation for decentralisation - training does not sufficiently support the implementation of the Decentralisation Strategy. While there is frustration with the delays in fully transferring competences, local authority staff and elected members are aware that they need to be prepared to take on such responsibilities (e.g. business tax collection).

Role of professional associations - professional associations are not recognised sufficiently as vehicles for supporting the process of decentralisation and the strengthening of communities. Only 8% of municipalities are cooperating with national associations.

Local training capacity - the capacity of local authorities to manage their own internal training functions is weak. There are no human resources departments that could carry internal training programmes.

Participation in training - while the need for training for better performance was clearly expressed, only a small proportion of staff or elected members recently participated in any training activity. Motivation was low, given the lack of a professional career structure and the low quality of some of the training on offer.

Training budgets - only 10% of municipalities (25% within Yerevan) have allocated training funds in their budgets. International donor organisations are seen as the main source of funding for training provision.

Immediate training concerns

The following topics were identified as an immediate priority:

	Strategic staff (mayors and chiefs of the councils)
1	Tax collection
2	Budgeting procedures
3	Debt management
4	Tax reporting
5	Cash flow management
6	Payroll calculation
7	Strategic financial planning
8	Procurement procedures and standards
9	General reporting

Other training priorities of this group included: computers, community enlargement programme, local government legislation and general management issues.

	Financial officers
1	Budgeting procedures
2	Tax collection
3	Strategic financial planning
4	Procurement procedures and standards
5	Tax reporting
6	Debt management
7	Cash flow management
8	Payroll calculation
9	General reporting

Other training priorities of this group included: computers, accounting, budgeting and general management.

	Operational staff
1	Tax collection
2	Standards of service provision
3	Ethics for elected representatives
4	Partnership working and contracting
5	Water supply
6	Procurement procedures and standards
7	Road maintenance
8	Waste management
9	Power supply and public lighting

Other training priorities of this group included: computers, community enlargement programme, methodological literature and local government legislation.

Other expressed training priorities include leadership, general management, citizen participation, human resource management, project management, communications and teamwork. Increased professional skills are needed to improve performance in service provision.

5. Constraints Threatening the Successful Implementation of the NTS

Revenues – most communities are unable to implement development plans due to the scarcity of resources. Competences are transferred without sufficient resources to exercise them properly. In such circumstances, training will be seen to have been wasted. Communities lack capacity in developing their own resources. They do not manage their assets effectively enough to generate revenues. With tight budgets, training is not given priority.

Ad-hoc requests from citizens – this is seen as one of the greatest bottlenecks in the day-to-day operation of many Communities. Citizens' requests take up most of the working hours of staff and impede the normal operation of service units.

Imbalance between small budgets and the services to be provided – sufficient resources (both financial and human) have not been made available to local authorities to enable them to properly exercise the responsibilities that have been transferred to them to undertake new responsibilities.

Small communities – over 60% of small communities have populations below 2000. They find it difficult to operate effectively. Training will have little impact in such circumstances.

Staff career structure and low wages - one of the impediments to the effectiveness and sustainability of training is the high staff turnover. There is limited motivation in investing in employees since many have to leave their jobs after every election. The motivation for training among staff is also limited because of their low salaries, relative job insecurity and the absence of a career structure.

TNA Recommendations

1   A key to the successful development of a local community in given circumstances is a skilled and professional staff. Local authorities should develop effective human resource departments. Staff should undergo performance appraisal to help assess training needs on a regular basis.

    ↳ Training should be directed especially to strategic staff in local governments. It should be concerned with the importance of <u>human resources management</u>, its modern techniques and principles. The idea of local government as a learning organisation should be explained and promoted.

2   Local authorities should develop <u>their own capacity</u> to manage basic training programmes within this wider human resources framework. This will increase the motivation of their staff and elected representatives and provide a vehicle for improving performance. It will put key training responsibilities back within local authorities, align training with local needs more effectively, and encourage longer term training sustainability. With increasing capacity, local authorities should develop their own training plans in the light of the needs of their staff and elected representatives; these should be incorporated within their general development plans.

    ↳ Training should concentrate on the organisation of local training programmes and on planning professional development. It should also reflect the establishment of an accreditation/certification system for performing jobs in local authorities.

3   A more consistent approach to strategic planning is needed by local authorities so that local training programmes can be developed to support the <u>implementation</u> of their strategic plans.

    ↳ There is a need for training in modern management tools and techniques. Training should concentrate on principles of strategic development and strategic financial management.

4   Effective strategic planning requires involvement from the citizens. <u>Citizen participation</u> should be encouraged and ways of encouraging such participation should be developed. There is also a need for more transparency in local authorities' operations. Local authorities should review the way they handle customer enquiries. They should seek out best practice and learn from it.

    ↳ Training should concentrate on advantages of increased citizen participation and on ways to communicate with citizens and deal with their immediate problems. The

principles of transparency should be established. Best practice programmes in this field should be encouraged.

5   Many of the Armenian communities are too small to effectively manage local problems and sufficiently support local development. Therefore the number of small communities should be reduced by amalgamating them where it makes sense or by developing arrangements for <u>joint working</u> between them.

      ✐ Training should increase the capacity for joint working between the small communities. It should promote team work and the development of inter-municipal projects.

6   Local governments should assume a more active role in the promotion and encouragement of local investments. New <u>promotional techniques</u> should be developed and better communication with potential investors should be assured.

      ✐ Training should increase understanding of the importance of local promotion as a necessary part of a local economic development strategy.

7   Local authorities should be encouraged to develop their <u>own revenue base</u> (e.g. by the use of local taxes, fees and charges and by promoting local economic development) and to use their assets more efficiently. This will help them increase their ability to invest in training.

      ✐ Local authorities should be trained in developing project proposals so that they can approach donor organisations and potential partner local authorities directly. They should be trained in techniques of tax and asset management, including outsourcing where this is appropriate.

8   The role of the <u>local government Associations</u> should be enlarged to enable them to provide training and other support services to local authorities.

      ✐ A training advice service should be provided to assist organisations in planning and coordinating training programmes.

9   The various training initiatives of training providers and donors should be better coordinated so that maximum value for money can be obtained from their training investment. This requires better <u>training information</u> and the establishment of training priorities.

> ✎ A resource centre should be established with a library of proven training materials and background documents; a website should be established and a newsletter published to improve the flow of training information.

10   Standards of training should be improved. A package of basic, standardised curricula should be developed from existing materials that have proved their value and from new materials as necessary. Trainers should be certified. Core curricula and programmes should be accredited.

> ✎ Training methodologies need to be more practice-oriented, making more use of on-the-job training, best practice, media, case-studies etc. Workshops should focus on skills that can increase competence at work. Easy-to-use manuals should be prepared. Pilot initiatives should be used to introduce new training methods. Training via the internet (or intranets) should be developed.

Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation

THE NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ALBANIA

(2004-2006)

September 2003

This is a project jointly supported by the Council of Europe and the European Commission

We will create a national training framework; we will work together more effectively; we will improve the professional environment of local government, so that training can be effective.

The Working Group on the National Training Strategy

September 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.1 The Working Group

A Working Group on the National Training Strategy for Local Government in Albania was set up in July 2002 under the co-chairmanship of the Ministry for Local Government and Decentralisation and the Albanian Association of Municipalities. It brought together the main organisations with a stake in local government in Albania (see Annex 2). It was supported by the Council of Europe.

1.2 Training Needs Analysis

The first task was to carry out a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA)[3].

This took account of:

- the needs of local authorities,
- the programmes and capacities of current training providers,
- the training implications of local government legislation and the Decentralisation Strategy,
- the importance of building up the capacity and competence of local authorities and their Associations.

The TNA involved using questionnaires, surveys and regional workshops. Key documents were analysed.   Many interviews and discussions were held in Tirana and across the country with local authority staff and elected representatives, with national officials and local people. There were numerous consultations with NGOs and international organisations. The findings of the TNA form the basis of this Strategy.

1.3 National Training Strategy

The Working Group met on several occasions to consider the progress of the Training Needs Analysis and the drafting of the National Training Strategy. The Strategy was subject to a national Roundtable to ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute to the Strategy and to see how it might influence their training programmes.
The National Training Strategy for Local Government in Albania was agreed by the Working Group at its fifth meeting in Tirana on 11 September 2003.

The Working Group is grateful to all those individuals and organisations – both public and non-governmental, national and international - for their contribution to the preparation of this National Training Strategy. They have a real stake in local government in Albania.

The effective implementation of the Strategy will continue to depend on the vision of those individuals and organisations and their will to work together for the common good.

2. THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

"Local authorities are one of the main foundations of any democratic regime "

(*European Charter of Local Self-Government*)

Remarkable progress has been made in the last four years in laying the foundation for decentralisation in Albania:

- Putting in place basic documents - the legal and institutional framework for decentralisation (the national strategy on decentralisation, the law on the organisation and functioning of local government units No 8652);
- Building consensus through an informed process of participatory dialogue and stakeholder involvement (task force, group of experts).

But there is some disappointment that the implementation of the legal framework has been so slow.

This may have been for the following reasons:

- There has been insufficient dialogue between central and local governments and between the Ministries, insufficient political will, little vision or agreement on how to move forward, ministerial changes following elections.
- Local authorities have lacked capacity.
- Central government has been reluctant to complete the transfer of competences (see Annex 1) or provide sufficient assets or funding to local authorities to enable them to implement the competencies legally transferred to them.
- There has been insufficient recognition of the status of local government staff and a failure to properly establish a core professional cadre.

The legal framework for local authorities in Albania has been developed over the last few years, and should be completed and fully implemented as soon as possible. But the legal framework is not enough. There can be good local government legislation but poor local authorities. There is a need for programmes that focus on the improvement of local authorities' capacity and performance.

This cannot be achieved without trained and motivated staff and elected members. This is the role of the National Training Strategy.

But the Strategy will not be effective in isolation. Progress in several dimensions of local government is required if the Strategy is to be successful. The process of decentralisation must continue; local government legislation must be fully implemented; a career structure for local government staff must be created in practice;
central government as a whole must give sufficient priority to the development of effective local government. If these things happen, the National Training Strategy can be effective.

3. THE NEED FOR THE STRATEGY

The National Training Strategy is based on the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and supports the Strategy for Decentralization and the reduction of poverty.

Decentralisation requires strong leadership, democracy and service capacity at local level. The National Training Strategy should help local authorities play their proper leadership, democratic and service roles by making staff and elected members more skilled and effective.

There are several training organisations that have been implementing their own programmes. Some have been of high standard, responding to needs, using competent trainers and interesting curricula, and following up participants to ensure that the training is translated into everyday work.

But some of the training has not achieved such high standards. Some has reflected the interests of the training providers rather than the local authorities. There has been duplication and a 'reinvention of the wheel'. There has been little assurance of the quality of trainers, curricula and training providers.

Many participants in training courses have later left their local authority for another job, or because of the election process, and the value of their training has been lost to local government.

Qualified trainers have a key role to play. They will be critical players in the development of local government. But some are less than well qualified; some are leaving Albania for better prospects.

The Stabilisation and Association Report on Albania by the Commission of the European Communities (April 2002):
 "Local government and the implementation of decentralisation are proceeding slowly and with difficulty due notably to shortages of qualified staff at local level……Human resources in Albanian public administration are, in most cases, scarce and not adequately trained."

This is why a National Training Strategy is needed. The dissemination of skills, understanding and best practice should equip the staff and elected representatives to better serve their local authority and local community. Their careers will have better prospects. Current trainers will be able to upgrade their skills; other staff will be encouraged to become trainers. Training capacity will be increased; the quality and extent of training will be enhanced.

Local authorities have come ….. from a culture of control and one-way communication ….. to a culture of partnership and decentralisation, of empowering people and of becoming a 'learning organisation'. The real challenge for the National Training Strategy is to change thinking and attitudes, *to change the culture of local government*

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

> *"Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population."*

(**European Charter of Local Self-Government**)

The Strategy will support the Decentralisation Strategy and the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It will identify training priorities. It will create a framework by which training providers can better focus their programmes. It will make better use of existing capacity and develop new capacity.

The National Training Strategy aims to:

- Harness the efforts of current and new training providers and focus them on local government priorities across the country.
- Ensure sufficient information is available to assist training providers plan their programmes and learn from best practice.
- Provide quality assurance for trainers, curricula and training providers.
- Increase the number of trainers and training programmes.
- Encourage new kinds of training programmes that better meet the needs of local authorities and exploit a wider range of methodologies.
- Support the building of training capacity in local authorities themselves and in their Associations to ensure sustainability.

Improving local leadership and service provision is one of the main goals of decentralisation. Both the efficiency and the quality of services are critical. Local authorities should not be satisfied with the provision of poor services; good staffs do not want to provide poor services; local people do not want to receive poor services. A systematic approach to improving performance is needed if the aspirations for local democracy are not to be disappointed.

Through this Strategy we seek to achieve the development of more effective local authorities. They will make better use of their staff and elected members to provide community leadership, engage local people and deliver quality services that meet local needs.

The National Training Strategy is focused on local government legislation and its training implications. It should help local authorities better prepare themselves for implementing the competences transferred to them.

We want to see local government services that are accessible, efficient and of high quality, and that respond to the needs of local people. This is good governance. The National Training Strategy should encourage local authorities to work with community organisations to harness their efforts in the governance of the community.

The National Training Strategy should see an increase in the resources being devoted by central and local authorities and by NGOs and international agencies for the training of local government staff and elected members. This increase is not just for the favoured areas that may

be used to working with international agencies. It should be for all areas; it should be for regions, municipalities and communes; it should be for all sizes of local authorities.

Besides contributing to delivering knowledge and skills, the National Training Strategy should lead to the change of thinking, attitudes and therefore practices of staff and elected members. This will shape the leadership and management of local authorities, and the culture of local government.

5. THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE STRATEGY

5. 1. *The National Training Strategy belongs to local government in Albania.* (Albanian ownership)

It is for local authorities and their Associations to take responsibility for the National Training Strategy and use it to best effect. They are responsible for ensuring that all their staff and elected members get the training they need. At the same time, it is for central government to provide the framework (e.g. the law on public service) that will best support the Strategy's implementation.

5.2. *The National Training Strategy is a working document.* (Dynamic character)

The National Training Strategy responds to the training needs of local authorities. These needs change. New legislation is introduced. New skills are required. The Training Needs Analysis and the Action Plan of the Strategy must be updated every year to reflect the new training requirements. As a working document, it is a guide for training providers when planning their programmes.

5.3. Sustainability
In the longer term, it will be for the Government and local authorities themselves to ensure the financial sustainability of local authority training.

The funding of the Action Plan of the Strategy will come from a variety of sources. Many of the current donor-funded training programmes will continue within the framework of the Strategy. But new funding will be needed for critical elements, and the Working Group will look to donors in the first instance to take account of these funding needs when drawing up their programmes. After all, if the Strategy is effective, it will help donors achieve better value for money in their local government programmes.

But training for local government should in due course be more independent of external financial support and direction. There needs to be a greater focus on developing training capacity within local authorities and their Associations. In the longer term it should be for the local authorities themselves to pay for their own training. The funding arrangements of local authorities by the Government can influence expenditure on training.

The financing of training should be seen as an investment in the quality of local government in Albania.

5.4. Cooperation with partners

The development of local government requires the cooperation of all the stakeholders in local government.
There are many stakeholders in local government: the local authorities themselves and their Associations, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation and other Ministries, non-governmental organisations, international agencies and other national institutions (e.g. universities). All have an important role to play. The best results come when local and central government work together for a common vision and are supported by other stakeholders. This is not easy to achieve. Every stakeholder should look to the common good.

5.5. Career structure

> *"The conditions of service of local government employees shall be such as to permit the recruitment of high quality staff on the basis of merit and competence; to this end, adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects shall be provided".*

(***The European Charter of Local Self-Government***)

Training should be founded on a career structure for local government officials.

It will be important for the Government to see that the law on public servants is properly implemented. Local government officials need a career structure if they are to be properly motivated and if they are to give of their best in the service of local people. Without such a career structure, the effectiveness of training will be minimal as staff will not take it seriously or they will move on to another job.

The full weight of Government should be used to encourage the recruitment and retention of competent local authority staff.

6. TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

The first task of the Working Group was to commission a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA). This was necessary not only to ensure that the National Training Strategy was built on firm foundations but also to allow local authorities and other stakeholders to contribute to the development of the Strategy.

6.1. Goals of the TNA (Training Need Analyses):

There were four main goals of the TNA:

- To collect information on the current situation of local authorities, their perception of the decentralization process and everyday problems with performance;

- To collect information on local authorities' past training experience and their perception of current training needs;

- To better understand the Mayors' perception of the current situation of local authorities and the influence of training on their performance and on staff attitudes to work;

- To compare the existing situation and the perception of Mayors and other leaders to commonly agreed standards of local government performance expressed in international documents and in the Albanian legislation and the Decentralisation Strategy.

6.2. Issues to be resolved:

Issues identified in several previous reports remain unresolved:

- There is lack of coordination between different training initiatives.
- The methodology of much of the training is too traditional; it should be shifted towards more effective learning methods.
- Local governmental staffs are not properly prepared to cope with their new responsibilities (e.g. business tax collection).
- The professional level of many elected representatives is low.
- There is insufficient strategy and action planning behind local government training.
- There is no resource centre for training organisations to use.
- There is a lack of standards and accreditation systems for trainers.
- There are no core curricula.
- Training activities offered by different donors are often overlapping.
- There is lack of information about training opportunities.
- There is a poor "training" culture within local authorities; most of them do not have any system of internal training despite the Mayor's legal responsibility for training.
- The motivation among local authority staff for training and development is very often limited because of their low salaries and the failure to fully implement the law on civil servants.

6.3. Recommendations of the TNA:

The TNA made the following recommendations:

- Training should support the implementation of the Decentralisation Strategy. There is frustration at the delays in fully transferring competences, but local authority staffs have to be prepared to take on such responsibility. They are prepared to accept such responsibility. Local authorities would be willing to invest more money in training if they could see the benefit.

- There is a lack of information about decentralisation and the role of local government. Information programmes should be developed through the media and other channels. A better understanding of local government and decentralisation will help generate the demand for training.

- The Law of Civil Servants needs to be implemented fully to give local authority staff the framework for a career; this is an essential foundation for training.

- The three local government Associations should work together to help local authorities develop the skills, competencies and attitudes needed for their new responsibilities.

- The capacity of local authorities to manage their own internal training functions should be enhanced; this would put key training responsibilities back within local authorities, align training with local needs more effectively, and encourage longer term self-sustainability.

- Training methodology needs to be considerably broadened; it needs to be more practice-oriented – e.g. using best practices and case-studies. Workshops should focus on skills that can be put to good use.

- Different local authorities are at different levels of development, and training priorities will tend to vary.

However, the TNA identified the following topics for priority:

- Financial management;
- Local and regional economic development;
- Strategic planning in the local government;
- Budgeting procedures;
- Tax collection;
- Procurement procedures and standards;
- Ethics for local government staff and elected representatives;
- Action against corruption;
- Standards of service provision;
- Roads maintenance;
- Water supply;
- Power supply and public lighting;

Other important training programmes should cover:

- Communications and engaging local people;
- Leadership and management;
- Partnership working and contracting;
- Waste management;
- Asset management (property and land);
- Staff management;
- Land use and urban planning;
- Performance management;
- Legal aspects of decentralisation.

- Some of this training should be supported with consultancy visits and the provision of relevant software, particularly to support better tax collection and property management, as this should release resources for use by the local authority.

- Stakeholders in local government should seek closer cooperation; this would lead to a more efficient use of training resources. This would need a coordination unit and a facility to exchange information.

- Local authorities should learn from each other, particularly from local authorities who have already achieved good standards in leadership, management and service provision. For example, best practices should be identified and disseminated. Benchmarks should be established and used to drive self-improvement. Internal study visits can expose staff and elected members to new ways of doing things.

- Training should reach all local authorities. Current training seems to have focused on those local authorities where success is more likely. Smaller local authorities will need to work together to make training effective. This will need good coordination at regional level.

7. VISION, MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES

> "*Priorities will therefore have to be set. Central government will have some priorities; local government will have others. These must be harmonised into an agreed set of training priorities and a timescale to show the gradual development of the training programme over the medium term. Donor priorities should match those of central and local government*".

(Steps towards a National Training Strategy in Albania, CoE discussion paper)

7.1. Vision

The National Training Strategy will contribute to effective and democratic local government in Albania.

Good local government needs a good local authority.

An effective and democratic local authority will:

- Focus on delivering results that improve the quality of life for local people.
- Communicate effectively with its staff and with local people.
- Promote effective leadership and management and recognise the changes necessary to do better.
- Encourage innovative solutions to meet specific circumstances.
- Look at services from the service users' perspective, and not just from that of the organisation.
- Be ready to work with partners to seek the best way of delivering services.
- Use the full potential of its staff and treat them as its most valuable asset.
- Make best use of all its elected representatives.

7.2. Mission Statement

The National Training Strategy will establish a <u>platform</u> for the professional, coordinated, sustainable and demand-driven development of staff and elected representatives in local authorities

This will lead to an enhancement of their skills and capacities to ensure professional and accountable local government and effective partnership between central and local authorities.

<u>The National Training Strategy will achieve this by</u>:

- Seeking for a better understanding of local training needs;
- Improving the quality and accessibility of training;
- Encouraging new approaches to training and commissioning new training to meet new needs;
- Making training information available;
- Promoting cooperation and the dissemination of best practice among local authorities;
- Promoting dialogue between central and local authorities and cooperation among local government stakeholders.

7. 3. Six Strategic Goals

First Goal :
Harness the efforts of current and new training providers and focus them on local government priorities across the country.

<u>Objectives:</u>

Identify core and specialist training programmes on the topics identified in the TNA for all staff and elected members.

Develop an annual update of the Training Needs Analysis as a basis for monitoring progress and developing new training programmes.

Encourage access to timely and relevant training for all the staff and elected members of local authorities.

Provide an advice service to training providers.

<u>Outcome:</u>

Training programmes will be up-to-date, interesting and extensive; they will focus on the needs of staff and elected members and on local authority priorities; they will reinforce other learning; training providers will see where they can best focus their efforts.

Second Goal:
Ensure sufficient information is available to encourage more positive attitudes to local government, to assist training providers plan their programmes and to learn from best practice.

Objectives:
Develop a resource centre for collecting and making information from different training organisations available (e.g. registered trainers, training curricula, training materials, relevant projects and training reports, legislative documents on decentralisation and other aspects of local government, case-studies of best practice).

Develop a database of relevant programmes, projects and other local government initiatives.

Develop an effective system of information exchange on training needs, opportunities and experiences between all local government stakeholders, making use of a variety of information channels (bulletin, SMS, video, media etc).

Create and maintain a website to support the implementation of the National Training Strategy.

Develop information programmes on local government to increase public awareness, using a variety of media.

Outcome:
Providers and local authorities will understand more clearly the training needs and opportunities of local authorities; they will have access to the library and database; they will be able to use the most appropriate material and methodology for their programmes.

Third Goal:
Provide quality assurance for trainers, curricula and training providers.

Objectives:
Develop a set of training standards to be applied to all training and consulting organisations and their programmes.

Make arrangements for an accreditation system for trainers, training curricula and training providers.

Outcome:
Training standards will be raised; all stakeholders will have confidence in the quality of trainers, curricula and training providers.

Fourth Goal:
Increase the number and quality of trainers.

Objectives:
Improve training materials for Training of Trainers courses.

Develop a more intensive and systematic programme for training trainers.

Outcome:
There will be more, better qualified trainers available for training local authority staff and elected members.

Fifth Goal:
Support the building of training capacity in local authorities themselves and in their Associations to ensure sustainability.

Objectives:

Increase the training capacity of local authorities (e.g. senior officer with training responsibilities, a Corporate Training Plan, in-house trainers and programmes, coaching and mentoring, Personal Development Plans etc).

Support the development of training capacity in the local government Associations.

Develop mechanisms at regional level to facilitate the effective delivery of training and to make best use of existing institutions in the regions.

Promote the implementation of the law on civil servants by assessing the current situation and by preparing and implementing an Action Plan.

Promote all kinds of professional development, including support for professional institutes that might take on responsibility for the standards and professional training within their profession.

Provide a careers service to help staff develop their professional careers.

Promote cooperation between local authorities, civil society organisations and the private sector at the local, national and international levels.

Outcome:
Every local authority will have the capacity to articulate and respond to a growing proportion of their basic training needs without resort to external assistance.

Sixth Goal:
Encourage new training programmes that meet the needs of local authorities and exploit the full range of methodologies.

Objectives:
Develop improved training curricula.

Increase the effectiveness of training through better methodology (more "practice"-oriented).

Develop benchmarking and best practice programmes in leadership, management and service provision.

Introduce other forms of learning, such as distance learning, e-learning and short term secondments.

Outcome:
Training will become more interesting and effective for local staff and elected members because it will exploit more interesting methods and will better reinforce other learning.

8. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The implementation of the National Training Strategy will require not only cooperation between local government stakeholders. It will also require a capacity at the centre and in the regions that will act on behalf of the stakeholders. It will require capacity in local authorities. This is where the work will be done and leadership given. This is why certain institutional arrangements will be necessary.

8. 1. Action Plan

An Action Plan will be developed by the local government Associations, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization and the Council of Europe in consultation with local government stakeholders. The purpose of the Action Plan will be to implement the goals and objectives of the National Training Strategy.

For each objective, the Action Plan will identify:

- the tasks to be carried out;
- responsibilities and opportunities for carrying out the tasks;
- the expected outputs;
- key progress indicators;
- the timescale.

Some elements of the Action Plan may be taken on by certain local government stakeholders (e.g. the direct delivery of priority training programmes). However, there is also a need for an organization to take responsibility for the overall implementation of the Action Plan.

8. 2. Training Agency for Local Government in Albania

A coordination unit should be established, called the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania (the Agency), under the control of the four Founders – the Association of Communes, the Association of Regions, the Association of Municipalities, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization.

The Agency will have the following structure:

- **Management Board** composed by the highest representatives of the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization and Ministry of Finance, conductors of Associations of Local Governments as well as representatives of strategic donors with potential contribution in local government. This board will be decision and coordination maker in definition of specifications and geographical delivery of trainings. It will manage the finances of the Agency.

- **Advisory Board** will bring together the main stakeholders in local government. This board will have consultative role about the decisions of Management Board.

▪ **Executive Directory** and its staff will implement the decisions of Management Board.

The Agency should be led in a way that responds clearly to the needs of local authorities and aims at self-sustainability. It should work in close collaboration with the Training Institute for Public Administration (TIPA) to make best use of TIPA 's facilities and experience and to contribute to those objectives of TIPA that relate to local government.

8. 3. The main objectives of the Agency should be to:

Provide the institutional capacity for overseeing and coordinating the training effort for local government.

The Agency should:
- be registered as an Not-for-Profit Organization;
- appoint a small number of professional staff;
- develop a framework for accrediting courses and trainers;
- research the issue of recruitment into local authorities and make recommendations to the stakeholders;
- promote its services through effective marketing.

Facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan of the National Training Strategy and ensure that it is regularly updated.

The Agency should:
- develop an Annual Training Plan;
- oversee the development of the Training of Trainers programme;
- define the urgent / regular and core / specialized courses needed by local authority staff and elected members and provide for their implementation;
- support the development of training capacity within local authorities;
- maintain a register of course curricula;
- ensure a professional exchange of training information;
- update the Training Needs Analysis on an annual basis.

Establish a Training Information Service.

The Agency should:
- hold regular training meetings with key stakeholders (Advisory Board);
- establish a database and library of training information, and introduce a One Stop Shop to provide advice;
- disseminate training information regularly;
- identify and disseminate best practice in leadership, management and service provision;
- introduce a Municipal Capacity index and promote the use of benchmarks and peer assessment to support capacity-building in local authorities.

Local authorities should feel that it is 'their' Agency. They should do everything possible to support it. But the development of the Agency will require the support of international agencies in its early years, while aiming for self-sustainability in the longer term.

The establishment of the Agency will be subject to a detailed project proposal that is being separately prepared for the Founders by the Council of Europe.

8. 4. Annual Training Conference

Each year the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania should update the Training Needs Analysis and prepare and disseminate an Annual Training Report. This Report should:

- look back at what has been achieved against plans for the previous year;
- look forward with plans for the coming year and the medium term.
- The draft Annual Training Report should be presented and discussed at an Annual Training Conference of stakeholders. This will provide an assessment of how effectively the National Training Strategy is being implemented; it will create an opportunity to influence the direction of the National Training Strategy;
- it will encourage the continuing engagement of stakeholders in the development of effective training for local government in Albania.

8. 5. Progress indicators

How shall we evaluate whether the National Training Strategy is succeeding? It should be possible to identify some core indicators in areas where we might expect to see change in the next three years.

The Training Agency for Local Government in Albania should establish a core set of indicators. These should be capable of demonstrating each year the effectiveness of the National Training Strategy. The Agency should set targets to give impetus to achieving the Strategy's objectives.

Such indicators might include, inter alias:
- An increase in the total funding being spent on local government training.
- An increase in the municipalities with their own in-house training capacity.
- An increase in the number of accredited trainers.
- An increase in the number of people being trained and in the average annual number of staff training days in local authorities.
- The number of local authorities allocating funds in their local budgets for training purposes.
- An increase in local authorities' annual training budgets.
- Opinion Surveys of local authorities and local government stakeholders in 2004 and 2006 to allow comparison.

Progress against such indicators should be set out in the Annual Training Report.

8. 6. Time Frame (2003-2006)

This proposed National Training Strategy is for the medium term. It runs for three years – until December 2006. That will be a good time to make an overall assessment of the impact of the Strategy and of the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania. The Board of the Agency should make arrangements for such an assessment to be made and to use the assessment as a basis for renewing or amending the National Training Strategy for a further three years or longer.

Timetable for the implementation of the Strategy

The proposed timetable for the implementation of the National Training Strategy is set out below:

Agreement to the National Training Strategy:
   - by the Working Group
   - by the Council of Ministers
	September 2003

Completion of the detailed project proposal for the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania	October 2003
Completion of the preparation of the Action Plan of the National Training Strategy	October 2003
Legal establishment of the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania	December 2003
Start of the implementation of the Action Plan of the National Training Strategy	January 2004
Appointment of the Executive Director of the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania and the beginning of operations	January 2004
First Annual Training Conference	November 2004
Publication of the first Annual Training Report by the Training Agency for Local Government in Albania	December 2004
Assessment of the effectiveness of the National Training Strategy	October 2006

WORKING GROUP OF NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY

Institution	Name Surname	Function
1. Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization	Natasha Paco	Vice Minister
2. Department of Public Administration	Filloreta Kodra	Director
3. Training Institute of Public Administration (ITAP)	Margarita Duka	Director
4. Albanian Association of Municipalities	Fatos Hodaj	Executive Director
5. Albanian Association of Regions	Elidiana Canaj	Chairwoman
6. Albanian Association of Communes	Naim Karaj	Chairman
7. EC Delegation	Vanessa Dick	Project Manager
8. UNDP	Kalyan Pandey Sagipa Jusaeva	Local Government Officers
9. UNOPS	Luigi Cafiero Miriam Neziri	Chief Technical Adviser Programme Manager
10. Urban Institute	Bart Kennedy	Project Director

Institution	Name Surname	Function
11. GTZ	Hans Ahlfeld Luan Dervishi	Director Project Manager
12. VNG / SNV	Alba Dakoli- Wilson Jan Schmeitz Nicolette Matthijsen Wilbert Schouten	Co-team leader VNG Acting Director SNV Prog.Coord. SNV Project Manager SNV
13. SIDA	Kjell Ostrom	Expert
14. SOROS Foundation	Raimonda Duka	Project coordinator
15. Greek Government	Anastasios Memmos	Second SecretaryDrejtor
16. Co-plan	Besnik Aliaj Dritan Shutina	Director Program Manager
17. FORMEZ	Marco Iachetta	Program Manager
18. Hans Seidel Foundation	Napoleon Qendro	Program Manager
19. Council of Europe	John Jackson Alba Brahimi Jacek Krolikowski Erind Kraja	Secretariat Acting Representative Expert Expert

SECTION 3

LEADERSHIP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The leadership of a local authority comprises in the first instance the Mayor and other senior elected representatives and officials. They have the key responsibility for the management of the local authority.

They have three main functions:

1   To look ahead, developing, sharing and planning a longer term vision of the community.
2   To provide strategic management for the organisation of the local authority and for the provision of local public services whether delivered (i) by the local authority itself, (ii) in partnership with other organisations, or (iii) through outsourcing arrangements.
3   To engage local people and organisations in the activities of the local authority by (i) keeping them informed (eg of Council plans and policies), (ii) consulting them on important matters (eg the draft budget), and (iii) sharing the decision-making role (eg in neighbourhood committees or in the joint provision of a service).

The leadership creates the climate for good local 'governance'. What they do and how they perform influences whether the local authority is a good place for staff to work in and whether the community is a good place to live.

People in leadership positions therefore need to (i) be effective to carry out their functions well, and (ii) show integrity to gain the confidence of the people they are elected to serve.

The section includes the CoE Benchmark of an Effective Democratic Local Authority. A National Association or training organisation can adapt the Benchmark and use it to develop leadership programmes for interested local authorities. Options for such programmes include self-assessment or external assessment by trainers or trained peers, followed by improvement planning. Participation in such programmes as a peer is a powerful exercise in personal development.

A model 2-day preparatory Leadership Workshop is included to introduce smaller local authorities with limited capacity to the Benchmark. This will help them understand the importance of leadership and how they might use the Benchmark.

The following CoE standards provide the basis for local authority policies on leadership:

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
(i) **Recommendation 60 (1999) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on political integrity of local and regional elected representatives**	Recommendation 60 recommends a Code of Conduct for all elected representatives. This covers (i) general principles, (ii) specific obligations on taking office, holding office and relinquishing office, (iii) the means of supervision, (iv) relations with the public, (v) relations with local government staff, (vii) relations with the media, and (viii) information, dissemination and awareness-raising.
(ii) **Handbook on Public Ethics prepared by the CoE Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (2004)**	This Handbook will provide local authorities with a broad understanding and a wide range of ideas on ensuring that public ethics is taken seriously, and acted upon, within a local authority. It includes three sections: (i) examples of good practice in different aspects of public ethics, (ii) an overview of public ethics in Europe with examples from different countries, and (iii) examples of national initiatives.

TOOLS	PROCESS
(i) **The Leadership Benchmark** (ii) **The Leadership Workshop** (iii) **The Leadership Benchmark Programme** (iv) **Peer Review: Report of the City of Solin** (v) **Peer Review: Evaluation Template** (vi) **Self-Assessment Form and Questionnaire**	This Benchmark is a powerful tool and must be managed properly. It can be used in self-assessment or by professional trainers. It can be used for a basic leadership training workshop. More effectively, it can be used through a Peer Review by a small but competent team of senior elected representatives and officials from other local authorities. The Peers will have been trained and the Peer Review organised by a Project Manager. The first stage is to adapt the Benchmark to the circumstances of the country where it is to be used. It is for the leadership of a local authority to <u>invite</u> the Peer Team to undertake the Peer Review. The leadership must want to become more effective. The Peer Review will conclude with recommendations based on an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local authority. Their views will have been gained from interviews and workshops with all key individuals and with all stakeholder groups over a period of 4 days. The leadership will be able to incorporate the recommendations within the local authority's strategic planning.

Reference to other relevant documents:

- Manual for Peer Training
- Training materials for training peers

Origins

The Leadership Benchmark was developed in England and adapted for use in transition countries. It has been successfully piloted in Bulgaria and Croatia.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

THE BENCHMARK

OF AN EFFECTIVE

DEMOCRATIC LOCAL AUTHORITY

('The Leadership Benchmark')

HOW TO USE THE BENCHMARK

This Benchmark will help local authorities become more effective. It will enable a local authority to assess its effectiveness in three of its main roles – leadership, service delivery and community participation. The authority will be able to compare its performance against the criteria of an 'ideal' local authority, set out in the Benchmark. The results will provide a baseline for an Improvement Plan that can be used by the participating local authority to drive up standards.

For the three roles, the Benchmark sets out 9 core competences. These describe what a local authority should be doing to carry out that role effectively.

In practice, local authorities are at different levels of performance, but each of them should be seeking to improve their performance to the levels of the best. The Benchmark therefore sets out a range of performance in each competence from Level 1 to Level 5. This allows the local authority to assess its level of performance in each competence.

For each competence, a local authority will exhibit indicators that may be positive or negative; a few examples of such indicators are provided. Indicators provide the evidence of performance, or level of competence. There are also some questions that can be used in interviews and workshops to elicit further evidence of performance in each competence.

It is possible for a local authority to apply the Benchmark to its performance through self-assessment; there are guidance and questionnaires available for that.

But a more powerful process is through a 'Peer Review'. A local authority might like to invite an external 'peer group' (consisting of 3-4 trained senior elected representatives and officials from other local authorities) to help it assess its performance. This team can use the Benchmark to undertake a 'peer review' of the authority. This would make the assessment much

more significant, and add a degree of objectivity; it would encourage local authorities to work together and learn from each other.

A visiting 'peer group' can use documents, workshops and interviews to gain a picture of the performance of a local authority, of its strengths and weaknesses, over a period of about 3 days. The group should discuss its draft findings with the leadership of the local authority and agree with them its recommendations for action.

It will be for the local authority itself to draw up an Improvement Plan to build upon its strengths, exploit any opportunities and improve performance in areas of weakness.

It would be the responsibility of the National Association of local authorities to manage a 'Peer Review' programme on behalf of those local authorities who wish to participate. The Council of Europe can offer expertise and a training manual in support of such a programme.

CORE ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF AN EFFECTIVE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Role 1   Leadership

1 Vision and strategy

➢ Develops a realistic vision and a set of values in consultation with local people and organisations, balancing short and long term requirements.
➢ Develops and communicates policies and strategies, welcoming contributions from others.
➢ Leads by example, setting high standards of behaviour and performance.

2 People management

➢ Values all staff and elected members, and helps them to play a constructive role with proper support and resources.
➢ Applies effective personnel disciplines and promotes career opportunities.
➢ Devolves responsibility to managers where appropriate and supports innovation.

3 Communication

➢ Reaches out to all groups in the community, maintains dialogue and helps them become engaged with local government.
➢ Keeps elected members, staff and local people well-informed about its policies and performance, and consults them on its plans.
➢ Ensures all elected members are contactable and have the interests of local people at heart.

Role 2   Service delivery

1 Planning and review

➤ Has clear planning arrangements at community, corporate and service levels for both short and medium term.
➤ Demonstrates clear mechanisms for scrutinising the performance of local services.
➤ Reports clearly and in public on performance results and future plans.
➤ Consults elected members, staff and service users on the design of local services.

2 Innovation and change

➤ Challenges the status quo, and introduces new ideas and better ways of doing things.
➤ Seeks out good practice, disseminates lessons and provides learning opportunities.
➤ Uses project management effectively to introduce change and deliver specific goals.

3 Service management

➤ Manages services efficiently and effectively, in a way that delivers value for money, encourages staff to give of their best, and takes account of the views of service users.
➤ Uses objectives, priorities, performance indicators, standards and targets in all services to drive up performance, and monitors them regularly to inform policy and planning, and to demonstrate accountability.
➤ Compares its performance to the best in other authorities and sets targets for improvements.
➤ Carries out fundamental performance reviews of service provision in order to deliver real improvement.

4 Resource management

➤ Manages finance transparently to achieve maximum benefit, deliver value for money, and avoid unmanageable risk.
➤ Makes best use of assets.
➤ Ensures that resource management responds to the objectives and priorities of the local authority.

Role 3   Community engagement

1 Citizen participation

➤ Keeps citizens informed; requests, listens and responds to local views, and welcomes feedback on users' experience of services.

➤ Creates opportunities for local participation in the design and delivery of services.

➤ Develops neighbourhood bodies to ensure citizen participation in local decision-making.

➤ Encourages registration and voting.

2 Alliance-building

➤ Builds strong partnerships (eg for service delivery) with local organisations, with other tiers of Government.

➤ Creates opportunities for local organisations to contribute to effective local governance.

➤ Makes best use of international opportunities for cooperation.

Role 1: Leadership / Competence 1: Vision and strategy

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (vision, strategy)

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
In consultation with all groups in the community, develops a realistic vision of the kind of community and local government that people want in the longer term, and develops practical strategies and longer term planning to achieve that vision.	• Has begun to define the vision, but with little consultation. • Some attempts to set out strategies, but planning tends to be short term and tactical.	• Has consulted / communicated vision internally and externally, but not much influence on service outcomes. • Explicit strategies developed (eg codes of conduct, training, links with other organisations etc), along with some (but not very effective) longer term planning.	• Widespread understanding of vision, reinforced by induction and training, with clear roles for staff and elected members (including the opposition) and mutual respect between them. • Strategies and longer term planning directly influencing policy and practice; active partnerships with local institutions; clear focus on making a difference for local people and resolving community issues.

Positive indicators:
- good strategic plan available and used;
- partner organisations / institutions fully engaged;
- all parties have access to information, facilities, advice.

Negative indicators:
- poor communication;
- certain community groups feeling excluded;
- internal conflict, inappropriate conduct.

Key questions:

Does the leadership understand the meaning of good local government? What do local people think?
Is the local authority clear about the main strategic issues?
What are the arrangements for working with external partners? With what results?
Does the local authority focus on peoples' needs (eg youth) and issues (eg housing)?
Has the vision been translated into clear objectives, milestones, plans and targets?
Do elected members (including the opposition) and staff work well together?

Role 1: Leadership / Competence 2: People management

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (leadership, roles, staff management, training)		
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Clearly values staff and elected members; generates commitment to the local authority internally and externally; manages staff effectively to ensure personal contribution to the successful achievement of the vision, policies and programmes.	• Leadership takes limited responsibility; weak personnel strategy. • Roles and responsibilities for staff and elected members unclear. • Staff management not seen as important by managers. • Training plans mainly on paper only. • Authority centralised.	• Leadership creates confidence, and works through personnel strategy. • Roles are clear and build on individuals' strengths. • Team work and management support is emphasised; staff are regularly consulted; promotion encouraged. • Full induction for members, and competency-based training and appraisal for all staff.	• Leadership inspires commitment and enthusiasm; personnel strategy has widespread support and leads to effective recruitment and retention. • Climate of cooperation and learning; good working arrangements between staff and elected members. • Good communications and team-working; innovation encouraged; achievement celebrated. • Strong personal motivation to improve; staff feel valued.

Positive indicators:

- staff newsletters and communications vehicles;
- effective training strategy;
- low levels of sickness and absence, and good work discipline;
- clear arrangements for recognising individual and team success and sharing good practice.

Negative indicators:

- the main source of information is unofficial;
- staff openly critical of senior management and the organisation;
- unhealthy, divisive, blame culture;

Key questions:

Are staff satisfied with their employment status? Is the local authority a good organisation to work for?

Is their a staff appraisal scheme? Is it working well and do staff support it?

Does the recruitment process attract the best people for the job? Do they stay?

What arrangements are there for staff views to be communicated to senior management / elected members?

Are staff committed to delivering high standards of service provision?

Do staff have enough authority to manage their responsibilities well? Is this reflected in budget allocations?

Role 1: Leadership / Competence 3: Communication

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (range, internal and external communications)

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Listens, encourages feedback and continuous dialogue with staff, elected members and all sections of the community; informs, convinces and influences, using a variety of communications channels appropriately; builds / uses networks through which to communicate; encourages community participation.	• Disseminates some information about the municipality; communication responsibilities unclear. • Senior managers do not really know what staff think. • Produces some information on specific services, but gets little feedback from service users.	• Communicates wide range of information through several channels; responsibilities clear. • Internal communication adequate and clear; staff and elected members understand policies and priorities. • Information on services / members available and clear; gets feedback from service users.	• Communication given strategic importance both internally and externally; timeliness, targeting and access managed well. • Senior staff and elected members seen as good communicators; training and expertise available; all staff involved. • Positive steps taken to engage local people, with special efforts directed to hard-to-reach groups (eg minorities, young people).

Positive indicators:
- examples of good communications;
- a corporate communications strategy;
- use of wide range of communications channels;
- mechanisms to engage with specific groups.

Negative indicators:
- poor relations with local media;
- leadership seen as poor communicators;
- communications mainly used to attract praise and minimise criticism;
- little communications on major issues.

Key questions:
Is there an annual report that puts in the public domain a clear account of performance and plans?
Are staff and elected members aware of the need for good communications? Are they trained to communicate?
Is there a well-publicised complaints procedure? How constructively is the information used?
How do local people and organisations assess the communications of the local authority? Do they feel well informed?
What are the key objectives of the communications strategy?

Role 2: Service delivery / Competence 1: Planning and review

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (process, outcome-focused, review-based)

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Systematic planning arrangements that link vision and strategy with practical implementation / service provision; performance is subjected to rigorous review and uses results to inform planning.	• An annual planning process is short term and mainly a paper exercise, seen as responsibility of senior staff. • Internal planning starting to focus on improving service delivery. • Little effective review of performance.	• Planning covers short and medium term (3 years), and linked to financial and personnel planning. • Planning allocates responsibilities, indicators and targets. • Planning derives from aims and objectives, which are reviewed regularly.	• Planning is visible and active, engaging all elected members and staff, covering shorter and longer terms (up to 10 years), and integrated across service areas. • Planning linked to job descriptions and individual / team performance appraisal. • Evaluation regularly used to inform policies and plans.

Positive indicators:
- plans are discussed regularly at team meetings and are visible through notice boards, IT systems etc;
- plans are being achieved;
- examples of services being improved as a result of review;
- good community, corporate, service plans accessible.

Negative indicators:
- absence of planning or out-of-date / unrealistic plans;
- excessive central control with managers uninvolved;
- planning seen only as annual exercise;
- elected members negative about performance review;
- information restricted.

Key questions:

Are the local authority's aims and objectives clear to everyone?
Are elected members and officers positive about planning and performance review?
Is there evidence of plans being discussed in team meetings and committee meetings?
How does monitoring, evaluation and performance review feed into future plans?
Do all parts of the local authority contribute equally and enthusiastically?
Do staff feel they work for a local authority that knows what it is trying to achieve?

Role 2: Service provision   / Competence 2: Innovation and change

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (leadership, degree of pro-activity, examples of success)

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Able to think and operate outside existing parameters, challenging the status quo and taking advantage of opportunities; welcomes and manages change in order to improve services.	• Leadership does not see need for change. • Is aware of new forms of local government, partnerships, management and service delivery. • Shows some attempts at planning and implementing change.	• Leadership communicates need for change among staff and elected members. • Actively encourages new approaches; encourages learning from elsewhere. • Can show several practical examples of innovation, and has a few pilot projects.	• Leadership demonstrates personal flexibility and willingness to change; reputation for innovation; asks people to contribute views about future. • Effective arrangements for evaluating new approaches, learning lessons and disseminating good practice. • Examples of innovation and evidence of learning widely identifiable.

Positive indicators:
- seen as a centre of good practice and innovation;
- new approaches to service provision and partnership working;
- processes in place to support change;
- many staff involved in implementing change.

Negative indicators:
- no, or few, examples of different approaches;
- creativity discouraged;
- little acceptance of change; status quo defended;
- examples of change that were not sustained or had little effect.

Key questions:

How well known is the local authority for innovation? In what areas?
Has the local authority undertaken performance reviews of service provision that brought about change?
Does the local authority belong to benchmarking groups or best practice networks?
Has the local authority really considered the changes implied by national legislation and policy?.
Is the local authority implementing sufficient change to achieve high standards of service delivery?
Have major changes been recently introduced successfully?

Role 2: Service delivery / Competence 3: Service management

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (best practice, indicators, user engagement)		
	LEVEL 1	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 5**
Actively seeks to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of service provision in a balanced way so that they better meet the needs of local people and community organisations; staff have the authority to fulfill their responsibilities well and are encouraged to give of their best; local people and organisations are consulted.	• Some ad hoc attempts to improve performance, but few indicators and targets; generally satisfied with status quo. • Staff not very motivated. • Views of service users have little influence on service delivery.	• Some improvements, but focus is more on process than outcomes; some joint working. • Manages performance with objectives, indicators, standards, targets. • Manages budgets well.	• Real drive to deliver high standards of service provision, seeking out best practice and comparing performance. • Performance information readily available; good project management; good use of IT; uses reviews to deliver improvement. • Outward-looking approach to citizens, users and potential users; local people actively engaged.

Key questions:

Do the performance indicators, standards and targets reflect user interests? How are they used to drive up standards?

How does performance in key service areas compare with other local authorities?

How effective are initiatives to encourage greater participation by local people in service provision?

How far are services subject to fundamental performance reviews?

How effectively are projects used to implement major initiatives? Is there sufficient project management expertise?

Do local people have good access to information about services? How is IT used to provide performance information? Is there a constructive complaints procedure?

Positive indicators:

- a clear suite of performance indicators, standards, targets used to drive performance;
- various arrangements for citizen engagement;
- reviews used to drive improvements;
- some services provided jointly with other bodies.

Negative indicators:

- performance indicators and targets rarely used;
- local views of services not taken into account;
- widespread satisfaction with the status quo;
- no external partnerships for service provision.

Role 2: Service delivery / Competence 4: Resource management

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (decentralisation, active management, consultation)		
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Actively manages all financial resources, facilities and assets to ensure maximum benefit, value for money and manageable risk; maximises capacity to achieve successful implementation of policies and programmes to meet the needs of service users and citizens; makes best use of systems and processes.	• Budget management is fully centralised. • Budgets are managed in line with regulations. • Local people are informed of the budget. • Staff do not have the resources to do the job properly.	• Some budget responsibilities with managers; some training. • Local taxes, fees, debt collection and property actively managed; some additional income generated. • Local people are consulted on the budget in advance.	• Managers / elected members actively develop budgets and manage assets / liabilities to meet service priorities; use IT systems effectively; implements best practice in financial management • Alternative sources of funding actively sought. • Staff and local people actively influence budgetary priorities.

Key questions:

Does the local authority have a reputation for good financial management? Is there good internal audit? How far does IT make financial information easily available?
Is there a clear strategy for drawing up the budget?
How much funding has the local authority attracted from alternative sources?
Are there examples of significant cost saving through changed approaches?
How does the local authority consult local people about financial matters?
Are there examples of joint working with partner organisations that increase resources?
What innovative use is local authority property put to?

Positive indicators:
- integrated finance, personnel, service planning;
- some devolved financial responsibility;
- clear financial information / performance data;
- up-to-date procedures.

Negative indicators:
- panic about resource or debt levels;
- high levels of unit costs, poor comparative costs;
- accountancy-driven approach;
- property poorly managed.

Role 3: Community engagement / Competence 1: Citizen participation

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (elected members, attitudes, methods of engagement)

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5
Understands the relationships required with all sections of the community; listen to views of service users and organisations to learn how to improve policies and performance; involves them actively in relevant decision-making; actively encourages voter registration and electoral turnout.	• Some elected members active in some areas. • Not really concerned about engaging local people; consultation seen as means of informing local people. • Only traditional methods used, eg public meetings.	• Most members trained and actively representing interests of local people. • Has strategy for encouraging involvement of local people; encourages electoral registration /voting. • Consultation ad hoc but some innovation; training available.	• Close contact between authority and all sections of community. • Culture of consulting and encouraging participation especially with hard-to-reach groups; high electoral turnout. • Wide range of techniques in use, especially promoting citizen participation in decision-making, eg through neighbourhood bodies.

Positive indicators:
- examples of good, innovative participation;
- mechanisms to support registration / voting;
- special measures to engage minorities;
- examples of resources and decision-making powers devolved to local communities.

Negative indicators:
- no sense of accountability to local people;
- no surveys of public opinion;
- elected members not visible in their community;
- people disenchanted with local politics.

Key questions:

What mechanisms are used to engage local people?
How does the local authority consult with specific groups (eg small businesses, minorities, youth)?
What do people say about their experiences of being consulted?
How are the results of consultation fed into the local authority's priorities, policies and plans?
How open are committee meetings? Are decisions taken openly, or secretly in advance?
Do councillors seek to maintain an exclusive role of speaking for local people, or do they encourage local people to speak for themselves?
How far are local people involved in the solutions to the problems they face?

Role 3: Community engagement / Competence 2: Alliance-building

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCE:	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (communications, structures, awareness, outcome)		
	LEVEL 1	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 5**
Recognises the need to work with central government and local organisations to benefit the community; works in partnership with a number of bodies to initiate and implement policies and programmes jointly or in co-ordination; some international cooperation.	• Communicates occasionally with other sectors (central government, NGOs, community organisations, private sector and other public sector institutions).	• Proactive approach to engaging with others sectors. • Structures in place to enable the different sectors to work together. • Awareness of how partnerships will impact on the structures and responsibilities of the local authority.	• Partnerships are producing positive outcomes; some partnerships international. • Sense of responsibility and sufficient expertise among staff and elected members for joint working. • Effective planning at community level with all sectors contributing; evidence of shared decision-making, shared resources, shared management.

Positive indicators:
- a good, comprehensive plan for the community;
- local forum / joint committees operating well;
- shared strategies for key issues (eg health improvement, business development etc).

Negative indicators:
- few attempts to communicate with other sectors;
- no obvious signs of partnership working;
- some sections of the community excluded;
- partnership arrangements seen as 'talking shops'.

Key questions:

How well has the local authority engaged with central government, other public sector institutions, NGOs, the private sector and other community organisations?
What is the level of its investment (effort, staff, finance, facilities, equipment) and expertise in partnership working?
What is the level of investment by other sectors in working in partnership with the local authority?
Are there successful examples of partnership working? What difference have they made in the community?
Are there examples of pooled resources or integrated service delivery?

PROFILE OF AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE

Local people like to think that they elect representatives to their local Council so that they and their community can be properly represented in local government. Sometimes they are disappointed, but generally their elected representatives do the best they can, often in difficult circumstances.

This is a challenging role. Representatives are elected to serve the interests of the people that elected them. They are also elected to serve the interests of the wider community. Indeed, they are elected to provide effective democratic local government.

Elected representatives are given a respected and high-profile position in society. It is also a position of responsibility and opportunity. They are there to try to resolve the every-day problems of citizens. They are there to make sure that local public services are both efficient and effective, that they respond to the needs of local people.

Elected representatives are there to ensure that local government is transparent and is governed by high ethical standards, that there is good two-way communications between local people and local government, that local people are involved.

> *Elected representatives have a real opportunity to make a difference, to contribute to the well-being of their community. It is up to them to make the most of it.*

It is also a position capable of abuse. Self-interest can win out over community interest and public ethics. This is the risk. Elected representatives must not only be ethical; they must be seen to be ethical.

Being a <u>competent</u> elected representative is not an easy job. To carry out such responsibilities, they need experience and skills. They need to understand how local government works, how it relates to central authorities. What are local government's legal rights and obligations? What are the opportunities and obstacles?

Elected representatives need to understand how to work <u>alongside</u> staff and to get the best out of them. They are not there to do the job of staff. But both staff and elected representatives are there as a team to deliver effective democratic local government. They need to understand each other's role.

> *A good working relationship between a local authority's staff and elected representatives is a critical factor in building effective democratic local government.*

Elected representatives need to understand the financial possibilities and limitations of the local authority. They need to understand how to develop policy and translate it into action, how to turn promises into practice, how not to make promises they cannot keep. They need to know how to work with others and learn from them. They need to know how to engage local people and local organisations in local government.

Elected representatives need to be trained. They bring with them sets of experiences and expertise. This they should be able to use in the service of local government. But they also need to build on this with new training and experience, with visits to other local authorities to see best practice in action, with self-learning and shared learning, with access to advice from experts and from more experienced colleagues. Elected representatives should recognise their training needs and to seek out training opportunities. These can be set out in Personal Development Plans.

Elected representatives should not expect to be excellent in all aspects of every skill. But a local authority should be able to make good use of the particular strengths and skills elected representatives bring to the local authority, and elected representatives should seek personal development in those areas of weakness.

Local authority staff should actively support the elected representatives. They should understand their needs and perspectives. They should ensure that the elected representatives are fully informed and engaged. They should ensure that advice and training is made available.

The Profile of an Elected Representative
Set out below are a set of 9 skills that a competent elected representative should master. Skills 7, 8 and 9 are particularly relevant to the political leadership of a local authority.

This Profile provides the basis for a series of discussions and learning among groups of elected representatives in, for example, a Workshop on the Role and Responsibilities of Elected Representatives. It could be the subject of the final day in the Leadership Workshop (see separate model) where elected representatives are introduced to the competences needed for local government leadership.

An elected representative may also want to use the Profile to carry out a self-assessment to identify areas where further personal development is needed.

National Associations are invited to use this Council of Europe model[1] to develop their own set of skills and actions for locally elected representatives in their own country in the light of local circumstances. They might do this through a Workshop following a Training Needs Analysis of elected representatives that makes use of questionnaires and focus groups.

---

[1] This model draws on the 'skill framework for elected members' drawn up by the IDeA, UK

National Associations might also wish to organise workshops based on this model for <u>every</u> newly-elected representative and for any others who may not yet feel confident in the responsibilities they have taken on. It should become part of a National Training Strategy.

<u>Political parties</u> might wish to take account of this Profile when selecting candidates for local election.

> *Research suggests that one of the most critical factors in building an effective democratic local authority is the leadership of that authority. Leadership is not invested in the Mayor alone. Every elected representative has a leadership role of some kind. This Profile should help improve the <u>political leadership</u> of local authorities.*

PROFILE OF AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE

Skill 1: Provides leadership to the community	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Looks for opportunities to engage with local people and local organisations; seeks their views; reaches out to all groups. b) Keeps up-to-date with issues of local concern, getting information from a wide range of sources. c) Promotes transparency and high ethical standards. d) Is approachable, understanding and encourages trust. e) Provides a voice for all sections of the community. f) Mediates fairly and constructively between people with conflicting needs. g) Campaigns with enthusiasm, courage and persistence on behalf of others.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who does not provide effective leadership? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is providing good leadership?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her leadership expertise?*

Skill 2: Implements regulations and monitors performance	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Evaluates arguments according to evidence; makes independent and impartial judgements. b) Chairs meetings effectively; follows procedures and keeps processes on track. c) Follows the legal process, balancing public needs and local policy. d) Monitors the performance of the local authority and intervenes as appropriate to ensure progress. e) Seeks feedback on his / her own performance and learns from experience. f) Understands and carries out any legal role to the highest standards.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who does not implement regulations and monitor performance properly? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is implementing regulations and monitoring performance properly?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to implement regulations and monitor performance?*

Skill 3: Challenges the local authority to do better.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Quickly analyses and assimilates information, taking account of the wider strategic context. b) Presents arguments in a concise and meaningful way. c) Asks for explanations and listens carefully to opposite arguments. d) Checks on the implementation of recommendations. e) Challenges processes, decisions and people, where necessary, in an objective, rigorous and resilient way. f) Acts as a 'critical friend', provides constructive feedback and acknowledges the success of others.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who does not challenge unnecessary processes, bad decisions and dishonest people? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is challenging actions of a local authority with integrity and not just opposing for the sake of opposing?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to challenge?*

Skill 4: Communicates well.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Communicates regularly with the community via newsletters, phone calls and local media. b) Listens, checks for understanding and adapts style as necessary. c) Builds relationships with the local media; creates opportunities for communicating key decisions, activities and achievements. d) Ensures issues are properly understood, so that decisions can be made based on proper information. e) Speaks clearly and confidently in public; uses easy language and avoids jargon. f) Provides regular feedback; keeps people informed and manages expectations. g) Uses appropriate language to communicate key points verbally and in writing (eg letters, reports, interviews, presentations). h) Encourages the use of institutional mechanisms to ensure good communications both internally and externally.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who does not communicate well? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is communicating well?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to communicate?*

Skill 5: Works in partnership with others.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5

Action:
  a) Builds good relationships with colleagues, staff and the wider community.
  b) Achieves objectives by co-ordinating others, maintaining focus on the task and persisting in the face of setbacks.
  c) Empowers others to take responsibility; knows when to delegate or provide support; involves citizens in decision-making.
  d) Makes others feel valued, trusted and included, including those of different backgrounds.
  e) Shows patience in developing networks and partnerships.
  f) Makes best use of the will, capacity and expertise of other organisations (public, private, voluntary) in local government.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who finds it difficult to work in partnership with others? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is doing a good job in developing partnerships?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to develop effective partnerships?*

Skill 6: Shows good political understanding and behaviour.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5

Action:
  a) Actively represents his / her political views and values through decisions and actions.
  b) Where he / she is a member of a political group, helps develop cohesion within the group and ensures good communication.
  c) Communicates political values through canvassing, campaigning and in other ways of engaging the public.
  d) Is committed to developing a deep political understanding of the local and national situation.
  e) Acts ethically; understands and communicates political values to others.
  f) Works across political boundaries in the interests of the community without compromising political values.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who has poor political skills? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is doing a good political job?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to develop effective political skills?*

Skill 7: Provides vision for the community and the local authority.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Contributes to strategic policy-making and prioritises actions based on local needs, manifesto commitments and regional opportunities. b) Works with staff to collate and analyse information and inform budgets and plans. c) Encourages involvement of other stakeholders in policy development. d) Contributes to and communicates a shared vision of the future; provides clear direction and promotes understanding. e) Is open to new ideas and adapts innovatively to change. f) Enhances own effectiveness by broadening his / her perspective and learning from others and from best practice.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who has no vision? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she has a clear vision and communicates it well?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to develop a good vision?*

Skill 8: Manages performance to drive up the standards of local public services.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Works closely with senior staff to develop, agree and implement strategies for efficient and effective service delivery. b) Sets and communicates realistic objectives; monitors performance and addresses short-comings. c) Emphasises a team approach and shares responsibility for success and failure. d) Encourages performance in service delivery to be challenged; responds positively to feedback and new ideas. e) Involves service users in the design and monitoring of services. f) Represents local people and local organisations in the appropriate forums.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who ignores performance? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is doing a good job in managing performance?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to manage performance?*

Skill 9: Delivering excellence.	PERSONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT				
	1	2	3	4	5
Action: a) Provides leadership; inspires trust and gains commitment to policies and decisions. b) Shapes a culture of excellence; acts as a role model for proper behaviour, ethical practice and democratic process. c) Builds strong relationships with senior staff and other elected representatives based on open communication and cooperative working. d) Acts as the public face of the local authority; champions the local authority's needs in other forums. e) Works across political and local authority boundaries to foster good communications and cooperation. f) Anticipates and resolves difficulties; judges when, and when not to, get involved and when to say 'no'. g) Is committed to learning, developing others and introducing best practice. h) Juggles numerous and sometimes conflicting responsibilities effectively.					

- *How would an elected representative behave who ignores the search for excellence? What would be the consequences?*
- *How can an elected representative know that he / she is delivering excellence?*
- *What can an elected representative do to improve his / her ability to deliver excellence?*

THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Introduction
The Leadership Benchmark assumes a certain level of development in a municipality. Some municipalities may prefer to start with a preparatory leadership workshop to allow the leadership of a municipality to understand more clearly their leadership role and how they might subsequently use the Leadership Benchmark to achieve higher levels of competence. This model offers a 2-day Preparatory Leadership Programme.

Participants:
Senior elected representatives and officials, particularly those newly elected or appointed and those responsible for smaller local authorities.

Objectives:
1   To develop participants' understanding of the basic elements of leadership and strategic management required to build effective democratic local government.

2   To get participants to think how they might introduce or reinforce the elements of leadership and strategic management in their own local authority.

3   To introduce participants to the CoE model Leadership Benchmark.

Outcome:
Participants should be able to begin to use the Leadership Benchmark to assess their level of leadership competence, to develop their personal approach to leadership and introduce reforms within their local authority to improve leadership and strategic management.

Programme duration:
2 days

Preparatory work:
Each participant is asked to bring a case-study / good examples of what his / her local authority has achieved in terms of longer term planning, community engagement, staff management, service provision and organisation development. The trainers, who should include senior elected representatives or officials with recognised leadership competence, should have numerous examples to hand.

Sessions (1-2 hours each):

1. **Vision of local government**

Purpose
To start thinking about how local government might develop in the longer term.
Task
Following an introduction, participants work in small groups to share realistic ideas about what they would like their local authority to be doing in 5-10 years' time. Each group reports back to the full session for discussion.
Questions
What kind of local authority do we want? What kind of local government do local people expect / deserve? What have we learnt from other European models?

2. **Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis)**

Purpose
To think about the basis for planning the development of the local authority.
Task
Following an introduction, participants work in small groups to fill in a one-page template of the strengths and weaknesses of their local authorities and the opportunities and threats facing them. They report back to the full session, where a composite SWOT analysis is prepared.
Questions
What is the local authority doing now that could be done better? What more could the local authority do? What are the main difficulties it faces?

3. **Core principles of effective democratic local government**
   a   Vision and strategies

Purpose
A local authority should have a vision of where it wants to go, strategies for how it should get there and expertise to implement the strategies. This should be developed in consultation with local people and organisations.
Task
Following an introduction and guided discussion with simple examples, participants should each prepare a brief (½ page) policy statement (ie vision and strategy) for one policy area in their local authority (eg local economic development) and share it with a partner.
Questions
Would local people and organizations share your vision and strategy? Is it realistic? How might it be funded?

   b   Community engagement

Purpose
An effective democratic local authority engages local people and local organisations at 3 levels: information, consultation and decision-making.
Task
Following an introduction and guided discussion with simple examples, participants should work in small groups to draw up a set of actions that a local authority should take at each level (one level per group). Each group reports back to the full session

Questions
Who is responsible for engaging local people in the work of the local authority? Does the local authority really want to involve local people? Do staff and elected representatives really understand the meaning of local democracy? How will you persuade local people to get involved?

c   Staff management

Purpose
An effective democratic local authority makes best use of its staff. This involves right recruitment, training, responsibilities, management, appraisal.
Task
Following an introduction and guided discussion with simple examples (eg on current practice and possible new approaches), the trainer should present a model job description. Participants should work in small groups to draw up a job description of one of the group's members and an associated personal training plan. This should be followed by a general discussion on using job descriptions effectively, and a role play of a job appraisal.
Questions
Does the leadership of the local authority really think that its staff are its most important asset? Is everything being done to encourage staff to give of their best? Do staff have enough authority to do the best job possible?

d   Service provision

Purpose
An effective democratic local authority should provide good services to its citizens.
Task
Following an introduction and guided discussion with simple examples, the participants should divide into small groups for a role-play. For the role play, 2 participants are citizens wanting to set up a particular business; they want to know how far their local authority can help them. The other 2 participants are an elected representative and a responsible official from the local authority. Following the role play, each group should design 4 or 5 performance indicators for a particular service (eg local economic development) and report to the full session on how the chosen indicators might be used to raise standards in that service.
Questions
What is best practice? How can it be used to raise service standards? How can it help solve the problems of the local authority? What value are performance indicators? Are the local authority services accessible to those who need them? Are there unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles? How does the local authority know that its services are managed in the best possible way and that they meet the needs of citizens? How can they be improved?

e   Organisation development

Purpose
How should an effective democratic local authority be organised?
Task
Following an introduction and a guided discussion with simple examples, each participant should set down 4 changes that he / she would like to introduce into his / her own local authority to improve its organisation, and explain them to the full session. If there is time, participants should then work in small groups to draw up a communications strategy for their local authority and discuss their proposals in the full session.
Questions
What should be the respective roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, the Council as a body, individual councillors and the staff? What should the organisation chart look like? Is the current organisation designed to deliver good services? Does it communicate well both internally and externally? How bureaucratic are the procedures? Is it easy to introduce reform? Are citizens informed and consulted? Where does accountability lie?

f   Institutional cooperation

Purpose
An effective democratic local authority works with other local authorities and with central and regional authorities. Its National Association is there to articulate its concerns and provide it with services. Other organizations can help provide advice and services.
Task
Following an introduction and guided discussion with simple examples, participants should work in groups to draw up a list of problems and solutions relevant to working with key partners. Each group should present its arguments to the full session.
Questions
Do local authorities know how to work effectively with regional and central authorities (and vice versa)? Is best use being made of the opportunities available? What are the expectations? What are the shortcomings?

g   Next steps

Each participant should draw up a **Personal Action Plan** to be implemented on return to their respective local authority, and share some of the ideas in a final session. The trainers might wish to draw up a set of recommendations for the follow-up to this Workshop by the National Association and other organisations. The National Association should consider how it might support the participants subsequently. This will end the Preparatory Leadership Workshop with a set of commitments.

LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK PROGRAMME

Introduction

Article 3 of the European Charter defines local self-government as the right and ability of local authorities to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population. These are essential characteristics of local government.

In South East Europe, modern local government is young – generally less than 10 years old. It starts with policy decisions and legislation. Competences and resources are transferred from central to regional and local levels of government. But that is no more than the start. There has to be a considerable degree of evolution to a stage where a local authority not only complies with the spirit as well as with the letter of the European Charter, but also reaches the standards of the best.

Not only do structures and processes have to be created; skills, attitudes and experience have to be developed. The change in moving from a culture of central control to one of actively responding to the interests of local people is difficult and complex. It takes time. Some local authorities move more rapidly along this path than others.

What makes the difference between more effective and less effective local government? On that the European Charter is silent. What is the 'direction of travel' for a local authority that seeks to be effective? It is not for central government to impose that direction of travel. Rather, it is for local government itself to set its own standards and to drive up its performance to the standards of the best. This is where a National Association can help.

The Council of Europe's 'Benchmark of an Effective Democratic Local Authority' sets out a set of criteria that define the characteristics of more effective and less effective local authorities in terms of their leadership, service provision and community engagement.

A local authority learns best when it learns from its own experience. The Council of Europe's Leadership Benchmark programme enables a local authority to first assess itself against that Benchmark. It is best if they are supported by professional trainers or, even better, from a trained 'Peer Review Team'. On the basis of the assessment, they should draw up an Improvement Programme for building on strengths, exploiting opportunities, and tackling weaknesses - that is, for achieving the Benchmark standards.

Objectives of the Leadership Benchmark Programme

1. Drive up the standards of local authorities towards those of the best.
2. Provide an opportunity to local authorities to take responsibility for their own improvement.
3. Give the local government national association(s) the capacity to lead the drive for self-improvement throughout local government.

Methodology

A National Association should normally be seeking, as one of its goals, to drive up standards of performance across local government. It is therefore in the best position to take responsibility for the Leadership Benchmark Programme.

The National Association will need to establish two teams:

a) a small Project Team to cover project management and administrative support.
b) a volunteer pool of local experts (Peer Review Team) from the more senior positions in local authorities (both staff and elected members); the criteria should be knowledge, skills and experience in leadership and service provision in local government.

The pool of Peers may be supplemented by independent people from outside local government but who may have relevant knowledge, skills or experience.

The National Association will invite local authorities to take part in the programme. There is no coercion. Local authorities must want to participate because they see the benefits of so doing.

The Project Team will put together a team of about 4-5 of the peers (Peer Review Team) under the leadership of a mayor or chief executive, and supported by a Project Manager, to work with a local authority to carry out the peer assessment and make a report. The Peer Review Team makes the assessment in two parts:

a) evaluating the key documents of a local authority (e.g. corporate plan, training strategy, economic development strategy, organisation chart etc)
b) spending 3-4 days in the local authority concerned to hold interviews and workshops with key individuals, groups of staff and external partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

This process will provide the evidence from both documents and stakeholders on the basis of which an assessment can be made. The focus of the assessment is on the corporate leadership and management of the local authority rather than the detailed operations of individual services. It should cover strengths, opportunities and weaknesses.

At the end of the visit, the Peer Review Team will want to discuss its preliminary findings with the leadership of the local authority to seek consensus. The Project Manager will prepare a draft report on which the local authority should be invited to comment. On the basis of the comments, the Project Manager will prepare a final report. These reports may be confidential.

On the basis of the assessment in the report, the local authority, as part of its commitment to the Benchmark Programme, should draw up an Improvement Programme to build on its strengths, exploit opportunities and tackle weaknesses. The Project Manager should arrange monitoring visits after 6 and 12 months to confirm that action is being taken in line with the Improvement Plan.

Peers should understand that participating in a Peer Review is an extremely valuable personal development experience for themselves.

In the course of the assessment, the Project Team will come across examples of best practice. With the agreement of the local authority, the National Association may want to use these examples as a basis of study visits or case-study publications, so that other local authorities can learn from them.

Implementation of the programme

a)   Preparatory steps by the National Association

i.   Translate the Leadership Benchmark and the Programme materials into its own language.

ii.   Hold a Workshop with local government representatives (both staff and elected members) to discuss the concept and amend (or add to) the Benchmark in ways that make it more meaningful to local circumstances.

iii.   Send the Leadership Benchmark and the Programme materials to all local authorities to seek their views and gain their commitment.

iv.   Establish a small project team (4-5 staff, including 2 project managers) to manage the Programme.

v.   Create a volunteer pool of, say, 24-30 local 'experts' ('peers') made up of local government chief executives, directors, mayors, senior elected members and people with the right skills but who may be working outside local government. The criteria for selection should normally include knowledge, experience and competence in leadership and service provision in local government.

vi.   Design and run a 2-3 day training programme for the pool of experts to familiarise them with the concept and practice of the Leadership Benchmark Programme.

b)   **Programme management by the National Association's Project Team**

i.   Invite local authorities to apply for a pilot 'Peer Review', and select the most appropriate [6] of them. There should be no coercion – the pilot authorities must want to do this because they see its benefits. Agree the dates for the peer visit with the selected local authorities. A visit should last for 3-4 days. From the pool of local experts, create a balanced team of [4-5] peers (Peer Review Team) for each peer review, each lead by a chief executive / mayor and supported by one of the project managers.

Four weeks before the visit

ii.   Request from the local authority 5 sets of background documents relevant to the peer review (corporate plan, training strategy, organisation chart etc). Each member of the Peer Review Team should receive a set. This will enable the team to gather a certain amount of evidence in advance of the visit and develop some understanding of the local authority.

iii.   Ask the local authority to make arrangements for accommodation, meals, transport and administrative support for the Peer Review Team for the duration of the visit.

Two weeks before the visit

iv.   Draw up a schedule for the Peer Review visit in consultation with the local authority. The schedule should include individual discussions with key senior staff and elected members, workshops with representative groups of senior, middle and junior staff in different departments, and discussions with the local authority's principal external partners (private and voluntary sector and other public sector bodies).

The aim of the discussions would be to build up a picture of the effectiveness of the local authority from the views of the people involved to complement the evidence gained from relevant documents. The Peer Review Team would normally work in pairs, and would be guided in each discussion or workshop by a prepared set of questions.

v.   The Peer Review Team would also need time to come together to discuss their findings with each other. They will be able to come to initial conclusions and to share those conclusions with the leadership of the local authority in a feedback session at the end of the visit.

Two weeks after the visit

vi.   Prepare a confidential draft report with recommendations, and share it with the Peer Review Team and local authority concerned. Revise it in the light of comments, and send the final version to the Peer Review Team and the local authority.

c)   Follow-up by the Local Authority

The local authority has committed itself to prepare an Improvement Programme based on the findings of the Peer Review Report. This might include introducing specific training programmes, changing processes, making better use of particular staff, initiating projects, setting targets, etc:

i.   Allocate responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the Improvement Programme, with final responsibility with the chief executive / mayor.

ii.   Build the Improvement Programme and the resulting changes into the normal structures and process of the local authority in due course (e.g. the corporate plan).

d)   Follow-up by the National Association

i.   In consultation with the local authority, arrange 1-day or 2-day follow-up visits after 6 and 12 months by the project manager and 1 or 2 members of the Peer Review Team to evaluate progress made by the local authority against the Improvement Programme, and issue a confidential monitoring report to the local authority.

ii.   In consultation with the local authority, identify any best practice that might be shared with the wider local government community.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Model Leadership Benchmark (CoE)	Refining the Benchmark	Assessment stage: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities	Capacity-building stage
	By the National Association:	*Within a local authority on request:*	*Within a local authority:* **Leadership Improvement Programme**
LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK ↑	National Adaptation Workshop ↑	3-day Trainer Assessment and Report ↑ 4-day Peer Assessment and Report	*By the National Association:* **2-day Leadership Workshops** a. Vision, strategy, planning, review b. People management c. Communications d. Service management e. Resource management f. Community participation g. Partnership working **Leadership Best Practice Network**

Report: Peer Review of the City of Solin, Croatia

Benchmarking the leadership and strategic management of a local authority

November 9 – 13, 2003

Summary

The City of Solin is perceived as an exceptionally well organized and homogenous unity achieving an enviable level of consensus in all its activities. All issues regarding the improvement of life quality in the City are decided upon rationally, regardless of any party affiliation. This approach to decision making on crucial issues facilitates the work of the City Government and of the Mayor, whose role and position are significantly reinforced by such relations. A strong political and administrative management are a prerequisite of a stable city administration.

In their work the Council is extremely open for suggestions and finding the best models, both those to be implemented by themselves and for those already implemented by others. Such approach resulted in a series of high-quality examples, some of them really innovative and original. On the other side, the models that have already been implemented elsewhere proved to be even better in Solin and their implementation has been confirmed in everyday life.

Along with the political and administrative management of good quality there is also a motivated personnel performing their tasks in a highly professional manner. Relatively high salaries for Croatian circumstances, as well as additional motivation are the guarantee for a high quality performance, which is additionally explaining the safety and stability of executive management in the City. Personnel profile is also satisfactory.

One of the main characteristics of both representative and executive management in the City of Solin is a distinctive identification of the needs of the City and the citizens, followed by the satisfaction of these needs, which forms a transparent strategy of development of community identity. In addition to a series of activities following this attitude, there is also an extraordinary support of sports activities, both individual and team activities. The City of Solin has become one of the few settlements in Croatia with a significant increase of population, which is a result of the fact that the City of Solin has developed into a desirable place for living, working and setting up a family.

However, despite all the results achieved by the City, there is no document that would distinctly determine the strategy of city development and provide guidelines for the future. Such a document would enable the present and future authorities to clearly determine the priorities of the community for a longer period and in this way to prevent the discontent of single interest groups with regard to the appropriateness of some projects, but at the same time this document would contribute to an even stronger development of community identity. Additionally, such document would be a guideline for prospective investors, enabling them to identify their interests and opportunity for cooperation, which would be in the best interest of the City of Solin and its citizens.

A strategic plan of city development would provide for many co-operation opportunities with partners in the realisation of strategic and other projects. It has been observed that the circle of partners in the operation of city administration is rather small and mostly restricted to the partners whose business activity is meeting the needs of the community, such as utility or traffic services. The city administration would significantly improve its performance by extending this cooperation to the neighbouring local self-government units, NGOs or economic sector, which could be included into development and implementation of joint projects. The possible determination of tourism as one of the priority frame of reference in the future development of the City includes a stronger engagement of government institutions (ministries, government agencies) or entrepreneurs (construction of hotels or marine).

The general image of the City of Solin is the image of a prosperous and successful community within the existing frames and circumstances in the Croatian society. However, this success would be considerably improved by a strategic plan which would be a guideline for the present and the future management, and this cooperation must include all social structures.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the Review Team may not be numerous, but they are aimed at the heart of the "problem". With only good intentions these recommendations are directed towards the improvement of the city administration, which is successful as it is. They were adopted by the City Council of Solin at the presentation of the Team's conclusions on all the advantages and challenges observed. The basic challenges that the City of Solin is facing are:

1. Elaboration of the economic development strategy of the City
2. Widening the circle of prospect partners in strategic projects
3. Salona Project – the past as a guarantee for the future

Background

1.   The visit to the City of Solin was part of the National Benchmark Programme of peer reviews in local self-government units, arranged by the National Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia in cooperation with the Council of Europe. A peer review helps the local self-government unit assess its current achievements and its capacity to change. The basis for the assessment is the Council of Europe "Benchmark of an effective local authority". This focuses on the two key organisational themes of leadership and strategic management.

2.   The peer review is not an inspection. It offers a supportive approach, undertaken by friends, albeit 'critical friends' and its intention is to help an authority identify its current strengths as much as its weaknesses.

3.   It is the beginning of an ongoing change process. This can then be taken forward by the local self-government unit with an improvement plan to address the areas where the review team recommends action. The National Association of Towns and Municipalities will monitor the plan's implementation wit a follow-up visit carried out a year after the original review if the City of Solin wishes.

4.   The members of the peer review team were:

- Branko Mučnjak, Team Leader, Mayor of the City of Donja Stubica
- Tulio Demetlika, Team member, Mayor of the City of Labin
- Draga Petričić, Team member, Head of the Administrative Department for city Self-management and general administrative services of the City of Zadar
- Mladen Ivanović, Team member, external associate of the Association
- Robert Telford Tinlin, expert of the Council of Europe
- Siniša Gregoran, Project Manager, City of Osijek

5.   The programme for the week was organised in advance and included a wide variety of activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a spectrum of internal and external stakeholders in the City of Solin, including:

- discussions with the political leadership and senior management of the City of Solin
- Workshops: "Relationship of the City of Solin and the employees and citizens". Participants were the employees of the City of Solin directly working with the citizens (frontline staff) and the employees performing physical and technical work; "The City of Solin as seen by elected members"; participants were members of City Government and the members of the City Council of Solin; "The City of Solin and its citizens"; participants were representatives of local self-government and NGOs.
- meetings with the elected members from all parties
- discussions with public service trade unions, tenants and service users

- visits to services including a leisure centre, sheltered housing, shopping centre and economic subjects
- a visit to a drop-in centre managed by a voluntary organisation
- meetings with external partners, the voluntary sector, representatives from residents panel
- discussions with representatives from community forums and associations

6.   The team was very appreciative of the warm welcome and excellent hospitality provided by the City of Solin during their stay, and would like to thank all involved for their valuable contributions throughout the week. The programme for the week was very well organised and co-ordinated and the team received wholehearted support and co-operation from everyone they met.

7.   The feedback given to the local self-government unit on the last day of the review reported on the key messages and this report gives a more detailed written account structured around the two main organisational themes mentioned above and the core organisational competencies supporting each of them.

Context

8.   In terms of space and partly of administration, the City of Solin is the successor of the old town Salona and exists continuously for over 2000 years. It was named after the river Salon (presently: Jadro). As an urban unit it was formed under the rule of Gai Julius Caesar and in that time it becomes the metropolis of the Roman province Dalmatia. Today the region is called Dalmatia and covers almost the whole eastern coast of Adriatic Sea. At his peak the City had some 60,000 residents. At the end of the 6th century the Avars and the Slavs conquered Salona and the City deteriorated. It was not until the early Middle Age, when Croatian aristocrats started to rule the City, that the cultural and demographic revival of the City started, but the former glory and importance of Salona has not been reached to the present day. With respect to the administration, the City of Solin is a part of the District Splitsko-dalmatinska. It is situated on the surface of 3,430 hectares and there are approximately 19,500 residents on this area. The area of the City is characterized by intense demographic movements. The City of Solin itself is an inseparable unit with Split, the second largest town in the Republic of Croatia. It is the very connection with Split that causes differences in opinions in some cases and in some strategic issues, but it is also a potential for possible benefits that Solin could enjoy in the future.

9.   According to the statistics, the average salary in Solin amounts to Kuna 4,219.00 kn, and on the level of the District Splitsko-dalmatinska the average salary is Kuna 3,981,00 kn. In the City of Solin there are 350 legal persons registered, and about 400 crafts (handicraft). Larger economic subject that significantly influence the economic and social image of the City are Dalmacijacement – RMC, INA, AD Plastik, Salonit, Coca-cola, Voljak, Mercator, Tommy and Farmacija. Although these economic subjects have an extremely strong significance, some of them are suppressing the most prosperous industry in Croatia: tourism. Situated on the very coast of Adriatic Sea, these subjects have prevented the development of tourism, as the City itself has only short strip of the coast and the major part of the City is located on the land.

10. The Statute of the City of Solin contains the determination of the representative body: the City Council consists of 19 councillors, and the executive government is the Mayor and 7 members of the City Government. The absolute majority in the Council are the members of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and of the Croatian Pure Party of Right (HČSP). The members of the SDP are the most important opposition.

     The city administration has 40 employees, 28 of them in their own facilities.

Leadership

Vision and Strategy

Advantages

- Existence of the environmental protection programme
- Existence of physical and urban development plan
- Existence of the vision for development of a prosperous town
- Strong political leadership

Issues for consideration

- Establishing the economic and social council
- Elaboration of a development strategy document

11. The City of Solin has elaborated the Environmental Protection Plan, which is one of the crucial issues for a town situated on a relatively small area, surrounded by large industrial plants.

12. In view of spatial restraints the Physical plan and the Urban Development plan are equally important. Due to the large population growth and extremely high rate of "wild" development it is praiseworthy to set the frames in which such situation can be controlled to some extent. The existence of the plan enables Solin to avoid the obstacles to the economic and urban development of the City.

13. The City of Solin has a transparent and well established vision of the development, which also reflects the local and the national development strategy. The social, environmental, economic and social areas are especially prominent. The vision provides a clear picture of comprehensive endeavours of the local self-government units and of the short-term and long-term goals to be achieved. The vision itself unites the endeavours of individuals and institutions in the City of Solin and is therefore a guarantee for the development. Moreover, the overall goals of the City of Solin are presented appropriately and - most important of all – the members of the city management structures have strongly identified themselves with these goals. Special emphasize should be put on the endeavour of the management structure to develop the identity of Solin as a community with special features, but also with many advantages including those that can be used as an example for both neighbouring and remote local self-government units.

14. The political and management leadership is markedly strong. The Council President and the Mayor have a support of the members of leading political parties, but also of the opposition parties. They also enjoy a strong support and loyalty of the personnel of the city administration. A strong leadership is undertaking many activities aimed at the social and cultural image of the town and has a role of promoter in the transformation of the City from the socially endangered and neglected unit into the desirable place to live in.

15. Despite the vision of city administration and the observable prosperity of the City, it is the opinion of the Review Team that the Council should widen the circle of participants in the development strategy of the City. In all working bodies of the Council the members are exclusively the councillors, and the experts from certain areas are neglected. In a long term such approach cannot achieve satisfactory results, because those who are practicing certain activities can better recognize the needs and the development changes to be applied in the planning. Therefore it seems that it is necessary to establish a body such as economic and social council.

16. Despite the results achieved by the City, there is a lack of a document clearly determining the development strategy of the City, directing this development towards the future. Such a document would enable the present and the future management to clearly determine the priorities of the community for a longer period and at the same time it would contribute to an even stronger development of community identity. According to the information from top officials of the city administration, the elaboration of development plan is underway and the anticipated term for its completion is the end of the year 2004.

People management

Advantages

- Financial stimulations for employees in city administration
- Good coverage with by-laws (enactment)
- Staggered work schedule – control of coming in and going out
- Contentment of city councillors with administrative and professional services of the City
- Well designed working facilities

Issues for consideration

- Additional education of employees
- Elaboration of criteria for financial stimulation
- Professionalism as an essential criterion for employment and work assignment

17. The guarantee for a satisfied and motivated employee in any organization is stimulation of good performance, and financial stimulation is the most appropriate form of stimulation. The city administration applies this form of motivation and it is reflected on the general atmosphere within the organization. A content of employees is obvious and it results in the loyalty to the management structure.

18. The City Council has enacted most of the by-laws granting the quality work adjusted to the law within the self-government domain of the local self-government unit in the Republic of Croatia. A good legislative base is a foundation for a quality and purposeful work of the bodies, whose basic activity is meeting the public needs.

19. The administration of the City of Solin has introduced staggered work schedule for its employees with the primary goal of enabling them to plan the time to be spent in their offices and the time in which they perform their duties. In this way the employees can adjust their working hours to their personal needs, which means that they make a maximum use of the time spent in their offices performing the tasks they were entrusted with. A careful control of arrivals and departures of employees prevents possible misuse of this privilege.

20. All members of the City Council have expressed their content with the professional services of the City and with the leadership personnel in those services. They have praised the quick reactions to the decisions of the Council and the City Government, as well as the quality of performance in implementation of these decisions. We consider this to be a result of the motivation mentioned above.

21. In addition to the motivation, the working premises are of an extraordinary importance. The working premises are well designed, with lots of light. All offices are equipped with air conditioners. Office furniture is modern and new, and so is the building in which the city administration facilities are located (constructed a few years ago). There is always a good provision of office supplies.

22. The skills of the city administration are mainly based on the knowledge acquired in a regular education, depending on the educational background. During the interviews with the employees the Review Team members learned that there is no additional training or education for the employees, such as foreign languages, informatics and other seminars, etc. If there is any additional training, it is limited to a very narrow circle of those on leading positions.

23. Although the Team felt that the financial stimulation deserved to be praised, it is nevertheless considered that such stimulation should be based on the criteria developed in advance, and not on the discretion of the management structure or as a result of a single activity of and employee. Lack of the criteria developed in advance opens the space for different rumours and discontent with regard to the justification of individual rewards. Even worse, there is also room for possible misuse of the rewarding process.

24. There are also rumours that some of the contracts financed by the City are awarded to entrepreneurs who are in close family or friendly relations with the members of the City Council or City Government. There were also some objections that in such this had been the crucial criterion for employment of some individuals in the city administration or in the institutions in which the City is either the founder or majority holder. The Team believes that the city leadership should take appropriate steps to prevent such rumours by ensuring that the crucial criterion for employment and contract awarding is expertise and not the suitability of any kind

Communication

Advantages

- Financing of local papers and of the show on the local TV
- Fixed hours for meetings with the Mayor and the Heads of Departments
- Previous public discussions on all important issues
- Weekly board meetings of the Mayor and the City Government
- Open phone line for complaints and suggestions
- Publishing the significant enactments on the Internet

Issues for consideration

- Reactions to citizens' complaints, no written answers
- Regular updating of the web site
- Appointing a person in charge of Public Relations
- Testing public opinion prior to making crucial decisions (going into debts, spending budget assets, etc.)

25.   The City Council is attaching great importance to informing the citizens and the general public and has therefore launched a local paper which is among other things presenting the activities and the plans of the city administration. The paper is entirely financed from the city budget. There is a show on a local television in a form of a weekly chronicle covering the events in the City. This show, too, is financed from the city budget.

26.   The Mayor is open for visits of the citizens once a week, on Fridays from 9 to 13 hours, and the Heads of Departments have daily consulting hours. At these meetings the citizens can raise their issues, give objections and suggestions for the work of the city administration.

27.   Prior to decision making there are public discussions on all issues of importance for the City. These discussions are open for all citizens, stakeholders, businessmen and all those who believe that it is in their interest to participate in the discussion. The attendance of these public discussions depends on the importance and attractiveness of the issues discussed.

28.   Once a week the Mayor and the members of the City Government meet to consider all important issues of current interest. It should be mentioned, however, that the meetings of the Mayor and the Heads of Departments or members of the City Government are held when necessary.

29.   There is an open telephone line for complaints of the citizens, and the citizens also can address the Head of Department in charge of utility services via cellular phone.

30.   The official Internet sites of the City include all important documents and enactments released by the City Council and the City Government. The Internet site is modern and well designed.

31.   The Review Team has observed one important shortcoming in the communication on all levels, both within the city administration and with the outside. There are no timely reactions to the complaints (written or oral), and when there is a reaction, as a rule there is no written answer to the complaint. In this way the citizens and other subjects are deprived of their basic right with respect to the bodies of city administration – the right to complaint.

32. Although the Internet site is well designed, it is necessary to update it timely and to include all current events and all activities in the City (whether of the city administration, or of any other subject) if such activity is important for a community life.

33. Although the "any time" direct communication has its advantages, there are also disadvantages to it, such as disturbance to the work of officials and clerks. It is therefore the opinion of this Team that it is necessary to identify one person in the city administration who would be in charge for Public Relations and who would be the contact person for citizens and other interested parties. This person would be in charge of the proper distribution of gathered information among the city services, in order to provide for competent solutions and decisions. In this way the disturbances of the work and possible unpleasant situations would be avoided.

34. Despite the fact that there are public discussions on all important issues, it is the Team's opinion that prior to making decisions on debts or spending of the budget it is necessary to test the public opinion. In this way each financial activity would gain legitimacy.

Community Engagement

Advantages

- Establishment of the Plan Council for elaboration of Master Urban development plan and inclusion of all social structures
- Organizing of activities for children not included into pre-school programmes
- Participation in covering the costs of transport for pupils and students
- Financing summer holidays for children of fallen soldiers in the recent war and for children from families with many children

Issues for consideration

- Improvement of the idea of local self-government
- Encouraging the foundation of the "Youth Forum" and the "Environmental Forum"

35. Prior to the elaboration of the Master Urban development plan the Plan Council was established. It requested the respective opinions of all relevant social structures, such as archaeological and art-conservation departments, water management authorities, etc. Such cooperation resulted in better quality of solutions in the Plan itself, preventing further devastation of the city area in the sense of uncontrolled "wild" development, and providing for the protection of the extraordinary rich historical and cultural heritage of the City of Solin and its surroundings.

36.   As the demographic growth is exceptionally high in the City of Solin, the City cannot timely follow such growth in terms of infrastructure. One of the consequences of the demographic growth is a relatively high number of children who could not find place in kindergartens, due to the lack of space in these institutions. In order to alleviate this problem, the City organizes different activities in kindergartens during summer. These activities include the children who are not included into the pre-school programmes.

37.   Considering the fact that the City of Solin is "leaning" on the City of Split, which is several times larger, this bond is inseparable. Therefore there are no high schools and colleges. In order to compensate for this, the City Council of Solin is participating in covering the transport costs for pupils and students who are daily commuting to Split for school.

38.   There is also a large number of children in Solin whose one or both parents were killed in the recent war in the Republic of Croatia. For such children the City provides for summer holiday expenses (accommodation and food). This programme includes not only children whose parents were killed in the war, but also the children from families with many children, and there is quite a number of such families in Solin. In this way the City contributes to the improvement and alleviation of extremely unfavourable demographic situation in the Republic of Croatia.

39.   Although there are some very good examples of the community engagement of city administration, it is the opinion of this Team that the most important segment in this context is underdeveloped: the local self-government. The local self-government is functioning as a prolonged arm of the City Council and is not particularly interested in acting as a corrective body to the city management. On the contrary, they coordinate and adjust all their activities to the actual management policy. It is also the opinion of this Team that the leaders of the local self-government have not completely implemented the idea of local self-government in the sense that they perform their activities that represent the local self-government. Local self-government is lead by the members of the City Council of Solin, which enables them to implement the actual policy of the city management, instead of correcting this policy. On the other side, the city administration is not interested in the idea of developing the local self-government, which is clearly shown in the lack of willingness to allocate certain assets from the city budget to local self-government (small utility services and other activities). In Team's opinion, this is the way to consciously keep the local self-government dependent on the city management.

40.   It is the opinion of this Team that establishment of certain forms of representative bodies of youth – one of the most sensitive social structures in need for special social care – is very useful. The Team also suggests that the Environmental forum be established, in order to intensify the representation of interest groups in the city management structures and to comprehensively engage the city administration in the community.

Alliance Building

Advantages

- Developed system of encouraging cultural and sports activities
- Cooperation with Mercator
- Participation in the project EKO-Kaštelanski zaljev
- Co-financing of primary health care, procurement of assets and equipment
- Joint strategy with other local self-government units on key utility issues

Issues for consideration

- Encouraging the founding of the union of city administration employees
- Inclusion of economic sector (private and public) into elaboration of the Economic Development Strategy
- Participation in the project of communal waste disposal with national government bodies and neighbouring local authorities.

41.   Pursuant to the strategy of developing town identity the top officials pay much attention to all forms of alliances of the citizen aimed at top performance. Sports needs to be specially mentioned in this context, as a part of the social life that is enjoying special protection in the City of Solin. Some of the athletes are top achievers on the national level, for instance the football club. In addition to top performance, the basic goal of such approach of the top officials is gathering as large as possible number of young people in the activities with positive impact on the physical and psychical development of young people. It should also be mentioned that cultural activities are also supported, especially those dealing with preserving cultural heritage of this area and of Croatian people in general, as there is plenty of this heritage in the City of Solin.

42.   A valuable example of the alliance with the economic sector is the cooperation with the company Mercator, one of the largest shopping centre chains in this part of Europe. In addition to the relatively favourable price of the building land that the city administration has offered in order to attract the investors, the city management has decided to grant Mercator certain privileges with respect to municipal contributions, in accordance with the number of people from Solin employed by Mercator. Such cooperation resulted in favourable conditions for the economic subject and has encouraged the development of some industries. It has also resulted in employment of a significant number of citizens of Solin.

43. The implementation of the Project Eko–Kaštelanski zaljev, including all units of local self-government that border with this bay, includes the construction of the pipeline that would take all wastewater from these nits to the open sea, far away from the bay. This project has an extraordinary importance for environmental protection, as it guarantees the protection of one of the most beautiful bays on the Adriatic.

44. In the settlements that are a constituent part of the City of Solin, but are physically separated from the urban core, the population is relatively low, mostly elderly citizens. Most of them cannot visit medical institutions in the centre of the City, so the primary health care is organized in their settlements. However, due to the relative small number of residents in these settlements the feasibility of these clinics is doubtful. The City Council has therefore decided to subsidize these clinics and to ensure that the medical care is provided for the residents living at remote locations or those who for some reason (e.g. poverty) cannot provide for themselves.

45. A very good example of an alliance with neighbouring local authorities is a joint strategy on key municipal issues. This primarily relates to water supply, waste water disposal, road construction etc. A joint strategy guarantees more feasible solutions of higher quality.

46. The Team believes that for the purpose of improving the level of mutual confidence between the employees of city administration and the city management, the city management should encourage the formation of union of its employees, as such union does not exist yet. In this way the relationship between the employees and the employer would be legally regulated in accordance with democratic principles.

47. In the present economic environment of Croatia, especially in Dalmatia, it is necessary to include the representatives of the economy (private or public sector) into the elaboration or implementation of any economic activity. As has already been mentioned, the experts are the best persons to indicate the needs and the shortcomings in the planning and implementation of such activities.

48. Considering the fact that the City of Solin cannot organize the communal waste disposal, due to its spatial limitations, and that it depends on the waste areas in the jurisdiction of other local authorities, the cooperation and development of waste disposal strategy with the neighbouring local self-government units would be very useful.

Service Delivery

Planning and Review

Advantages

- The existence of the Master Urban development plan
- The existence of the Municipal Infrastructure Development Plan
- The existence of the Project for construction of primary school with respective programmes
- Plans for construction of hotel accommodation

Issues for consideration

- Defining of development strategy
- Control of "wild development"
- Better use of historical heritage for tourism

49. The existence of a Master Urban development plan and its importance has already been mentioned in the context of the vision and the strategy of the City of Solin and its management, especially with respect to spatial limitations and the extraordinary historic and cultural heritage and the need for its protection. The Master Urban development plan prevents any further devastation of the area, as the practice of devastation was present in Solin for some years.

50. Logically following the Master Urban development plan is the elaboration of a detailed plan of municipal infrastructure development. The city administration has recognized the needs and the shortcomings in this segment and has elaborated the detailed plan of municipal infrastructure development. This plan shall be gradually realized depending on financial situation and possible partners for single projects.

51. In addition to the lack of a building for pre-school activities, the school building is also necessary. This need is rather acute, as the number of school children is much higher. The city administration has responded on time: the design for the construction of a primary school building is already elaborated and the appropriate land plot has been provided. This structure shall fully meet the present demand for primary school education in the City of Solin.

52. Considering the inestimable historic and cultural heritage and the vicinity of the sea as the elements for development of tourism, the lack of the hotel accommodation is observable. The City Council of the City of Solin has included the construction of hotels into its priorities. The land plot in the centre of the City has already been provided for this purpose. Now follows the elaboration of the design and obtaining of documentation required, as well as search for the partner for realization of this project.

53. Defining of the development strategy would provide for future development of the City in the desirable direction. It is up to the political decision of the representative body whether this strategy shall be based on tourism, industrial development, handicraft, trade or some other activities. At any rate, the existence of a development strategy would render additional legitimacy to all activities.

54. One of the major issues, which is virtually impossible to solve, in the City of Solin is the extraordinary high percentage of structures constructed without valid documentation (the so-called "wild development"). This is an issue that the present management has inherited from the former system and it is not characteristic only for one area, but is present on the entire Croatian coast. It is the opinion of this Team that the city management should do their best to minimize or even to stop this trend.

55. It has already been mentioned that the City of Solin developed on the location of the antique City Salona, and many different cultures and people have lived on this area. In the early Middle Ages the City was the centre of Croatian cultural and political life. All this resulted in an invaluable cultural and historic heritage of the City of Solin. Numerous archaeological localities and countless items found represent one of the most valuable archaeological collections in Europe and worldwide. Despite these facts, this extraordinary cultural heritage is not used properly. It is to regret that not enough people know of this fortune, and this is the result of insufficient promotion. After the visit to the localities in the City this Team has learned that it really is a world class heritage and that the City of Solin should build its future on this heritage.

Innovation and Change

Advantages

- Provision for the citizens to pay the dues to the City without commission
- Subsidies for overhead charges for socially needy population, soup kitchen
- Existence of the Traffic Safety Council
- Acceptance of Benchmark
- Participation in the project "Eko-škola"

Issues for consideration

- Introduction of Intranet
- Stimulating the retraining of unemployed citizens
- Inclusion of private sector in provision of services

56. The City Council has introduced a good innovation: a provision for paying the charges payable to the City without a mediator. In this way the commission of the mediators in these transactions is avoided, which is a benefit for the citizens, as they are the end users and thus the ones paying these commissions. This facility is in the premises of the city administration and thus available to all citizens.

57. In each city there is a certain number of poor citizens. It is the responsibility of city management to deal with this issue, and the example of the City of Solin in this respect is very positive. In addition to financing the soup kitchen, the city subsidizes the lodging costs and overheads for the socially needy. In this context we once again mention the financing of summer camps for parentless children and children from large families, subsidies for health care, etc.

58. There is a Traffic Safety Council in the City with the primarily task of increasing and improving the traffic safety in the traffic network of the City. They work in cooperation with the police.

59. By accepting the Benchmark project and active participation in it the City Council of Solin has shown Innovation and readiness for change and for learning about best practices for the sake of improving their own work. By the implementation of the Benchmark programme they have shown a true wish and readiness to improve their performance.

60. The participation in the project "Eko škola" also shows the readiness and willingness of city management to socially educate their citizens, especially the youngest citizens.

61. However, in the present information era it is evident that the City of Solin lacks Intranet. The top officials gave their guarantees that the introduction of Intranet is about to be realized. They are aware of all the advantages of this system with respect to the communication between the bodies of the City, to availability of information and to the communication with the citizens in meeting their needs.

62. The unemployment problem is present in Solin as well as in the rest of the Republic of Croatia. Local self-government units are not able to participate in solving this problem by merely providing new jobs, as this issue is determined by many other factors. In the City of Solin there is a large number of "target educated" people, whose education was in accordance with the needs of the former system, which has built industrial giants in the city area. This again was in conformance with the policy of plan production. After the collapse of these industries there was a surplus of labour force with the education inadequate to present conditions and needs, which resulted in a potentially large number of socially needy citizens. The Team therefore thinks that the City of Solin should make every effort to provide for additional training of such citizens and re-training for scarce skills or occupations enabling self-employment. In this way the City would contribute to the solution of a huge unemployment problem and deteriorated social conditions.

63. The city management should include private sector in service delivery, both for the possible higher quality of service deliver and for the fair competition on the market. This is especially applicable in dealing with the lack of pre-school institutions, by enabling the private initiative to organize pre-school education. This would alleviate the problem and reduce the number of children who could not be included into the regular pre-school programmes. There are many other areas in which including the private sector into public service delivery would possibly offer solutions of good quality.

Performance Improvement

Advantages

- Genuine endeavour to achieve high standard in service delivery
- Seeking best practice and comparing with the best
- Good project implementation

Issues for consideration

- Supply of computer equipment
- Additional training of employees (foreign languages, information science, etc.)
- Extending working premises

64. As mentioned above, the city management shows a genuine wish to achieve high standards in service delivery through permanent research of best practice in single segments, and also by their willingness to participate in the projects that can improve their performance, such as Benchmark. This determination is also reflected in the willingness to submit their own work and performance to the evaluation of peers from other cities, which is a clear indication of the genuine wish for improvement. Their willingness to compare their performance with the performance of other local self-government units guarantees the improvement of "governing" and the high level of meeting the needs of the citizen in the local self-government unit.

65. The result of such approach to public sector affairs and to meeting other needs of the citizen is the extremely good realization of single projects, which is in the City of Solin obvious everywhere: sports facilities, subsidized housing construction, arrangement of streets and squares, construction and maintenance of unclassified roads, children playgrounds… In short: A former backward area of Solin is turning into a desirable place for living and working and one of the leading centres in the region, which serves as an example.

66. In order to transfer this activity and high level of professionalism to other employees, an additional computerization of city administration is required. In addition to the introduction of Intranet, new computers needs to be purchased and all professional services should be equipped with computers. A high quality performance of modern administration cannot be imagined without modern technical devices.

67. In order to enable the employees to follow up on the introduction of modern technical equipment, they need to be additionally trained. It is the Teams opinion that the city administration should provide for training of their employees, providing a proper training in computer science, foreign languages, etc. Such training is an investment for the future, for achieving even better performance.

68. During the interviews with the employees in the city administration the Team has several times told that the working premises, despite their equipment and quality, are not big enough. There are 2 to 3 persons sharing one room which is as a rule to small. Top officials agreed with this objection and have informed the Team that there is a solution to this problem by new disposition of employees and premises. One of the solutions is moving the archive into basement, which was redesigned for this purpose.

Systems and Processes

Advantages

- Great response of councillors to the sessions and a good procedure for reconciliation of views - constructive opposition
- Well organized own municipal services
- Openness of the system for objections and suggestions from users

Issues for consideration

- Insufficient use of the existing computer equipment
- Computerization of entry register

69.   In accordance with good interpersonal relations and with the extraordinary motivation of the members of City Council of Solin, the response and the participation in the sessions of the Council is exceptionally large. The issues relating to the wellbeing of the City are not assigned political connotations. All decisions are made by consensus, with previous discussions in party clubs. Despite that, the opposition is always warning about possible irregularities or objecting to the decisions that are not in common interest of all residents of the City of Solin, thus proving their constructiveness and opposition. On the other hand, they never obstruct the work of the Council merely because they are in opposition.

70.   Considering the fact that the City of Solin is a small local self-government unit in the immediate vicinity of the City of Split, it has been found unnecessary to establish their own municipal services, as the majority of demand is covered by the respective services of the City of Split (garbage disposal, public transportation, etc.). However, for certain activities of municipal services the city administration has established their own facilities and their operation have been brought to a very high level. In addition to highly qualified personnel engaged in these activities, a high level of motivation can also be observed. It should be mentioned that the organisation and the maintenance of city graveyard is very good and this graveyard is one of the best maintained on the Croatian coast.

71.   For any system to function well it is crucial that it is open for objections and suggestions of its end users, as they are best critics of performance quality. The Team has observed a very high openness to suggestions and objections in all structures of the City of Solin, as well as a rather good perception of these suggestions and objections by the top officials to whom they are directed.

72. As already mentioned, the lack of computer equipment is a problem that can be observed everywhere. It is the opinion of the Team that the existing equipment is not properly distributed or not sufficiently used. We have observed computers in some departments that do not need them as badly as some other departments. The entry register is still done manually, which is a rather inappropriate way to keep files in modern business operation. In addition to improving the speed of work, the computerization also influences the performance quality. In our opinion, the city administration should redistribute the existing computer equipment to alleviate the lack of such equipment until new computer equipment is provided.

Resource Management

Advantages

- High grade care for pre-school and school education, participation in covering the expenses of extended day-programme
- Investing into sports and culture
- Budget implementation in accordance with the plan

Issues for consideration

- More efficient collection of payments for municipal services
- Introduction of taxes allowed by the law
- Reconsideration of priorities

73. In addition to the above mentioned extremely high social sensibility, the financial aspect of this care should be mentioned. In their endeavour to help with the care for the children, the city administration has decided to participate in covering the costs of day care in pre-school institutions. The amounts covered by the City are exceeding the amounts paid by the parents.

The pre-school institutions and the schools are well equipped with basic means of labour. The City often donates the equipment to such institutions. The accompanying facilities, such as sports facilities and children playgrounds are regularly maintained and extended, and a construction of new ones is also planned. In addition, the City often organizes and finances different events that raise the level of care for children and the youth.

74. When speaking about the care of young population and the satisfaction of social and cultural needs of the citizens, first thing to mention is the extremely high investing into sports and cultural tradition. The City is financing the local football team, which is achieving enviable results in Croatian relations (champion of the 2nd league), and there is a series of other sports clubs financed from the city budget. Investment into sports infrastructure is observable everywhere: a new multipurpose sports hall with 1,500 seats provides for regular training of wide variety of sports clubs – from handball to martial arts. The new tennis centre with its facilities not only satisfies the needs of its members, but also enables the recreational activities of many citizens. In this centre there is a modern exercise and aerobic hall. All these projects were implemented in the past few years and they clearly indicate the orientation of this city administration. Cultural events are supported by financing the work of associations who preserve the local and national cultural tradition, and also by financing the cultural events.

75. Due to the large number of economic subjects in the City, the budget income of the City is rather large. If compared with other local self-government units of comparable size, this income is more than good. The reports for the year 2002 and for the first six months of 2003 show that this income is realized according to the plan and in stipulated terms. This is a clear indicator of high quality and reality bound planning of budget income and expenditures.

76. Despite the good planning, the Team has noticed that the City is not efficiently collecting payments for municipal services and other outstanding debts. The outstanding debt from the payments for municipal services has grown in the first six months of this year to an inappropriate level. The debtors are mostly large economic subjects, and they are at the same time the largest source of income. The top officials of the City have assured this Team that this is usually solved by a single payment of the total amount of the debt. It is the opinion of the Team that such situations should in the future be prevented by more efficient collection of payments or by using all legal means for debt enforcement.

77. The Croatian legislation provides for a wide spectrum of budged income of local self-government units, leaving it to the discretion of each local self-government unit to decide which of these rights they will make use of. It is the opinion of the Team that the city administration of Solin is not making use of a substantial part of possible income sources, such as taxes for undeveloped construction land, tax on vacation houses or tax on alcoholic drinks. The Team feels that by introducing these taxes the City would significantly increase the budget income, which would increase the assets available to the City.

78.   In addition to the existing rather good income and to the introduction of new income, we feel that the city administration should consider the priorities for spending the budget. Upon insight into the documentation submitted to us we established that a significant amount is invested into sports. This has its advantages and we have already mentioned that, but we think that in some segments the financing should be limited and the assets re-allocated. For instance, the money allocated for scholarships of young and talented pupils and students are negligibly low when compared to the amounts allocated for this purpose in other parts of Croatia. Investing into young and talented people is investing into future, not only in sports, but in all other areas of the life.

Review manager

Siniša Gregoran

LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK PEER REVIEW

EVALUATION TEMPLATE

This questionnaire should be completed and discussed by mayors, peers and project managers following each Peer Review in order to learn lessons for the future.

1. Suggested questions about the Peer Review (PR)

- What were the most frequent problems in the local authority you have visited that the PR helped to resolve? (for peers and project managers)

- What expectations did you have for the PR? How fare they were achieved / not achieved / exceeded? (for all)

- What did you learn from the PR for yourself personally and what did you bring back to your local authority? (for all)

- Do you think that the PR gets deep enough to understand the real issues? (for all)

- In what ways could the PR have been more effective? How might the PR have been better organized and supported? (for all)

- How might the preparations have been better managed? (for all)

- Do you think you were adequately trained for the PR? (for peers and project managers)

- What changes (if any) were already / will be soon introduced in your local authority as a result of the PR? (for mayors)

- What benefit did it bring to (for all):

  - the leadership (political and executive)?
  - the staff / councillors?
  - internal organisation and services?
  - service delivery ?

2. Suggested questions about the Improvement Plans

- How committed do you think is the authority to an Improvement Plans? Do you think the PR is enough of a learning process to support an Improvement Plan? (for all)

- What support you think would be helpful for the preparation and the implementation of the Improvement Plan? (for all)

3. Suggested questions about the "Benchmark of an Effective Democratic Local Authority"

- What changes (if any) are / would be necessary for the Benchmark to be fully adapted to the circumstances of your country? (for all)

- Would it be useful to develop performance management tools within each of the competences to support further improvement? If so, how would you introduce them? (for all)

4. Suggested questions about the Programme

- What support you think the National Association of local authorities and the responsible Ministry should give to the extension of the Leadership Benchmark Programme to all municipalities?

- What kind of capacity should the National Association of local authorities have in order to manage the Programme across the country?

THE LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE

This Self-Assessment is to be used in conjunction with the actual Council of Europe Benchmark. Its aim is to provide a basis for improving the leadership and strategic management of a municipality. This will facilitate improvements in the strategic environment so that it better supports improvements in service provision.

The Self-Assessment allows the leadership of a municipality (senior elected members and staff) to assess its performance in leadership and strategic management by themselves, without necessarily depending on an external expert or a Peer Review. The assessment will enable the leadership to identify priority actions through which improvements can be brought about.

This Self-Assessment should be carried out in two stages:
1   A Questionnaire to all elected members, senior staff, junior staff and external organisations with links to the municipality.
2   A one-day self-assessment workshop of senior staff and elected representatives.

The Questionnaire should be filled in anonymously, but the leadership might want to identify the different groups (ie elected members, senior staff, junior staff, external organisations) to see whether or not their perceptions differ from each other. This might influence the improvement plan.

The workshop should focus on (i) agreeing the level of, and reasons for, performance in leadership and strategic management, taking account of the Questionnaire responses and the positive / negative indicators, and (ii) identifying priority actions that should bring about improvement.

It would be helpful if a local project manager is appointed who can (a) oversee the Questionnaire exercise, compile the results and present them to the workshop, (b) identify in advance the necessary documents that form the positive indicators, and (c) make the necessary arrangements for the workshop. It would also be helpful for an independent person to facilitate the workshop as it will be important to provide as objective an assessment as possible.

THE LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of this Questionnaire is to allow the views of all the municipality's stakeholders to contribute to a self-assessment of the leadership and strategic management of their municipality. It allows elected members, senior staff, junior staff and external organisations to participate in the exercise.

This is the first of two stages of the self-assessment exercise. The second stage is a workshop of senior elected members and senior staff to complete the assessment and start planning priority actions that lead to improvement.

The Questionnaire should be filled in anonymously by each of the main groups of stakeholders. The exercise should be overseen by the designated project manager, who will compile the results and present them to the subsequent workshop.

Please rate your municipality's leadership and strategic management on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent) in terms of each of the competences listed below. You may want to add a specific comment, explaining your assessment or suggesting improvements after each assessment.

<u>LEADERSHIP</u>

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Vision and strategy ➢ Develops a realistic vision and a set of values in consultation with local people and organisations, balancing short and long term requirements. ➢ Develops and communicates policies and strategies, welcoming contributions from others. ➢ Leads by example, setting high standards of behaviour and performance.					
2 People management ➢ Values all staff and elected members, and helps them to play a constructive role with proper support and resources. ➢ Applies effective personnel disciplines and promotes career opportunities. ➢ Devolves responsibility to managers where appropriate and supports innovation.					
3 Communication ➢ Reaches out to all groups in the community, maintains dialogue and helps them become engaged with local government. ➢ Keeps elected members, staff and local people well-informed about its policies and performance, and consults them on its plans. ➢ Ensures all elected members are contactable, and have the interests of local people at heart.					

SERVICE DELIVERY

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Planning and review ➢ Has clear planning arrangements at community, corporate and service levels for both short and medium term. ➢ Demonstrates clear mechanisms for scrutinising the performance of local services. ➢ Reports clearly and in public on performance results and future plans. ➢ Consults elected members, staff and service users on the design of local services.					
2 Innovation and change ➢ Challenges the status quo, and introduces new ideas and better ways of doing things. ➢ Seeks out good practice, disseminates lessons and provides learning opportunities. ➢ Uses project management effectively to introduce change and deliver specific goals.					
3 Service management ➢ Manages services efficiently and effectively, in a way that delivers value for money, encourages staff to give of their best, and takes account of the views of service users. ➢ Uses objectives, priorities, performance indicators, standards and targets in all services to drive up performance, and monitors them regularly to inform policy and planning, and to demonstrate accountability. ➢ Compares its performance to the best in other authorities and sets targets for improvements. ➢ Carries out fundamental performance reviews of service provision in order to deliver real improvement.					
4 Resource management ➢ Manages finance transparently to achieve maximum benefit, deliver value for money, and avoid unmanageable risk. ➢ Makes best use of assets. ➢ Ensures that resource management responds to the objectives and priorities of the local authority.					

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	1 2 3 4 5
1 Citizen participation ➢ Keeps citizens informed; requests, listens and responds to local views, and welcomes feedback on users' experience of services. ➢ Creates opportunities for local participation in the design and delivery of services. ➢ Develops neighbourhood bodies to ensure citizen participation in local decision-making. ➢ Encourages registration and voting.	1 2 3 4 5
2 Alliance building ➢ Builds strong partnerships (eg for service delivery) with local organisations and with other tiers of Government. ➢ Creates opportunities for local organisations to contribute to effective local governance. ➢ Makes best use of international opportunities for cooperation.	1 2 3 4 5

LEADERSHIP BENCHMARK – SELF ASSESSMENT

Name of municipality:

Leadership - Competence 1: Vision and strategy

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Leadership - Competence 2: People management

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Leadership - Competence 3: Communication

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Service delivery - Competence 1: Planning and review

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Service delivery - Competence 2: Innovation and change

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Service delivery - Competence 3: Service management

Assessed level	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: .....
	- senior staff .....
	- junior staff .....
	- external organisations .....

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Service delivery - Competence 4: Resource management

Assessed level …..	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: …..
	- senior staff …..
	- junior staff …..
	- external organisations …..

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Community engagement - Competence 1: Citizen participation

Assessed level …..	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: …..
	- senior staff …..
	- junior staff …..
	- external organisations …..

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

Community engagement - Competence 2: Alliance-building

Assessed level …..	Results of Questionnaire:
	- elected representatives: …..
	- senior staff …..
	- junior staff …..
	- external organisations …..

Actual positive indicators:

Actual negative indicators:

Reasons for assessment:

Priority actions:

SECTION 4

SERVICE PROVISION

SERVICE PROVISION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Introduction

The challenge for every local authority is to improve its service provision to reach the standards of the best. This means both internal services (like human resources management) and external services (like local economic development).

Sometimes there are the constraints of resources (finance, assets, expertise) that make it difficult to achieve the highest standards. But in many cases, improvement is possible by (i) examining the local authority's policy and approach to the provision of a service and developing recommendations for improvement, (ii) learning from others, and (iii) establishing key performance indicators and standards in each policy area and using targets to drive improvements.

In every country it is possible to find good practice in the delivery of public services and in the management of a local authority. The good practice may have been developed through the professionalism of particular individuals or from ideas developed in cooperation with a national or international organisation. It is there.

The challenge is how to use such examples of good practice to inspire other municipalities and to develop performance standards. Furthermore, good practice should be an achievement to be celebrated – itself a good practice not very common in the public sector.

Good practice can be shared in several ways – through case-studies, publications and workshops, through the media, through study visits to the good practice local authorities, through training and learning programmes.

The advantage of sharing good practice is that it is home-grown. It is not an imported model out of harmony with local circumstances. It is a relatively inexpensive way of making local government better.

This section is about Best Practice. Other approaches to improving service provision, eg performance management, will be included in further Toolkits. Best Practice programmes are relatively easy and cheap to manage. They do not need international experts. They celebrate success. National Associations should be keen to organise them, with help from their local government Ministry. They start with the idea that every country has some best practice from which others can learn.

But this approach to best practice is not only about selecting local authorities for awards in a few selected policy areas. The special element is to transform the Best Practice services into training vehicles and encourage other local authorities to study them and learn from them. New policy areas can be introduced every year.

The following CoE standards provide a basis for local authority policies on service provision:

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
CDLR Report: Neighbourhood services in disadvantaged urban areas (2003)	The existence of neighbourhoods with special problems, in which the quality of the residents' environment is declining, is not new. Local authorities have undeniable advantages in dealing with problems in these areas: knowledge of the situation, stronger political responsibility for urban problems, the power to adapt solutions to each neighbourhood's specific needs, an ability to involve the public. Measures aimed at improving neighbourhood services enable positive results to be obtained within a short time. The upgrading of neighbourhood services takes two basic forms: traditional services are geared to the specific needs of residents, and special services are created for these neighbourhoods. In addition, new forms of inter-service and inter-authority co-operation are being developed. This report examines the state of neighbourhood services in (i) disadvantaged urban areas and (ii) areas with low population density. It presents initiatives and good practice of municipalities and governments in this area and offers guidelines for further action in this field.
CDLR Report: The role of local authorities in the field of local social services (2000)	There is growing demand for social services of a better quality. At the same time, public authorities face budgetary restrictions. Is more decentralisation in social service provision the right approach? Local authority goals relate to the effectiveness and efficiency in delivering services, adequate levels of local public expenditure and the distribution of revenues, ensuring quality services without increasing costs, avoiding overlap, fostering horizontal and vertical co-operation between public authorities, and achieving synergies with the private sector. The final resolution adopted by the 12th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local Government gives guidelines on how to pursue these goals.
CDLR Report: Management and funding of urban public transport (1999)	Transport policy is one of the essential elements of any regional and local planning strategy because of its impact on both citizens' well-being and on the sustainability of any form of development. This report was prepared from a study of specialised literature and of case studies provided by four countries: Finland, Italy, Lithuania and the Russian Federation. It endeavours to deal with problems linked to the organisation, management and funding of urban public transport on the basis that an improvement in urban transport will have an important impact on the sustainability of urban development.

CDLR Report: The use of performance indicators in local public services (1997) *(A new report on performance management is in preparation)*	Constant improvements to public services are of common concern to all local authorities. The use of evaluation systems and performance indicators are likely to modernise their provision. This report gives a general presentation of performance indicators and examines their use, followed by case-studies in the fields of urban public transport, maternity services and registry offices in Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It includes recommendations for action.
CDLR Report: Local public services and the rights of their users (1997)	Citizens have a right to good local public services, which should be available to all citizens who need them on the basis of equality. The continuity of essential services should be guaranteed. Local services should contribute to the sustainable development of the area and to a balanced and rational distribution of resources. Local authorities should continuously improve their services and offer choice in service where appropriate. Local people should be informed about services available.

TOOL	PROCESS
(i) **Best Practice Programme** (ii)**Model Prospectus** (iii) **Prospectus, Best Practice Programme, Croatia** (iv) **Best Practice Case-Study, Slovenia**	This programme should be managed at national level through a Steering Group of interested parties. Criteria of best practice in, say, 2 or 3 selected service areas – both internal and external – are developed and set out in a Prospectus, along with the selection and award process as well as the dissemination and training obligations. Local authorities are invited to apply for Best Practice status if they feel they meet the criteria. The evidence is later verified. An independent Evaluation Panel will select the Best Practice authorities in each area; they will receive an award (funds, study visit, computers etc donated by interested organisations) at a high-profile national ceremony. The Best Practice authorities are also obliged to transform their best practice service into a training vehicle for a year. A case-study of the best practice service is prepared and disseminated. A 1-day training programme is prepared by the local authority, and other local authorities are invited to come on a study visit to learn from the best practice example. New themes can be introduced each year. In due course, it is hoped that a regional dimension can be developed, eg a best practice programme for SE Europe or for the Caucasus. This should begin to generate performance standards that become accepted across the region.

Reference to other relevant materials:
There are Best Practice programmes currently being developed in Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina through their respective National Associations.

Origin: This approach to Best Practice was developed in Poland and England and is adapted for use in the country where it is being introduced.

BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

1.   General presentation of the Best Practice Programme

This project will enable the identification of local authorities that demonstrate best practices in key areas of their responsibilities. These local authorities will be provided with support in order to enable them to share their best practices with others.

The Programme starts with the development of a **Prospectus** setting out the criteria for best practice in selected services or themes. It also covers the application and selection process as well as the training obligations on Best Practice authorities. Local authorities that believe they have developed best practice in one of these areas can apply for **BEST PRACTICE** status.

The National Association of local authorities will, together with a Steering Group, select and award authorities achieving Best Practice status. There might be, for example, 2-3 awards in each theme.

Best Practice status will be awarded to individual local authorities for a period of one year. In becoming a Best Practice authority, the local authority will enter into an agreement with the National Association to share their good practice with the wider local government community.

This will be achieved through a programme of activities. Activities could include a national event for each service, at which the winning authorities will present their best practice to interested municipalities, followed by individual dissemination programmes developed by each Best Practice authority. These programmes will include open days, study visits, etc. The Best Practice authorities will also produce publicity materials on their best practice, including brochures and publications on web sites.

2. Objectives

- To raise standards in local government by identifying and recognising innovative and excellent practices in service delivery by local authorities;

- To acknowledge and reward the best performing local authorities in key areas of local government work and to help them act as centres of excellence from which other authorities can learn;

- To develop better public services, higher standards of service delivery and improved local government management;

- To promote innovations in various areas of local government responsibilities;

- Share ideas among central government institutions about how they might encourage good management practices in local government;

- To contribute to the creation of strong civil society through the promotion of effective democratic local government.

3. Methodology

3.1. Administration of the programme

The National Association will be in charge of the implementation of the programme. A Best Practice Programme Steering Group will be established to assist the Association in the technical implementation of the programme. The Steering Group will help the Association:

- identify a Project Manager;
- choose the services in which best practice will be awarded;
- develop indicators to measure best practice in each service;
- identify partners from the international, public or private sectors to agree to provide awards to the Best Practice authorities;
- shortlist the applications and the select the Best Practice authorities on the basis of written evidence, documentation, a visit and a presentation.

The Best Practice Programme Steering Group will also agree the Prospectus setting out the criteria, the application and selection procedures, and training opportunities and obligations for being awarded Best Practice status in a selected service(s). The Steering Group will arrange for the Best Practice authorities to receive their awards in a high profile ceremony.

A Project Manager will be appointed to manage the implementation of the programme. The role of the Project Manager will be to support the National Association and the Steering Group in developing, managing and evaluating the Best Practice programme in selected services .

3.2. Identification of services or themes

The Project Manager, with the help of the Steering Group, will identify perhaps two or three services or themes in which Best Practice status will be awarded. A consultation exercise will be carried out with the local authorities in order to ensure that the services or themes chosen are a priority and they would benefit from exchanges of experience with their counterparts.

Once the services or themes are identified, the Project Manager, with the help of the Steering Group, will develop a series of performance indicators that will be used to measure best practice in each of the themes. These indicators will ensure that all local authorities applying for the award are judged according to the same criteria.

3.3. Preparation of a Prospectus

A Prospectus will be prepared, setting out the criteria for each of the selected services or themes and identifying the evidence that the Selection Panel would be looking for. The Prospectus will also set out the procedures for application and selection.

An Application Form will be developed, in which the municipality will be asked to describe the way in which they demonstrate best practice in the selected service or theme, as well as outlining their intentions for disseminating this best practice.

The Prospectus and Application Form will be distributed to all municipalities in the country and to other levels of government in order to ensure that they understand the importance of this Programme.

3.4. Applications for Best Practice status

Local authorities will be invited to apply for **BEST PRACTICE** status in the selected service or theme, where they believe they are performing well according to the criteria set out in the Prospectus. A deadline will be set for the receipt of the applications.

3.5. Longlisting and Shortlisting Procedures

The Association, with the help of the Project Manager, will make a longlist of the applicant authorities. Afterwards, the Association, with the help of an Advisory Panel of the Steering Group, will make a shortlist of the applicant local authorities.

The Project Manager and 2-3 members of the Advisory Panel will visit each shortlisted municipality. During this visit the municipality will be asked to demonstrate its best practice in the relevant service or theme, showing the Advisory Group concrete examples of its best practice. The visits will provide the Advisory Panel with the opportunity to confirm the elements of the application and to look closely at any aspects that they believe need further explanation.

The shortlisted municipality will also be invited to give a formal presentation to the Steering Group before the selection of the Best Practice authorities. The Association, on the advice of the Advisory Group, will select up to 2-3 municipalities in each service or theme to be awarded Best Practice status.

3.6. Awards Ceremony

The awards could be announced by the responsible Central Authorities at an Awards ceremony. This would help to encourage local authorities to apply, and raise the profile of Best Practice authorities. The Best Practice authorities will have access to funds and technical assistance to implement the dissemination programme that they set out in their applications.

3.7. Training for Best Practice authorities

The Project Manager will arrange a training programme for the relevant staff and elected members in the selected Best Practice authorities to help them to:

- explain how they exercise their competencies in the Best Practice service or theme;

- explain how they reached that level of best practice;

- act as trainers, prepare the training material and plan training methodology and arrangements for open days and study visits, etc.;

- discuss openly the issues that arise in the course of exercising their competencies in the selected service or theme.

Separate training days could be held for the groups of authorities selected for each service or theme.

3.8. Dissemination of Best Practice

An initial launch event could be organised for each Best Practice theme, acting as a vehicle for the Best Practice local authorities. They would have the opportunity to present an overview of their best practice and to promote their forthcoming dissemination events. This would also allow the Best Practice authorities in each service or theme to exchange best practice and ideas with one another.

Each Best Practice municipality will be required to organise a number of best practice events. These events should be intensive learning processes for both the visitors and the host authorities. They would allow open exchange of ideas and information. Visitors would benefit from new ideas and approaches that they could put into practice when they return to their own authorities. Host authorities should benefit from their visitors.

These events might include activities such as: conferences, seminars and workshops; publications and use of the Internet; development and dissemination of information materials; newsletters; exhibitions; etc.

The Best Practice authorities will be asked to sign an agreement with the National Association to confirm their commitment to engaging in activities to disseminate their best practice. This agreement will allow some flexibility and the dissemination events will depend partially upon the demands from other local authorities for specific mentoring, support and information.

3.9. Training Materials

The Project Manager will record and disseminate the best practice in a series of publications and through other media channels (e.g. television, radio and newspapers). A 'Best Practice toolkit' could be developed to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of best practice.

4. Programme Outcomes

The Best Practice Programme should result in the following outputs and outcomes:

- It will motivate and publicly acknowledge those staff and elected members who have been responsible for the provision of high quality services.

- It is a relatively inexpensive way of developing practical, tailor-made training programmes that are focused on achieving better quality local government.

- It will lead to better service provision, community engagement, longer term planning, partnerships with other organisations, motivated staff etc across all local authorities.

- It generates a good multiplier effect - it motivates and trains a large number of staff and elected members who can disseminate that experience more widely and introduce best practice within their own local authorities.

BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

Model Best Practice Programme (CoE)	Preparatory stage	Award stage	Capacity-building stage	Outcomes
	By National Association:	*By Steering Group:*	*By Best Practice Authorities:*	
	National Workshop	Theme selection ↗	**Training programmes:**	• Higher standards and increased efficiency and effectiveness in internal and external services
BEST PRACTICE MODEL ↑	↑	Prospectus ↗	Preparing training materials ↗	
	Steering Group	Selection ↗	Training best practice staff ↗	• Innovation in service delivery
		Best Practice Award	Consultancy, Open days, Study visits, Workshops	• Best practice culture

MODEL PROSPECTUS FOR A BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

The Prospectus is divided into two parts:(1) the announcement and description of the Programme for local authorities, and (2) a general explanation of the principles behind Best Practice programmes.

PART 1: ANNOUNCEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

1. COVER PAGE OF THE PROSPECTUS

The cover page should include:
- Title of the programme;
- Name of the main organisations involved (Association/s and partners) and the main political supporter (Ministries);
- Logos of sponsors (e.g. international organisations, ministries and association(s));
- Table of contents.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

2.1.   Invitation

A one-page letter signed by the Minister responsible for local government (or deputy) and the National Association(s). The letter should:
- express the determination of the Ministry and the National Association to develop the capacities of local authorities;
- briefly present how best practices and their dissemination may contribute to the improvement of the management, performance and institutional development of local authorities;
- explain why selected project themes are relevant for local government in the country;
- briefly explain the benefits for the local authorities participating in the programme (including rewards for the winners, benefits from best practice workshops, peer visits and open days);
- express the support of the Ministry and the National Association(s) to the programme and encourage all local authorities to participate and share their best practices with others;
- end with general wishes for success.

2.2. Short information about participating organisations and division of tasks

Basic information about all the actors involved, as well as the division of the responsibilities between them, should be provided.

2.3. Information about the programme

a) General information

A short description of the essence of the programme should be set out.

b) Goals and outputs

This section should explain the general goals of the programme: why is this programme being implemented? A general background for the proposed approach could be sketched. It would be useful to explain here:

- Why self-reflection on, and self-improvement in, management and performance is important, and how it supports organisational development.

- Why knowledge-sharing is beneficial for all local authorities involved, and how local authorities could benefit from learning about specific practices exercised elsewhere in the country.

In general, the *goals* should reflect the following:

- support for transforming local authorities into self-reflective, learning organisations where improving local government comes from self-improvement;

- the promotion and development of a new management culture in local government which focuses on the implementation of innovative solutions to identified problems and the sharing of knowledge through peer education.

The programme should result in a range of outputs and outcomes:

- It will motivate and publicly acknowledge those staff and elected members who have been responsible for the provision of high quality leadership, management and services.

- It will develop practical, tailor-made training programmes for achieving better quality local government that can be managed in a relatively inexpensive way.

- It will lead to better leadership and strategic management, service provision, community engagement, longer term planning, partnerships with other organisations, motivated staff etc across all local authorities.

- It generates a good multiplier effect - it motivates and trains a large number of staff and elected members who can disseminate that experience more widely and introduce best practice within their own local authorities.

c)   Recipients and benefits

A short, clear explanation of who may participate in the programme and the benefits of their participation should be set out.

d)   Best practice themes

The list of best practice themes and a short rationale for each of theme should be set out. This section should clearly explain why and how these themes were selected. The number of themes should be limited, so that the programme is easily manageable, and should reflect local government priorities; other themes can be selected for further rounds in following years.

The criteria for best practice in each selected theme should be defined, agreed and set out, including a range of performance indicators and standards as appropriate. This will need some research.

Short description and explanation of the concepts like "leadership", "citizens' involvement", etc. should be also added to secure a proper understanding of their importance.

An example of a rationale for a theme[1] is presented below:

Theme: Community leadership

Popular attitudes to local government are all too often characterised by cynicism and apathy. Voter turnout in last year's local government elections was the lowest since the Second World War. When asked about their attitude to voting in local elections, 30% of respondents felt it would make little difference. Part of the solution is for councils to take a more active role in leading local communities. They should make sure they are in touch with their local community by consulting widely and regularly with them, not only on single issues, but also on community plans and local performance plans.

Councils can play an important role in securing the quality of life of local communities. They should work in partnership with and through other organizations and become closer to local communities in order to orchestrate a collective and targeted response to their needs. They should also reform their own internal political management arrangements in order to make themselves more accessible and open to local people and to create an outward focus for councilors by giving them time to have a meaningful dialogue with those they represent.

---

e)   Implementation

This section should contain a detailed description of procedures for each stage of the project. Language should be precise and simple to allow all interested participants to understand the requirements of the programme. The description may be followed by a scheme or a table gathering the most important information from particular stages.

---

[1] From an overview of the Beacon Council Scheme, UK

Example:

Stage of the project	Requirements for participants

f)   Announcement of the programme

While announcements may be made in the media, this Prospectus will be the main way in which the organisers announce the programme. It should be disseminated to all local authorities. Sources of information should be included:

- Details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address) of the project manager;
- Website where detailed information about the programme is available (including the electronic version of the Prospectus and Application Form);

An explanation of how local authorities may participate in the programme should be provided in this part. The Application Form should be appended to the Prospectus. The Application Form should allow an applicant local authority to set out the evidence of best practice in a selected theme. A case-study and copies of actual documents should be attached. The Form should also allow the inclusion of basic data about the particular local authority and its locality, as well as contact details (name, address, phones, fax, e-mail, website, contact person).

g)   Preparation of the best practice case studies

This section should clarify the obligation of participating local authorities to develop a case study of their best practice. The format of the case study should be clearly set out. A sample format of a case study should be attached to the Application Form. The case-study should show how the best practice activity conforms to the agreed best practice criteria for the theme.

h)   Selection of the shortlisted candidates

A detailed explanation of the selection process should be presented: who will be involved in the selection process; what selection criteria will be used; how participants will be informed of the results.

i)   Verification visits to municipalities

Visits to the shortlisted municipalities should be planned in order for the Selection Panel to get a picture of the actual best practice performance as described in the case study. The objectives and agenda of the visits as well as the responsibilities of both the applicant local authority and the Selection Panel should also be clarified.

j)   Selection of best practice authorities
This section should explain how the final selection of those local authorities that achieve best practice status within each theme will be organised (by whom, how many and

according to what criteria). The process of announcing the award of best practice status should also be set out.

k) Awards for best practice authorities

A description of the award(s) should be provided (funds, study visit, computers, certificate, etc.). The award ceremony agenda could be mentioned. This should be a high-profile ceremony hosted by the local government Minister with as much media coverage as possible.

l) Training for best practice local authorities

Best practice local authorities will be expected to offer training in their best practice activity to others. This section should describe the training to be provided to best practice local authorities to help them become trainers. The Project Manager should arrange for a short (2 day) training programme to be given to relevant staff and elected members in the selected Best Practice local authorities to help them to:

- explain how they exercise their leadership, strategic management, service provision and community engagement and the impact this has on local people;

- explain how they reached the level of best practice in the selected theme;

- act as trainers, prepare training materials and plan training methodology and arrangements for open days and study visits; and

- discuss openly the issues that arose in the course of achieving best practice.

As a result of the training, a set of common standards for study visits could be agreed and a programme for open days and study visits by other local authorities proposed.

m) Peer visits

After training, key staff and elected members from the best practice local authorities might offer themselves as a Peer Team that could visit other local authorities on request to advise on how best practice might be introduced there. For many participants, this will certainly be a relatively new method of supporting institutional development. That is why a clear description and explanation of the idea of a peer visit should be presented.

n) Dissemination

This section should introduce all proposed methods of dissemination of the best practice in each theme (eg publication of case-studies, all forms of media etc). A wide dissemination of the best practice experience of local authorities, making best use of all media, will certainly be one of the most important factors in the motivation of local authorities in participating in the programme.

o) A detailed timetable

It is important to set a clear timeframe for the programme's implementation, i.e. the application process, selection procedures, awards, training, etc.

PART 2: NEED FOR EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In this chapter, the idea of best practice should be explained in the context of the institutional development of local authorities. Some other concepts (case study, benchmarking) should also be introduced.

Please note that some ideas in the Prospectus can be explained also through short examples, eg:

> *"While traditional organisations require management systems that control people's behaviour, learning organisations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and shared understandings of complex business issues."*
> *Michael Fullan*

1. General introduction (development and sharing of experiences)

This section should explain how and why collecting and sharing knowledge may contribute to the improvement of the management of local authorities. It is important to focus on how best practice may contribute to this process. The concept of "benchmarking" against standards based on best practice could be introduced.

2. Best practice

a) What is best practice?

This section should explain what best practice is and how it can be used to improve local government leadership, management and service delivery in the selected areas.

b) What are the criteria that help distinguish best practice from "average practice"?

Best practice is an action which is:
- innovative;
- replicable (in new environment);
- relevant (to problem identified);
- a "success story" based on sufficient, reliable data;
- based on evidence from multiple settings (local, international);
- focused on both process and outcomes;
- takes account of the wider picture;
- based on strategic needs in given theme.

Where the monitoring and evaluation of a local authority's activities identify weaknesses or opportunities, best practice offers a potential solution.

c) Using best practice case-studies to improve local government:

The case studies could be published and used as supplementary training materials. A case study should:

- describe an actual service or process that contributes to better local government;
- take into account the specific context;
- present a given activity in a comprehensive way that takes into account the history, social and economic background, the legal context (without reference to the places and individuals concerned), a detailed course of action (with the presentation of the role of the local authority leadership, officers at different levels and elected members), the impact on local people and on the environment where it took place, any conclusions that the author draws.

A case study could be developed according to the following procedures:

- Analysis of the circumstances: What has happened? What were the reasons for the problem? What is the problem all about?
- Search for solutions: How to solve the problem? Options and recommended action.
- Forecast the results: What should be the results of the specific solutions? Distinguish positive, and negative effects.
- Discuss the adopted solutions and show their conformity to the agreed best practice criteria.
- Adapt the solutions to the real world operating conditions: To what extent can the results of the analysis be transferred to other local authorities?

3. Indicators of excellence in selected themes

In order to help local authorities identify best practice in the selected themes, a short list of indicators should be proposed with respect to: (1) the general assumptions and values (e.g. there are some generally agreed standards concerning citizens participation) and (2) specific circumstances of the country.

The indicators should be based on research on the theme, the work of professional institutions and comparative practices in other countries. They may be based on the Council of Europe "Benchmark of an Effective Democratic Local Authority", assuming that excellence is illustrated by level 5 performance.

Example of indicators on leadership[2]:

> *"Beacon councils should have the following high quality and effective arrangements: (LEADERSHIP)*
> - *a corporate strategic plan and performance review framework;*
> - *a code of conduct and an employees' code and formal structures to ensure ethical standards of behaviour by officers and members;*
> - *a Crime and Disorder strategy;*
> - *good effective liaison, joint working and partnership arrangements with the public, private and voluntary sectors;*
> - *a management development strategy;*
> - *arrangements to communicate about change, encourage widespread exchange of ideas and test out / pilot new approaches;*
> - *regular independent assessment of the council's overall performance;*
> - *a training and development programme for elected representatives;*
> - *highly motivated, well-trained and committed staff;*
> - *arrangements to contribute to developing and implementing Regional Development Agency strategies;*
> - *a strategic plan and performance review framework to ensure that in policy-making and employment practice, the impact upon women, people from different ethnic minorities and disabled people is assessed and that appropriate action is taken to address any adverse differential impact."*

4. How best practices can be used to improve capacity of local governments

A Best Practice database could be created and used as a *tool for institutional development.* The case study development process is an opportunity for self-reflection on the way a local authority can transform itself from 'just an office' into a learning organisation.

A learning organisation:
- seeks improvement;
- is open to innovation;
- is able to change internal structures in rapidly changing external conditions;
- monitors and evaluates projects to improve performance;
- is self-reflecting;
- facilitates open communication;
- supports team - work and the development of common visions;
- supports the transfer of lessons learned among all staff and elected members.

---

[2] Reference to the UK Beacon Council Scheme

A Best Practice database is a tool *for local government project management*. It helps to:
- identify gaps and needs, barriers and obstacles;
- identify opportunities;
- select best practice;
- evaluate current performance.

5. Best practice and benchmarking programme

Best practices illustrate the high level of performance described by the indicators. The idea of developing a set of indicators for different themes in the longer term should be introduced here.

6. Case studies

This section should present the appropriate structure of a case study. A sample structure and examples of case studies could be included. The aim is to help local authorities prepare good descriptions of their best practice activity.

a) The structure

The case study structure should be explained in this section. Each element of the structure should be set out in an understandable way and to help participants realise why it is important to put specific data into a case study. They have to know that their efforts will be useful for a broader audience.

If the case study is to be applicable in other conditions, it should be clear and transparent. People have to know the context, what the issues were and how they were solved, what the experiences and the outcomes were.

b) Suggested structure of case study

1. Title, authors

2. Executive summary (Problem statement, Historic response, Project response)

3. Community data

4. Community background (The current economic and political situation, External Factors)

5. Action taken to resolve the problem:
   - Description of the solution in the work plan and the steps by which this solution was implemented;
   - Resources required to achieve the solution of the problem;
   - Changes that were made in the original plan.

6. Lessons Learned and Conclusions:
   - Key points which led to success;
   - Factors unique to the community;
   - Future steps envisaged in the on-going solution to this or related problems.

7. Contact Names, Phone and Fax Numbers

c) Example of the presentation of Best Practice in the Rural Development Program (FSLD, Poland):

Recommended format:
- *1 page general introduction defining case and explaining why case is important;*
- *2 –3 pages setting case in regional context and discussing background of the case: describe sector, history, and perhaps include timetable of significant laws or events affecting the case;*
- *6 page case study;*
- *1 page of lessons learned and successes*

Useful best practice should stress:
- *Both "descriptive" and "explanatory" part of the story*
- *Process (how we achieved that?) - not only effects*
- *Success factors*
- *Situational factors critical to success*
- *Indicators used to evaluate project performance*
- *Evidence of meeting criteria*

Possible sources of evidence when writing case studies:
- *Evaluation and monitoring reports based on performance indicators*
- *Interviews with people implementing projects and with project's beneficiares*
- *Reports based on questionnaires*
- *Observation*
- *Needs analysis reports*
- *Evidences of individual self-reflection*
- *Reports from team meetings*
- *All types of documents produced*
- *Articles from newspapers*
- *Statistics*
- *TV and radio programs*
- *Photographs*

PROSPECTUS

BEST PRACTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CROATIA

Prepared by the Steering Group for the Best Practice Programme
Zagreb, Croatia
2004

N P >

best practice
in local self-government

**Information about the programme
and application form**

The programme is implemented under the auspices of
the Central State Office for Administration and the Council of Europe

On the behalf of the Central State Office for Administration, I am pleased to announce the launching of the best practice programme in the Republic of Croatia

In modern public administration systems, the importance of local self government for the quality of everyday life of all citizens is increasing. Very often, local self-government units, i.e. the work, commitment and vision of local authorities - could serve as a model of creative, responsive, effective, efficient, transparent and client-oriented public administration.

This programme is aimed at identifying, publicly recognize and award the best practice on local self-government level, and to disseminating the best practices among other local self-government units wherever possible. The benefits of the programme are multiple - on one hand the best practice of local self-government units will be publicly promoted as the awarded for high quality of services delivered to citizens. On the other hand, the programme offers the opportunity for best practice local authorities to share their experiences, and for all other local authorities to get introduced to practical experiences of their colleagues and to adopt them in practice.

We believe that the best practice programme should contribute to develop better public services, higher standards of service delivery and improved local government management, and on the long run, to create the image of local self-government as example for overall public administration.

If you think that your work, vision and strategy have contributed to development of your local community, if you think that your achievements deserve wide public acknowledgment and if you want to share your best practice with others, we encourage you to participate in the programme and we wish you the success.

Zagreb, August 2004

Antun Palaric
State Secretary
Central State Office for Administration

>

The quality of citizens' lives often depends on what their local authorities do and how they do it. That is why the Council of Europe fully supports the modernisation of local government.

To achieve this, not only do structures and processes have to be created; skills, attitudes and experience have to be developed and fundamental cultural change throughout local government need to be promoted. Local authorities need to explore new and imaginative ways of involving their local communities in their plans and programmes. New approaches to service delivery need to be explored, and innovative partnerships tried out and developed. It requires local authorities to be open to innovation, ready to share experiences, and eager to learn.

The Council of Europe's Best Practice programme gives all Croatian local authorities an opportunity to learn and to innovate. The heart of the Best Practice programme is about helping to raise standards in local government, by identifying innovative and excellent examples of service delivery and helping the authorities concerned to spread best practice.

You now have the opportunity to participate in the programme, build on the successes of the Best Practice authorities and spread the message about delivering the high quality public services that people want and deserve. Working together, we can be sure that we will have in place many Best Practice examples for local authorities which can make a real contribution to the modernisation of Croatian local government.

Strasbourg, August 2004

Philip Blair
Director of Co-operation for Local and
Regional Democracy

>

ABOUT THE BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

The best practice programme is a a part of an international project recently initiated by the Council of Europe, aimed at dissemination of best practice in public and exchange of the best practices among local authorities. During the last few years, the programmes with similar content have already been implemented or launched in the number of Western European and transition countries. In the Republic of Croatia, the programme implements the Union of Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities, as an umbrella organisation of the local self-government units.

THE SUPPORT TO THE BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

Besides the Council of Europe and Central State Office for Administration, the project is supported by a range of organisations, which authority and institutional support add the additional importance to the Project: The European Commission, OSCE, USAID/ The Urban Institute, Local Democracy Agencies from Sisak and Brtonigla, UNPD/ILO and «Friedrich Ebert» Foundation.

The representatives of the above mentioned institutions are gathered in the Steering group of the Project, which monitors and evaluates the successful implementation of the programme, and controls the procedure of evaluation and selection of the best practices.

The best practice programme is divided in two main stages: stage of the selection of local self-government units, namely the local authorities who will be awarded with the best practice status, and stage of dissemination of best practice among local self-government units.

>

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE PROGRAMME:
SELECTION OF THE BEST PRACTICE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The first stage of the programme comprises of evaluation of programmes, projects and initiatives in particular spheres of local government work and selection of best practice in local self-government.

The applications for the best practice status could be submitted in eight selected areas, which fall into two main categories: local community leadership and service provision on local level.

TOPICS OF THE BEST PRACTICE COMPETITION IN 2004

Local community leadership
1.   *Solving the problem of unemployment on local level*
2.   *Economic development*
3.   *Communication with client citizens*
4.   *Modernisation of local government management*

Service provision on local level:
1.   *Providing of pre-school and primary education*
2.   *Social welfare provision*
3.   *Environmental protection*
4,   *Communal waste*

In order to be eligible for the best practice status, the programmes / projects / initiatives should fulfil following criteria:

> to be initiated by local authorities (initiative)
> be relevant to the problem (relevance);
> prove a new approach to the problems (innovation);
> demonstrate a record of successful implementation (efficiency);
> be transferable, i.e. suitable for replication in other local authorities (applicability).

Besides the innovative practice, the competing authorities have to prove their **good general performance**, as well as to confirm their **willingness to participate in dissemination** of their best practice to other local authorities.

The programmes, projects and initiatives that participate in the programme will be judged by the independent **Evaluation Panel** of the programme, which consists of prominent experts in the field of local self-government.

EVALUATION PANEL OF THE PROJECT

The Evaluation Panel of the project is a group of prominent experts in the area of local self government. The group consists of local government representatives, representatives of academic community, Croatian and international experts dealing with local self-government issues, representatives of central state administration and media. The Evaluation Panel members play a central role in developing the criteria for evaluation of best practice in selected topics, shortlisting of local authorities, visits and on-site review of best practice and deciding on winners of competition. The Evaluation Panel is composed in a way which ensures competent and independent selection and judgment of the best practice authorities.

>

**SECOND STAGE OF THE PROGRAMME:
DISSEMINATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE**

Best practice status will be awarded to winning authorities for a period of one year. During that period, the best practice authorities will participate in sharing their experiences, practices and lessons they have learnt through the activities co-ordinated by the Union of Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities. The main dissemination activity planned for this stage of the programme which will be supported by the programme will be **open days** for visits of representatives of all interested local authorities to best practice authorities.

OPEN DAYS FOR VISITS

The purpose of the open days is to enable all interested local authorities first-hand insight in the functioning of the best practice in the winning local authorities. For the duration of their best practice status, local authorities will be supported in organizing open days for visits at least once a month. The duration and content of visits, as well as support that will be provided to winning authorities in dissemination of best practice will be agreed between the Union of Association of Towns and Municipalities and the winning authority.

In addition, all the local authorities participating in the programme are invited to **propose the other ways for disseminating** the best practice to be supported by the programme, such as training events in best practice for other local authorities, dissemination of brochure which contains the description of best practice and publishing of best practice on the Internet.

>

CALENDAR OF THE PROGRAMME

The implementation of the programme will consist of the following steps:

a) Application for the best practice status

All local authorities interested to take part in competition should fulfil the application form which is part of this call for applications and send the fulfilled form back by mail, e-mail or fax to the Union of Association of Towns and Municipalities no later than 1 October 2004.

b) Shortlisting of best practice local authorities

On the basis of evaluation of application forms, the Evaluation Panel of the Projects will shortlist the candidates for best practice status by 10 October 2004. In each of two areas of programme (local government leadership and service provision), a minimum of five local authorities will be selected, which will be awarded with the status of the "best practice authority" in the area in which they applied for the best practice status.

All local authorities that applied for competition will be informed by mail on their score and on the shortlisted authorities by 20 October 2004.

>

c) Visits to shortlisted authorities

During **October and November 2004,** three representatives of the Evaluation Panel of the Project will visit the shortlisted authorities for on-site review of functioning of their best practices. The date, time and content of visit will be agreed with shortlisted local authorities individually.

d) Final presentation and announcement of the best practice local authority in the Republic of Croatia

The representatives of shortlisted local authorities shall present their best practices to Evaluation Panel and Steering Group of the Project in the first half of December 2004. After the presentations, the Evaluation Panel of the Project, representatives of the Central State Office for Administration and the Council of Europe shall bring decision on one local authority with the best practice in the Republic of Croatia.

e) Anouncement of the best practice local authorities and award ceremony

Public announcement of best practice local authorities in certain areas of programme and the local authority with the best practice in the Republic of Croatia, with the presence of the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Council of Europe and other organisations supporting the programme, press and electronic media will take place on the ceremony that will take place in the second half of December 2004. The best practice authorities will be announced by the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Council of Europe.

>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AWARDS

The participation of local authorities in the programme requires significant commitment by the local authorities, which needs to be publicly acknowledged. On the other hand, it is also outstanding opportunity for all local authorities to inform the public about their achievements and raise significant media and public attention. In addition, we believe that the project will result in many valuable best practice examples that deserve to be disseminated on national and international level. Therefore, the awards for the best practice authorities are primarily aimed at acknowledgment and support of their work and at disseminating the information on their best practice among other local authorities, professional public and citizens.

All local self-government units, **which apply for the programme and which fulfil general criteria of the programme** will receive the **certificate of participation** in the programme, and their examples of best practice shall be described in the publication on the best practice in local self-government.

>

The shortlisted local authorities will be awarded by the Council of Europe and the Central State Office for Administration with the status of *"best practice local authority"* in the area where they applied for that status. These local authorities will have right to use publicly the title of the best practice local authority for the respective area of the programme. In addition, these local authorities will have possibility to disseminate their best practice through sponsored print and distribution of informative leaflets, publishing the articles of their best practices in the press and broadcasting the information on their best practice in electronic media. Furthermore, the description of their best practices will be included in an international publication on the best practice, which shall be publicly announced and distributed to all the local self-government units and interested professional public in Croatia and abroad. Finally, the best practice of shortlisted local authorities will be published on the website of the Union of Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities.

With the goal of further support in dissemination of best practice, best practice local authorities will be called to participate in international workshops with the representatives of local self-government from other countries, and the study tours and visits to local authorities shall be organised for them.

THE BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME
APPLICATION FORM

BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION, PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU READ AND UNDERSTOOD INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS, TERMS AND CONDITION OF COMPETITION, REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Information on initiative applying for best practice status

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:
BEST PRACTICE CATEGORY (please thick)   *COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP*   *SERVICE PROVISION*
BEST PRACTICE TOPIC: _____ *(please, see the list of topics eligible to apply for the best practice status)*
NAME OF THE INITIATIVE: _____ *(leave this blank if your best practice programme does not have an official name)*
PERSON IN CHARGE FOR THE INITIATIVE: *Name:* _____ *Position:* _____ *Contact address:* _____ *Telephone:* _____ *E-mail* _____

Date of application: _____

I certify that, to my best knowledge, the information contained in this application is accurate.

Name: *Signature:*

_____   _____

Please note that the application must be submitted and signed exclusively by the persons authorized for representation of the local self government unit.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT UNIT:

Name of local unit:

Number of inhabitants:

Size (sqkm):

Number of members of representative body

Number of members of executive body:

Number of employed in local government:

Total annual income in 2003

Total annual revenues in 2003
(please enclose the report on execution of local budget for 2003

INFORMATION ON THE BEST PRACTICE

Please answer all the following questions, provided that your answers do not exceed the apace envisaged for them. Besides your answers to specific questions, you may provide any additional information you consider important for better understanding of best practice of your local authority. The purpose of the questions is to guide but not limit your responses. Furthermore, you may add all the relevant documentation that provides evidence for your best practice.

1. Description of the problem
- *What is the problem which your innovative practice attempted to solve?*
- *When did this problem occur and what caused it?*
- *How many people the problem affected?*
- *What were the implications of the problem (e.g. budgetary, organisational, political, social) ?*

2. The purpose of your best practice
- How your best practice solves the identified problem?
- Did you consider any other possible solution for the problem? If yes, what were the alternatives considered, and why did you decide for the best practice you implement.

3 Description of your best practice
- When did you launch your best practice?
- Who are the beneficiaries and how many of them?
- Shortly describe the activities your best practice?
- Did you find any unexpected results in implementing your best practice? How did you solve them?
- Did you have any external support in designing and implementing your best practice (e.g. international organisations, NGOs, media)?

4. Results of your innovation
- What are the main results of your best practice?
- Does your best practice solve the problem of all the beneficiaries?
- Does your best practice solve the problem completely for the beneficiaries? If no, what else needs to be done?

5. Support for the best practice
- Do the beneficiaries of your best practice recognize its positive results?
- How the best practice you launched was accepted by public (citizens, local media)?

- Is there any opposition to your best practice?

6. Budgetary implications
- What is the cost of your best practice?
- What are the sources of funding for your best practice (e.g. local budget, external funding, donors
- Did you best practice produce savings in the local budget?

7. Other implications of your best practice
- Are there any indirect results of your best practice (i.e. did it serve as ground for any other initiatives in your local community)

8. The sustainability of your best practice
- Do you have long term plans for continuation of your best practice? If, no, please describe why (e.g. the programme you initiated achieved its results, lack of funding for the future activities etc.)
- If you intend to continue your best practice, please describe any further improvements you intent to introduce

9. Dissemination of your best practice
- Are the other local units already informed on your best practice? If yes, how many of them and how well they are informed? What are the main sources of information?
- What do you consider as the most effective way for disseminating information on your best practice to other local authorities?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME, PLEASE SEND BACK THE FULFILLED APPLIACTION FORM TO:

**Union of Association of Towns and
Association of Municipalities
Hrgovići 59
10000 Zagreb**

The applications could also be sent by fax (fax number *01/36 37 116)* or by e-mail to *najbolja.praksa@post.htnet.hr*

The electronic version of application form could be downloaded on the Web site of Union of Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities (http://www.savez-gradova-opcina-rh.hr)

The best practice programme is supported by:

BEST PRACTICE CASE-STUDY

PROVIDING HOME-BASED SUPPORT - MUNICIPALITY ŠKOFLJICA (Slovenia)

I. GENERAL DATA

Management area	Social security
Name of best practice	Providing home-based support
Index stage	3
Implementing organisation	Administration of the municipality of Škofljica
Name and address of implementing organisation	Municipality of Škofljica Šmarska cesta 3 SI - 1291 Škofljica Tel. +386 (0)1 3667360
Date of implementation	from 2001 onwards
Contact person	Lorena Goričan

II. DATA ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY

The municipality of Škofjljica occupies the south-eastern outskirts of Ljubljana and spreads along the main arterial road in the direction of Kočevje and further in the direction of Reka and Novo mesto respectively and still further towards Zagreb.

The municipality of Škofljica is one of the fastest developing municipalities in Slovenia, which is indicated by the explosive growth of its population and the development of different economic businesses in the area. The population counts to approximately 7.200 inhabitants, whereas the territory measures 43,3 km^2. The buildings there are mainly individual houses, also the most recent ones, (which proves a high standard of living). The age-structure is a very favourable one: 1239 inhabitants are under 15 years old and 733 inhabitants are over 65 years old.

III. DESCRIPTION

1. General description of the best practice

According to Article 43 of the Social Security Act municipalities are legally bound to secure the network of public services providing home-based support. Beside the implementation of the work the municipality is also obliged to secure all the necessary financial means for it. Home-based support can be provided by means of the concession grant from the municipality or by the Social Work Centre (a national institution).

Home-based support covers the following types of services:

- Housework support, including delivery or making one meal, buying provisions, doing the washing-up, basic cleaning of the residence rooms, making the beds and primary keeping of the residence rooms;

- Support with keeping personal hygiene including the assistance with dressing up or undressing, washing, feeding, vital necessities and the care for personal orthopaedic aids;

- Assistance with keeping up the social contacts including the establishment of the social network within the environment, with volunteers and relatives, further accompanying the needy person when attending to obligatory matters, informing of the institutions about the state and the needs of the beneficiary and the assistance in the preparation of the beneficiary to his /her institutional placement.

By issuing the relevant order the municipality decides in what way the network of the public service for providing home-based support is to be assured. The provision of support varies in municipalities to a great extent: it may be implemented by the Social Work Centre, a public institution, by the work unit or local authority or by other legal and natural persons.

Municipalities cope with different working conditions, therefore they should strive to seek the most suitable way of providing home-based support.

2. Defining the problems

a) Reasons for providing home-based support within the municipality

There are many powerful reasons for providing home-based support.

It is of vital importance that old-aged and ill citizens remain in their homes and their environment as long as possible. The elders find it very difficult to move to the Nursing Homes as long as they are still mobile. Social life of the elders takes place mainly within the groups of friends, neighbours, and also the Association of the pensioners. Many

times these people can also be of great assistance to their children. They are reluctant to move to the Nursing Homes thus being deprived of their roots, they find themselves among strangers in a very impersonal environment. Considering the financial aspect the municipalities profit from keeping the elders at their homes more than they would if they had to cover the expenses of the expensive institutional care.

Providing home-based support within the municipality is very important considering the financial aspect; it is cheaper than assurance of the institutional care for the elders; moreover, providing home-based support influences the demographic and social structure of the municipality in a positive way.

So far the municipality of Škofljica has been providing home-based support by working units. Yet in such a unit mainly communal activities are included, therefore this was not proved to be the best suitable organizational form to provide home-based support. Moreover, a working unit neither imposes immediate control nor maintains sufficient contact with a worker providing the corresponding support; besides the professionality of home-based support is questionable.

For this reason the municipality of Škofljica is planning to provide home-based support within the local authority together with the assistance of the Social Work Centre and external executors.

b) Difficulties experienced within the municipality when providing home-based support

The municipality of Škofljica has to cope with several difficulties when providing home-based support:

- The local authority is small because of the limited budgetary funds, so it is not possible to employ a social worker who would regularly check the justification of the needs and supervise the provision of home-based support.

- The needs for home-based support are not recognized in spite of the presence of the home care institutions responsible for taking care of ill people at their homes. Another very important dimension of home-based support is its social aspect, which is not fully taken into account by home care.

- Home-based support is not recognizable among citizens and consequently also not treated as such, therefore it is often considered as equal to home care or to domestic help.

- Local authority does not dispose of the records of the beneficiaries of the home-based support.

- The municipality is not in favour of provision of home-based support by the Social Work Centres, which is the case in some other municipalities, as the Centre falls within the competence of the national government and as such covers a wider territory (more municipalities together). Its seat is in another municipality, it is territorially separated from the municipality, further it is not presented with the concrete problems of the aged in our municipality, and its work is rather impersonal in most cases.

- For the time being the municipality of Škofljica provides home-based support free of charge, though the beneficiaries should at least cover the expenses for part of the services. Due to the missing records it is not possible to do a calculation and consequently to set up the price for individual services.

- For the time being the municipality of Škofljica provides home-based support on its own and not by the Social Work Centre, for which reason it is not eligible to the financial participation from the national government

- Momentarily the worker providing the home-base support is sometimes left on her own due to inappropriate service management and supervision. She is also not entitled to compensation for annual holiday and sick leave. Because of the lack of records and supervision she performs every possible piece of work, for which she is asked or wished for by beneficiaries. Actually she sometimes also carries out the work of the home maid, which is by no means the primary task of provision of home-based support, moreover, this is considered to be above standard service.

3. Proposed solutions to the problems (methods)

The municipality of Škofljica recognised the problem and wishes to solve it on its own. By all means the assistance of the Social Work Centre and the relevant external executors will be appreciated:

Step 1: Firstly, the municipality of Škofjljica allocated the competence for the provision of home-based support from the working unit to the local authority and the Department for Social Activities (in which also the residents of the Nursing Homes, kindergardens, schools, etc. are included). This will enable professional supervision and the appropriate professional leadership of provision of home-based support. The municipality is going to try to establish a contractual relationship with the Social Work Centre.

Step 2: Further the municipality of Škofljica will reestablish the keeping of records of beneficiaries of home-based support and make the service cost analysis. It will also carry out a survey among the elders in order to establish the real needs for support.

Step 3: The municipality of Škofljica wants to negotiate the contractual agreement with the Social Work centre, to make it participate in analysing the needs – once or twice a year (as necessary) and to establish the beneficiaries of home-based support and issue a decision about their entitlement to support. The purpose of such an agreement with the Social Work Centre would mainly be to establish the keeping of records of the beneficiaries of the home-based support.

Step 4: By establishing the keeping of records of the beneficiaries of the home-based support the municipality of Škofljica could also carry out the inventory of all the services, make the cost analysis and fix the price list of the services respectively.

Step 5: Once the price list is published, the municipality of Škofljica will introduce home-based support to the citizens via public media and offer individual services also to socially non-endangered persons, who would also like to benefit from them. These additional services would have to be wholly compensated for by the interesting parties.

Step 6: Should the number of interesting parties for home-based support exceed the number of beneficiaries according to the issued decisions, external executors would have to be attracted for provision of additional services.

Step 7: Basic services of home-based support as provided by the statute and by the ordinance, will be provided for by the person regularly employed (he/she will provide services either only for the municipality of Škofljica or also for some other neighbouring municipalities, depending on the number of beneficiaries). The provision of additional services will be carried out in cooperation of the Students' service and the inclusion of students respectively. Following the outcome of the preliminary analysis the youngsters are very much interested in work with the elders and want to be included in the social work. This holds true mainly for students and degree-takers, future doctors, nurses, sociologists and psychologists which would gather work experience this way and at the same time this would be a perfect way to promote interaction between the youngsters and the elders.

Also pensioners additionally trained for such support could be attracted to participate in this work and also those already assisting their peers by keeping them company or by offering them personal help. Among the energetic participants are also the Association of pensioners, Scouts, Kritas…

IV. KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS AND CONCLUSIONS

The crucial contribution to successful reorganization of home-based support in the municipality of Škofljica will undoubtedly be the records of the beneficiaries, which could not be acquired without the cooperation with the Social Work Centre. Therefore a relevant agreement with the Social Work Centre will have to be reached as soon as possible.

The main goal of the provision of home-based support within the municipality is to become more citizen-friendly, because apart from home-based support as provided by the statute also other groups of people could be included (students, other elders and other groups) in this work. Thus the effect would be multidimensional, as both the elders as well as the offerers of home-based support would gain substantial benefit from joint work.

SECTION 5

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The unique feature about local government is local accountability. Local representatives are elected to serve local people. Local authorities are there to develop a longer term vision for the community, to improve the quality of life of local people, to provide services that meet local needs and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community.

Nor are local authorities alone in their responsibility. Community organisations and other public and private sector bodies have an interest in the development of the local community. Whether they are youth groups, residents' associations or Chambers of Commerce, these organisations have a stake in the community. They benefit from its development. At the same time, they have much to contribute to its development.

A local authority belongs to local people and local organisations. If it is to meet local needs, it has to understand what those needs are. Who understands better than local people themselves? If it is to make a real impact on the development of the community, why not harness the commitment and expertise of all community organisations in a shared endeavour?

Local elections are only the first step on the path to community participation. Voting once every four years, and then leaving it to the elected representatives to carry on with their work is one approach. But it is an approach that does not necessarily bring about effective democratic local government. A deeper engagement is needed.

Community participation is one of the key pillars that make a local authority effective. But it does not just happen. In more centralised cultures, local people may expect local officials to make the decisions, to tell them what to do. They are not used to sharing in decision-making. Community participation is something the local authority must work at. It needs a strategy both to engage local people and to bring local organisations into constructive partnerships.

The starting point is building <u>awareness</u>. Local people and organisations, as much as officials, have to understand the rights, obligations and opportunities of local government. In some cultures, awareness is widespread; in others, it is weak.

Secondly, local people and organisations have to be <u>informed</u> of the activities of the local authority, its policies and plans, its decisions, its performance results. The local authority needs mechanisms to do this: a communications strategy, a quarterly magazine, a sympathetic press, radio and local TV programmes.

Thirdly, local people and organisatons should be <u>consulted</u> on the draft plans and budgets and the kind of services they want. Such an approach should become

second nature to elected representatives and officials. Service providers should get feedback from service users on the quality and accessibility of the services provided.

Fourthly, local people should have the opportunity to participate in <u>decision-making</u>, where it is relevant. They could participate in, for example, local committees or youth Parliaments to which budgets have been devolved. There could be specified times when they can speak at Council meetings.

Fifthly, local organisations may be able to work in <u>partnership</u> with a local authority to deliver particular services more effectively. A Tenants' Association can take responsibility for maintaining a residential building. Youth organisations can work with the police and local authorities to reduce youth offending. A Chamber of Commerce can support local economic development initiatives.

It can sometimes be difficult for elected representatives and officials to share power in this way, to allow others to influence the decisions they are responsible for making. But decision-makers should listen to those to be affected by the decisions. Delegated decisions, if managed properly, are often better decisions because they are made by people who understand the issues better. But there are constraints: conflicts of interests must be avoided; sometimes the interests of the community as a whole must outweigh the interests of a particular neighbourhood.

This is what democracy is all about.

This section sets out the values and principles of community participation and offers a range of tools to support programmes that encourage greater participation in local government by local people and organisations. A good starting point is for a local authority to determine how good it is at engaging local people through an external 'stocktake'. This can identify where the local authority needs to do more; this can be set out in an Action Plan. The case-studies identify just a few of the projects that a local authority can initiate to encourage greater community participation.

National Associations might want to start a pilot programme to learn how to use these tools and to see what can be achieved through their use.

The following CoE standards and tools provide a basis for local authority policies and action on citizen participation:

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
No. 2(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life	Recommendation 19 was adopted by the CoE Committee of Ministers in 2001. The full text includes an Explanatory Report. The Recommendation invites local and regional authorities to subscribe to a set of principles and improve local regulations and practical arrangements. The steps cover (i) general measures, (ii) participation in local elections and the democratic process, (iii) direct public participation in local decision-making and the management of local affairs, and (iv) methods to encourage participation by groups that normally have difficulty in participation.

European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life	The Youth Charter includes examples of local authority policies relevant to youth: leisure and socio-cultural activities, youth employment, education and training, social welfare, health promotion, information, equal opportunities, rural areas, environment. It also suggests mechanisms for youth participation, including the use of youth delegates, the co-management of projects, consultation.

TOOL	PROCESS
Building awareness Concept paper: core values and principles	This paper, which is drawn from the Guide to Participatory Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, seeks to explain what democratic governance means and why citizen participation is important.
Audit Model: factors affecting participation	This paper sets out the CLEAR framework (developed by Prof. Gerry Stoker) that can help policy makers audit their approach to improving citizen participation and identify those aspects where they need to focus more attention.
Stocktake Questionnaire	The Questionnaire was developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia and Montenegro with support from the Irish Government. It contains a series of questions about participation in local democracy and lists 19 different forms of public participation. It can help a local authority provide a stocktake on the degree of democratic participation; this can identify the action needed for improvement. The Questionnaire also provides ideas for action.
Taking action Model Action Plan	The model Action Plan was developed at the International Conference on the Development of Democratic Citizenship and Responsive Leadership at Local Level, held in Fuerteventura in 2002. The Action Plan sets out 4 key objectives: develop leadership skills; empower citizens; make use of the media; improve the legal framework. For each objective, the Action Plan sets out typical problems to be faced, suggests strategies, recommends both local and national / international priority measures. This model Action Plan should help a local authority move from policy to implementation, from thinking to action.
Evaluation Indicators and techniques for pilot projects	Pilot measures to introduce greater citizen participation need to be evaluated. The Evaluation Tool sets out indicators, techniques and sources of verification for typical policy objectives. On the basis of such an evaluation, decisions can be taken to retain or amend the appoach and whether to introduce the measures more widely.
In practice Case-study: Prijedor	This case-study describes the introduction of a Centre for Citizens' Information, a Web Page and a One-Stop Shop in a town in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES[1]

Democratic governance: what is it all about?

The first step towards enhancing citizen participation is to outline what democratic governance is about. Democratic governance can be characterised in terms of the following operational features:

- It exhibits high levels of transparency and accountability; that is, information is made available and widely shared, decision-making processes are open, and public officials are held to account for the use of resources and the achievement of outcomes.

- It provides for increased citizen participation, particularly for marginalised groups, and for decision-making by local bodies that are accessible to citizens.

- Its structures and procedures permit the incorporation of the views of a range of social groups (eg community organisations) in the formulation of policies and the equitable delivery of public services. Democratic governance also defines the role of the State in supporting the principle of subsidiarity and the process of decentralisation.

- It operates within an institutional and legal framework that recognises and respects human rights and the rule of law.

Fundamental values of local government in Europe.

Why do people have local self-government? Why is local government important? Why is it valued? Why does it persist? These are basic questions about local government that both practitioners and academics over time have debated. The literature identifies three main <u>normative</u> values upon which local government is based in Europe:

Autonomy: This indicates the degree of power in decision-making between the power of the local authority and the power of the central or regional authorities. It reflects the scope for local discretion and the range of functions given to local government. The existence of local government prevents over-concentration of political power and allows for different political choices to be made in different localities.

Democracy: Points to local government as a political platform and the opportunities of participation and involvement opened up to citizens – the existence of local governments encourages the inclusion of citizens in governance.

Effectiveness: Capacities for service delivery and problem-solving – local governments can be efficient structures for the delivery of services tailored to the varying needs of different localities.

---

[1] Drawn from 'The Guide to Participatory Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro'

It is important to notice that the emphasis on the different values varies between countries, over time, and within different periods of development.

Different models of democracy

Democracy may have different forms, including the following:

- **Representative democracy**: allows people to elect a small number of other people to represent their views and interests in parliaments/municipal councils.
- **Direct democracy**: allows decision-making to take place through mechanisms that engage the mass of the people.
- **Participatory democracy**: provides opportunities for people to express their opinions and contribute to decision-making either through collective or individual forums.
- **Deliberative democracy**: focuses on debating local issues in an open, frank and tolerant atmosphere. The process itself is important.

Table 1 Different views of democracy with associated features

Theories of democracy	Features	
Representative democracy	Direct election of mayor City Cabinet	Clarifying the individual responsibilities of leading councillors
Direct democracy	Popular vote/referendum	
Participatory democracy	Voucher system User surveys Complaint systems Citizen surveys Public meetings	Citizens Panels Area/neighbourhood forums Question and answer sessions connected to council meetings Public hearing
Deliberative democracy	Deliberative hearings Town market meetings	Cyber democracy

In many European countries there is now a trend towards more direct and participatory democracy.

Citizen participation: what and why?

That local government should involve the public or 'get closer to the community' is hardly a new thought. The history of European local government is littered with experiments in public participation and consultation. More recently we have witnessed two different or parallel trends. The *first trend* seeks to promote public involvement in service provision in terms of extending choices within services, encouraging service-users to assess service quality and contribute to service management. The empowerment of citizen and service-users is seen as a means of disciplining out-of-touch and self-interested politicians and professionals in local government. These right-wing-oriented reforms have sought to recast the essence of local government in terms of "value for money".

The *second trend* is a growing interest in community thinking focused on strengthening citizen participation in civil society and building 'social capital'. These left-wing-oriented initiatives have been based more on building renewed trust and dialogue between local authorities and their communities.

Citizen participation is not an aim in itself. Rather, it seeks to achieve certain objectives which in general are divided in two main categories:

Objectives for participation from a democratic perspective:

- More participation means more democracy.
- Greater participation is an objective in itself, because participation is positive by nature.
- More participation leads to greater equity.
- The development of an active civil society requires a greater degree of participation.
- Participation gives greater democratic legitimacy for local government.
- Participation gives a new brand of involved and responsible local citizenship.

Objectives for participation from a policy implementation perspective:

- Participation will increase the likelihood of implementation or sustainability of a new policy.
- Expanding participation helps to assure greater responsiveness to the needs of the proposed beneficiaries, resulting in a better fit between needs and policy solutions, leading to increased service-user satisfaction.
- Participation increases support, legitimacy, transparency, and responsiveness of a particular policy.
- Participation leads to better quality in local services.

Types of participation

How to maximise participation? There are a range of options, from relatively more passive to increasingly active modes:

Information-sharing: Information sharing serves to keep people informed, to provide transparency, and to build legitimacy (this is a one-way information flow).

From local authorities to citizens:

- Dissemination of written material through officials documents, newspapers or magazines;
- Distribution of documents from local government offices through press conferences, radio or television broadcasts; or establishment of websites.

From the public to local government:

- Responding to questionnaires and surveys;
- Accessing toll-free telephone "hot lines";
- Providing various kinds of data;
- Opinion surveys or analyses.

Consultation*:* Consultation involves sharing information and gathering feedback and reaction (this is a mechanism which helps establish two-way information flows and an exchange of views).

- Beneficiary assessments;
- Participatory poverty assessments;
- Town hall meetings;
- Focus groups;
- National/regional/local conferences;
- Round tables;
- Hearings.

Collaboration*:* Joint activities in which citizens or different interest groups are invited to be involved. Collaboration moves beyond collecting feedback to involving citizens and community organisations in problem-solving, policy design, monitoring and evaluation. This does not include any delegation of decision-making power.

- Public reviews of draft legislation;
- Government (national/regional/local)-led working groups;
- Government (national/regional/local)- convened planning sessions.

Joint decision-making*:* is a form of collaboration where there is shared control over decisions made. Shared decision-making is useful when the citizens' knowledge, capacity, and experience are critical for achieving policy objectives.

- Joint committees;
- Public-private partnerships;
- Advisory councils;
- Blue-ribbon commissions or task forces.

Empowerment*:* This mechanism is about transferring the control over decision-making, resources, and activities from the local authority to other stakeholders. Empowerment takes places when citizens and community organisations, acting autonomously and in their own interests, can carry out policy mandates without significant local government involvement or oversight.

- Local natural resource management committees;
- Community empowerment zones;
- Water user associations;
- Different kinds of partnerships;
- Civil society "seed" grants.

One issue that frequently clouds the "how to participate" question is the tendency to give certain types of participation more value. Some see information-sharing and consultation as lower quality forms of participation and cite empowerment as the feature that distinguishes whether participation is "genuine" or not. However, the various types of participation are more usefully seen in instrumental terms, as serving a particular function or objective rather than in terms of "good" or "bad".

One reason not to make value judgments about the types of participation is that activities from information-sharing to empowerment are related hierarchically. Each subsequent type builds upon the previous ones. Therefore, it is more useful to think of these as underlined rather than isolated or discrete alternatives. For example information provision and transparency are the foundation for all kinds of participation.

Trends in the take-up of methods of participation

One can divide the different forms of public participation into four categories:

- Those which are essentially traditional in their format;
- Those which are primarily customer-oriented in their purpose;
- Innovative methods which are designed to consult citizens on particular issues;
- Innovative methods which seek to encourage greater citizen deliberation over a particular issue.

Table 2   From traditional methods of public participation to innovative methods of deliberative participation.

Traditional methods of public participation	Customer oriented consultation
- Co-option/committee work - Question and answer sessions - Consultation documents - Public meetings	- Complaints/ - suggestion schemes - Service satisfaction surveys - Other opinion polls
Innovative methods for consultation	**Innovative methods of deliberative participation**
- Interactive website - Referenda - Citizens' panels - Focus groups	- Citizens' juries - Community plan/needs analysis - Visioning exercises - Issue forums

Participation as the foundation for building social capital

Legitimacy, transparency and citizen influence are very important dimensions related to participation and democracy. But at the same time participation means something more from a local government or democracy perspective. The primary advantage of a tradition and history of participation is its contribution to the formation of 'social capital'. Through the practice of participation, individuals and groups become more capable of organising themselves independently from the State, articulating their demands, manoeuvring successfully in various policy arenas, and interacting with public officials and agencies.

The more experience individuals and groups have in participating, the more likely they are to develop enduring patterns of mutual trust, to mobilise around issues, to engage in collective action, and to be successful in securing a place and influence in the democratic process/system. This will, hopefully, lead to empowerment and socio-economic development.

That is why it is so important to strengthen participation.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

FACTORS AFFECTING
PARTICIPATION[1]

The Council of Europe is committed to increasing the participation of citizens in local government. It wants to see consultation and participation embedded into the culture of all local authorities.

Why is participation an attractive policy option? There is an <u>intrinsic</u> value in participation. It is what the idea of citizenship means – being involved in the decisions that affect every-day life.

There are also knock-on benefits of participation. It helps deliver local accountability. It sustains the legitimacy of decisions. It provides the foundation of community leadership. The public endorsement of local authority policies and services builds public confidence in local political institutions. Better design of public services comes when local authorities listen to local people.

There is a distinction between participation through elections and other forms of participation. Elections provide the most equal form of participation and guide policy-makers in the array of decisions they face. Participation between elections offers a different dynamic to democracy. It allows a more focused input into decision-making.

The challenge is how to engage local people between elections. There are various methods of consultation and deliberation. New information and communication technologies offer new opportunities; they can be flexible, attractive and not time-consuming. But special efforts need to be made to engage those who are more marginal or less articulate.

Many new measures have been recently developed both to increase electoral turnout and to encourage participation between elections. These range from school citizen education programmes and access to information to the development of neighbourhood groups. These have to be sustained and expanded.

The CLEAR framework
Factors that underlie participation and non-participation are set out in the CLEAR framework below. This is based on in-depth studies and will help local authorities understand what drives participation. It will help elected representatives and staff assess the participation and consultation efforts of their own local authorities.

---

[1] Summarised from the report of Prof. Gerry Stoker 'Extending Local Participation' to the CDLR (October 2004)

The CLEAR Framework

Factor affecting participation	How it works	Associated Policy Target
Can do	The individual resources that people have to mobilise and organise (speaking, writing and technical skills, as well as confidence to use them) make a difference in their capacity to participate	Capacity Building: specific support measures or targeted development
Like to	To commit to participation requires a sense of involvement with the public entity that it the focus of engagement	Sense of community, civic engagement, social capital and citizenship
Enabled to	The civic infrastructure of groups and umbrella organisations makes a difference because it creates or blocks an opportunity structure for participation	To build the civic infrastructure so that there are groups and organisations around to channel and facilitate participation
Asked to	Mobilising people into participation by asking for their input can make a big difference	Public participation schemes that are diverse, engaging and reflexive
Responded to	When asked people say they will participate if they are listened to, not necessarily agreed with, but able to see a response	A public policy system that can show a capacity to respond

Getting people to participate is not easy. There may be a lack of capacity to participate or a lack of engagement with politics or with local issues. There are no quick-fix solutions. Results take a long time to come. But the behaviour of local politicians and managers is important. If they ask people to participate in a committed and consistent manner and respond effectively to any subsequent participation, local people are more likely to become engaged.

The CLEAR model suggests to policy-makers that, if they wish to increase local participation, the solution is largely in their hands. All the key factors that drive up local participation are open to their influence. Policy levers are available. Activity levels rise where people <u>can</u> participate, <u>like to</u> participate, <u>are enabled</u> to participate, <u>are asked</u> to get involved, and <u>are responded to</u>.

Initiatives to increase citizen participation should be accompanied by operational research to see what works and what doesn't. Best practice can be identified and shared, perhaps through Best Practice Guides and by bringing practitioners together in Workshops and Networks. 'Hands-on' learning is important. Success should be recognised. Participation thus becomes a key element in policies ranging from transport to crime prevention.

Can there be too much participation? Local government needs the capacity to act, not just listen. People want to be responded to in practice; they look for valued outcomes. If these things do not happen, participation will be discredited.

What kind of participation is desirable? Generally it involves individual action. But there is an important place for collective action. The objective may vary. It may be to get as many people as possible to participate, where the weight of numbers is important for providing legitimacy. It may be necessary to get local people to think about issues outside their immediate interest and consider the common good; this deepens understanding and broadens policy options. Negotiations around different interests and opinions creates stronger consensus.

The underlying point is that participation should be on the basis of a realistic understanding of what politics can and cannot do. A political system requires loyalty. This should rest on a balanced judgement. It assumes that the organisation can do the right thing in the right way, and that, in time, it can correct its mistakes and adjust to new circumstances. There needs to be this element of trust.

Citizen participation requires the 'local voice' to be heard. The 'local voice' is generally based on self-interest. Sometimes it reflects expertise, but too much expertise will drown out the views of ordinary people. It can be constructive or destructive. In order to work, the political system requires attitudes of 'win some, lose some'. It needs to avoid excluding particular groups of citizens.

For participation to work, local people need to support the political system and not just seek short-term gain.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: STOCKTAKE OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

QUESTIONNAIRE[1]

to be filled in by the local authorities

Q1

Description of the Municipality

Name of Municipality	
Total Number of Citizens	
Ethnic Composition of Municipality [%]	
	Croat :
	Bosniak :
	Serb :
	……. (*complete listing*)
	Other :
Net Change in Population in last 5 years	**Increase[%] or Decrease [%]**
Number of Citizens in Rural Areas	
Number of Citizens in Urban Areas	
Number of [full-time or full-time equivalent] Public Servants in Administration	

Please insert the ethnic categories appropriate to the country / entity

---

Voting Turnout in Last Local Election [% of electorate]	
Voting Turnout in Previous Local Election [% of electorate]	
Total Number of Elected Representatives	
Number from Party 1	
Number from Party 2	
Number from Party 3	
Number from Party 4	
Number from …….	
	…….
Number of Female Elected Representatives	Under 35yrs [ ] Over 35yrs [ ]
Number of Male Elected Representatives	Under 35yrs [ ] Over 35yrs [ ]
Name of Largest Settlement	
Name of Second Largest Settlement	
Population of Largest Settlement	
Population of Second Largest Settlement	
Geographical Size of Municipality	(Km^2)
Special Geo-Political Features – to include regional identity	

Please insert correct names for the political parties, appropriate to the country / entity

Name the <u>Neighbouring Municipalities</u> and indicate the level of Inter-Municipal co-operation between your municipality and these.
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

<u>Neighbouring Municipality</u>	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	*Often (6)*
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						

What are the main <u>issues of concern</u> when citizens (individually/groups) contact you?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Often (6)
a. Behaviour of Local Administration						
b. Behaviour of Local Politicians						
c. Education Services						
d. Emergencies						
e. Employment Support						
f. Environmental Problems						
g. Ethnic Issues						
h. Health Services						
i. Housing Services						
j. Lobbying Opportunities						
k. Local Budget						
l. Local Infrastructure						
m. Personal Safety						
n. Planning Permission						
o. Planning Policy						
p. Poverty						
q. Property Rights						
r. Sports Facilities						
s. Taxes						
t. Transport						
u. Waste Management						
v. Water Supply						
w. Youth Problems / Emigration						
x. Alternative Accommodation						
y. Other (*please specify*)						

How do citizens (individually /groups) communicate these concerns to you?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. Face-to-Face						
b. Telephone						
c. Letter						
d. e-Mail						
e. Delegations						
f. Demonstrations						
g. Petitions						
h. Representations						
i. Local Media						
j. Citizen Information Office						
k. Interest Groups						
l. Website						
m. Local Ombudsperson						
n. Council for Ethnic Relations						
o. Other (*please specify*)						

How do you <u>inform citizens</u> in response to their concerns?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	*Always (6)*
a. Face-to-Face Meeting						
b. Telephone						
c. Letter						
d. e-Mail						
e. Newspaper						
f. Radio						
g. Television						
h. Bulletin Board						
i. Community Leaders						
j. Internet						
k. Local Ombudsman						
l. Council for Ethnic Relations						
m. Other (*please specify*)						

How do you <u>encourage citizens</u> to participate in democracy at the local level?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. General Promotion						
b. Local Newspapers						
c. Local Radio						
d. Mail Shots						
e. Personal Invitation						
f. Public Meetings						
g. Seek Particular Expertise						
h. Private / Public Partnerships						
i. Neighbourhood Councils						
j. Public Debates						
k. Youth Forums						
l. Website						
m. NGOs						
n. VOs						
o. LDAs						
p. Other (*please specify*)						

What in your experience are the <u>barriers</u> to citizen participation in democracy at the local level?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. Inappropriate Legislation						
b. Failure to Implement Law						
c. Inflexible Structures						
d. Lack of Awareness						
e. Lack of Councillor Support						
f. Lack of Encouragement						
g. Lack of Officer Support						
h. Lack of Public Interest / Engagement						
i. Lack of Resources						
j. Lack of Time						
k. Lack of Training						
l. Other Competing Interests						
m. Other Preoccupations						
n. Sense of Exclusion						
o. Lack of Confidence in the Political Process						
p. Lack of Self-Organisation						
q. Fears of the Consequences						
r. Lack of Information						
s. Other (*please specify*)						

What are the <u>benefits</u> that active participation initiatives have brought to your municipality?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. Better Decision-Making						
b. Better Policy-Making						
c. Community Development						
d. Greater Citizen Awareness						
e. Improvements in Services						
f. Individual Empowerment						
g. Stronger NGO Sector						
h. Stronger VO Sector						
i. Local Development						
j. Economic Growth						
k. Increased Trust in the Political Process						
l. Individual Fulfilment						
m. Wider Reputation						
n. Competitive Advantage						
o. Increased Acceptance of Resposiblity						
p. Increased Responsiveness by Local Politicians						
q. Improved leadership Legitimacy						
r. Increased Collaboration between Interested Groups						
s. Wider Consensus on Important Community Issues						
t. Other (*please specify*)						

What are the <u>problems</u> that you consider active participation initiatives have brought to your municipality?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. Bad Decision-Making						
b. Community Fragmentation						
c. Disillusionment						
d. Downgrading of Services						
e. Greater Citizen Confusion						
f. Over-Representation by NGOs						
g. Weaker Policy-Making						
h. Increased Workload on Representatives						
i. Reduced Effectiveness						
j. Undermining Representative Democracy						
k. Other (*please specify*)						

To what extent do the following approaches <u>promote</u> citizen participation at the local level in your municipality?
[☑ the appropriate boxes]

	Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Always (6)
a. Central Government						
b. Corporate Strategy/Standards						
c. Departmental Projects						
d. Individual Council Members						
e. Informal Community Leaders						
f. Local Government Networks						
g. Local Projects						
h. Public/Community Demands						
i. Political Group Policy						
j. Central Government						
k. NGOs						
l. Municipal Campaigns						
m. Ombudsperson						
n. Neighbourhood Councils						
o. International Organisations						
p. Media						
q. Trade Unions						
r. Educational Institutions						
s. Inter-Municipal Co-operation						
t. Other (*please specify*)						

Please consult "Guidance Notes" Q10 before completing this section

[☑ the appropriate boxes]

Q10

Form of Participation	Used in the past	Used this year	Will use in the future
a. Complaints / Suggestion Schemes			
b. Service Satisfaction Surveys			
c. Other Opinion Polls			
d. Interactive Web-site			
e. Referendums			
f. Community Plans / Needs Analysis			
g. Citizens' Panels			
h. Co-option / Committee Involvement			
i. Question and Answer Sessions			
j. Consultation Documents			
k. Public Meetings			
l. Citizens' Juries			
m. Focus Groups			
n. Visioning Exercises			
o. Service User Forums			
p. Issue Forums			
q. Shared Interest Forums			
r. Area / Neighbourhood Forums			
s. User Management Services			
t. Public Hearings			
u. Newsletters for Citizens			
v. Ombudsperson			
w. Public Relations Officer			
x. Section in Local Newspaper			
y. Suggestion Box			
z. Local Public Inquiry			
aa. Other (*please specify*)			

Guidance Notes

Different Forms of Public Participation

This section collects information about the some of participation initiatives that are currently used by local authorities. These may be run by the authority on its own or in collaboration with other agencies. Please complete information for each form of participation used by your authority. Definitions and examples for the listed forms of public participation are given below in order to minimise ambiguity and ensure the comparability of responses:

Complaints/suggestions schemes:

> These may be temporary or ongoing, service-specific or authority- wide. They may different forms, e.g. fill-in cards or a telephone line.

Service satisfaction surveys:

> These may be one-off or regular initiatives, focusing either on specific services or on the local authority's general performance. Surveys may be carried out in a variety of ways (e.g. postal or door-to-door) and may cover the entire local authority population or a particular group of service users or citizens.

Other opinion polls:

> These may be used to find out citizens views on non-service specific issues (e.g. community safety or the town in 2000). Opinion polls are generally used to obtain citizens immediate reactions. 'Deliberative opinion polls are used to compare a group of citizens' reactions before and after they have had an opportunity to discuss the issue at hand.

Interactive web-site:

> This may be based on the internet or on a local authority-specific intranet, inviting e-mail messages from citizens on particular local issues or service matters. We are only interested in interactive initiatives and not in the use of computer technologies simply to provide information on services or facilities.

Referendums:

> These allow citizens to vote on policy-specific options, as in the Strathclyde vote on the reorganisation of water services.

Community plans/needs analysis:

> The purpose of these is to set out priorities for local service provision and local authority policy, often on a community-by-community (or neighbourhood) basis.

> In general, councillors take primary decisions about the budget while citizens review (and may reorder) specific priorities.

Citizens panels:

> These are ongoing panels which function as a 'sounding board for the local authority. Panels focus on specific service or policy issues, or on wider strategy.

> The panel is made up of a statistically representative sample of citizens whose views are sought several times a year.

Co-option/Committee Involvement:

Co-optees are citizens who usually represent a particular community group or set of interests on council committees or working parties. In some cases these citizens act in an advisory capacity but in others they playa full role in decision-making.

Question and answer sessions:

These are held at the end of councilor committee meetings, providing citizens with an opportunity to direct questions at elected members.

Consultation documents:

These are a traditional method of communicating issues for discussion or decision-making options to citizens. They may be specific to a particular service, citizen group or neighbourhood. They may be used in conjunction with public meetings or other forms of participation (e.g. service user forums). They may be linked to statutory requirements for public consultation.

Public meetings:

These are a traditional method of seeking public views on particular issues or facilitating debate on broad options for a specific service, policy or neighbourhood. They may be initiated by the local authority (or a particular department) or be convened in response to citizen or community concerns. We are referring here to one-off public meetings, rather than ongoing forums (covered below).

Citizens juries:

A citizens jury is a group of citizens (chosen to be a fair representation of the local population) brought together to consider a particular issue set by the local authority. Citizens juries receive evidence from expert witnesses and cross-questioning can occur. The process may last up to four days, at the end of which a report is drawn up setting out the views of the jury, including any differences in opinion. Juries views are intended to inform councillors decision-making.

Focus groups:

One-off focus groups are similar to citizens juries in that they bring together citizens to discuss a specific issue. Focus groups need not be representative of the general population, perhaps involving a particular citizen group only. Discussions may focus on the specific needs of that group, on the quality of a particular service, or on ideas for broader policy or strategy. Focus groups do not generally call expert witnesses and typically last between one and two hours only, usually involving around 12 people.

Visioning exercises:

A range of methods (including focus groups) may be used within a visioning exercise, the purpose of which is to establish the 'vision participants have of the future and the kind of future they would like to create. Visioning may be used to inform broad strategy for a locality, or may have a more specific focus (as in environmental consultations).

Service User Forums:

These are ongoing bodies, which meet on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the management and development of a particular service (e.g. an older peoples day centre, or a leisure centre or park). Forums may have a set membership or operate on an 'open basis. Such groups may have the power to make recommendations to specific council committees or even to share in decision-making processes.

Issue forums:

These are also ongoing bodies with regular meetings, but focusing on a particular issue (e.g. community safety or health promotion). Again, they may have a set membership or operate on an open basis, and are often able to make recommendations to relevant council committees or to share in decision-making processes.

Shared interest forums:

These are similar to issue forums but concentrate upon the needs of a particular citizen group (e.g. young people or minority ethnic groups). Again, they may have a set membership or operate on an open basis, and are often able to make recommendations to relevant council committees or to share in decision-making process.

Area/neighbourhood forums:

Such forums are concerned with the needs of a particular geographically -defined area or neighbourhood. Meeting regularity, they may deal with a specific service area (e.g. planning or housing) or with a full range of local services and concerns. Area forums mayor may I not have dedicated officers attached to them. They may have a close link with the relevant ward councillors or with councillors responsible for the service areas under discussion. We are interested here in area forums in which citizens playa key role, rather than in councillor-only area committees. Membership may be set or open. Where there is a formally-established membership (e.g. of representatives from tenants or community associations in the area), members of the public may be free to participate in an open discussion session at meetings.

User management of services:

These initiatives represent the most radical form of public participation in that citizens are given direct control over the management of local services and resources. Examples of user management include community-based housing organisations (or tenant management co-operatives) and community-run nurseries, youth clubs and community centres. Such initiatives usually operate through an executive committee, elected by the wider group of users.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: MODEL ACTION PLAN

(Derived from the Final Report of the international conference on the Development of Democratic Citizenship and Responsive Leadership at Local Level, Fuerteventura, 2002)

First objective: Develop leadership skills so as to transform the behaviour of local politicians and senior technical and administrative officials

PROBLEMS	STRATEGY / APPROACH	LOCAL PRIORITY MEASURES	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY MEASURES
Poor-quality leadership	Identify and teach key skills	Devise a training programme for local politicians and senior technical and administrative officials designed to transform their attitude to participation and to increase their understanding of:	- Develop explicit criteria for identifying good practices,
Reluctance to share power and fear of citizen participation	Promote an open-minded attitude to participation and transform administrative culture	- the implications of leadership; - the importance of its role in the context of participatory governance; - the potentially complementary nature of direct and representative democracy; - the benefits of power-sharing (which can be a win-win game); - how to communicate with the media	- Set up an interactive database of examples of best practices; - Launch quantitative and qualitative research into participatory democracy; - Promote research schemes in collaboration with the citizens concerned; - Promote the formation of networks; - Introduce a European prize for innovative practices in terms of citizen participation.
Discrepancy in the way citizens and elected representatives see democracy	Work with local political parties to achieve progress in the party political system	Set up forums where political parties, the media and NGOs can meet in order to arrive at a common understanding of the implications of local democratic governance.	
Low profile of political parties with regard to local democratic citizenship.			

Second objective: Promote the empowerment of citizens so as to develop a culture of participation

PROBLEMS	STRATEGY / APPROACH	LOCAL PRIORITY MEASURES	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY MEASURES
Complexity and opacity of the political process which prevents citizens from properly understanding the decision-making process	Bottom-up participatory democracy: develop neighbourhood democracy by giving citizens the possibility of influencing decisions or taking decisions regarding everyday problems.	- Set up advisory and/or decision-making bodies at neighbourhood level; - Make sectoral measures possible which are in keeping with the demands and methods of expression of the various target groups; - Foster contacts between neighbourhoods and organise joint meetings between the various neighbourhood councils, so as to set priorities and promote joint action. - Reform the curricula of schools and universities to give due weight to the culture of participation, with special attention given to women, young people, cultural and ethnic minorities and undergroups;	- Develop explicit criteria for identifying good practices; - Set up an interactive database of examples of best practices; - Launch quantitative and qualitative research into participatory democracy; - Promote research schemes in collaboration with the citizens concerned; - Promote the formation of networks; - Introduce a European prize for innovative practices in terms of citizen participation
Disenchantment and lack of trust, lack of active citizenship	Help local civil society to find the means to devise long-term local development strategies. Promote civic education in the broad meaning of the term. Strengthen solidarity among residents and bolster local associations. Make the neighbourhood a springboard for raising wider issues, such as economic democracy.	- Devise local educational pilot programmes in specific fields, especially that of interculturalism. It must also be possible to impart civic education through alternative formal or informal mechanisms; - Support the action of local associations and NGOs, especially those of young people, and increase their ability to run their own projects independently or with the co-operation of the authorities; - Establish mechanisms to assist and defend individual citizens in their dealings with local authorities; - Offer a wide range of training opportunities to citizens and activist members of associations, so that they can play an active role in participatory processes and organise themselves (at individual and collective level).	

Third objective: Actively encourage the media to become involved in democratic governance

PROBLEMS	STRATEGY / APPROACH	LOCAL PRIORITY MEASURES	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY MEASURES
Inadequate or distorted presentation of the local civic process	Promote fairer, more honest and fuller information.	Create the requisite conditions for the development of new local media focusing on democratic and participatory governance.	

Fourth objective: Improve the legal framework

PROBLEMS	STRATEGY / APPROACH	LOCAL PRIORITY MEASURES	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY MEASURES
Excessively rigid legal framework, which regulates local processes too stringently.	More flexibility, and exemptions, so as to encourage greater numbers of local experiments.	- Establish a framework permitting the creation of "free" towns experimenting with the development of local democracy; - Adopt minimum standards requiring participatory governance; - Establish a partnership between central government and the local authorities which are committed to participatory democracy.	- Develop explicit criteria for identifying good practices, - Set up an interactive database of examples of best practices; - Start quantitative and qualitative research into participatory democracy; - Promote research schemes in collaboration with the citizens concerned; - Promote the formation of networks; - Introduce a European prize for innovative practice in terms of citizen participation.
Lack or inadequacy of a legal framework prompting the development of local citizenship	Legal mechanisms encouraging local authorities and citizens to commit themselves to participatory governance.		

EVALUATION INDICATORS AND TECHNIQUES FOR PILOT PROJECTS IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Increasing the participation of local people in local government is always a difficult process. They have to see the benefits of investing their time and efforts in such participation. They need to be confident that such participation will actually contribute to something, will lead to actual results. For that, they will want to be sure that the local authority has both the will and the capacity to listen, to respond and to take appropriate action.

This is no easy task, especially if citizen participation is to be sustained. Participation is about the culture of the local authority and the willingness of staff and elected representatives to be held to account by local people. It is about the attitude of local people believing that they can and should influence their local authority. How can this be achieved?

Projects have to be designed carefully. One important element in project design is to set out ways of evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the project from the outset. Thinking about this in advance informs the development of the project's objectives and activities.

This Model identifies a number of ways in which typical project objectives can be evaluated.

	Project objectives	Evaluation indicators	Evaluation techniques / Sources of verification
1.	Establish a relationship of mutual confidence and trust between the citizens, the local politicians and the administration	1.1 Mechanisms of communication between the local politicians and the citizens 1.2 Degree of satisfaction of the citizens concerning the behaviour of local politicians and municipal staff 1.3 Availability of different mechanisms ensuring accountability in local politics	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available
2.	Increase access to information about the operation of the municipality and introduce the necessary mechanisms of communication between the citizens and the local authority	2.1 Tools and techniques used for providing information to the citizens 2.2 Tools and techniques for gathering information from the citizens 2.3 Citizens' awareness of the available mechanisms of informative participation 2.4 Accessibility of the information to citizens in general and, in particular, to those who encounter difficulties in getting involved (e.g. women, youth, elderly people) 2.5 Quality of the information provided 2.6 Quality of the feedback provided	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available

	Project objectives	Evaluation indicators	Evaluation techniques / Sources of verification
3.	Increase co-operation between NGOs, the local politicians and the administration	3.1 Increased participation of community associations and NGOs in community life	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available
4.	Increase citizen participation in the decision-making process at local level through various mechanisms of direct participation	4.1 Availability of mechanisms of direct citizen participation 4.2 Citizens' awareness about the mechanisms available 4.3 Methods of election of the members of the citizen forums / councils / committees and their representative character 4.4 Transparency in the operation of mechanisms of citizen direct participation 4.5 Impact of decisions of the citizen forums / councils / committees on the management of public affairs at local level 4.6 Feedback provided by the local council and the administration to the citizen forums / councils / committees	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available

	Project objectives	Evaluation indicators	Evaluation techniques / Sources of verification
5.	Increase the participation of those who encounter difficulties in participating through the creation of appropriate platforms and mechanisms (e.g. women, youth, elderly people)	5.1 Platforms, tools and techniques used to increase the participation of those who encounter difficulties in participating (e.g. women, youth, elderly people) 5.2 Accessibility of information about the operation of the municipality to those who encounter difficulties in participating 5.3 Promotion of a citizen participation policy based on the principles of equal opportunities in general and, in particular, gender equality 5.4 Representative character of citizen forums / councils / committees	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available
6.	Promote intercultural dialogue and better integration of minority groups in community life	6.1 Platforms and tools for promoting intercultural dialogue 6.2 Accessibility of the information about the operation of the municipality to the representatives of minority groups 6.3 Creation of the necessary mechanisms of communication between the minority groups and their associations, the local politicians and the administration, tailored to the specific needs of the representatives of the minority groups 6.4 Representative character of citizen forums / councils / committees	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available

Evaluation of the efficiency of project management

	Project objectives	Evaluation indicators	Evaluation techniques / Sources of verification
1.	Ensure effective and sustainable functioning of the mechanisms of citizen participation created	1.1 Consistency of the innovative mechanisms created with the objectives of the project and with the specific needs of the target groups 1.2 Co-ordination between the project activities and the activities of the existing structures 1.3 Participation of NGOs and community associations in the project activities 1.4 Capacity to establish networks between different project partners (local / national)	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available
2.	Dissemination of best practices in the field of citizen participation to other municipalities of the country	2.1 Accessibility of the information about the progress of project implementation at regional, national and international level 2.2 Relationship between the municipality and other partners at regional, national and international level 2.3 Number and quality of channels used to ensure information flow 2.4 New related initiatives launched in other municipalities (knock on effect)	**Evaluation technique:** Meetings with various focus groups Feedback from the members of the focus groups **Background:** Activity reports, Municipal decisions / minutes of the citizen forums / consultative councils, Any information documents available

CASE-STUDY: PRIJEDOR MUNICIPALITY[1]

Introductory Explanation

As a template for a case study, we have taken the municipality Prijedor in which were noticed new mechanisms in municipal management such as a Centre for Citizens Information (CIC), a Web Page, a One-Stop Shop (OSS) and an openness towards NGOs.

As a specific example of the work of the Working Group for Transparency (composed of representatives of OSCE, LDA, USAID/PADCO), the local authorities and local NGOs started the Centre for Citizens' Information and a One-Stop Shop. Prior to this they began the process of information networking for municipal services and a database creation, and they started a web page of the municipality. A significant initiative of the Municipal Assembly was the creation of a new expert service for the Mayor for working with NGOs.

PRIJEDOR - Description of Municipality

The municipality of Prijedor is located in North-western part of Republic of Srpska /Bosnia and Herzegovina with an equal distribution of rural and urban population. There is a total number of 108.600 citizens of which 75,26% are Serbs, 23% Bosniacs, 0,63% Croats and 1,1% of others. The total number of the Municipal Parliament's members is 31 of which 8 belong to the SDS (Serbian Democratic Party), 6 to SNSD (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats), with 4 for the Coalition of Bosniac Parties. Out of the total number of members there are 9 women and nearly all of them are over 35 years of age.

The diversity of political parties in the municipal assembly brings constant instability and unrest. Eventually, some initial assumption that harmony and contact with the NGO sector would be easier and more efficient were confirmed because they were more likely to be interested in improvement if they had greater participation in decision-making and municipal policy. It is very important to stress the positive example of Prijedor in which changes are being implemented in parallel with extremely successful returns. The result is a greater interest in international institutions in this area.

The problems with the municipal administration are unusually large because Prijedor is the second-ranked municipality by size of population with a considerable number of refugees and returnees against the backdrop of the extremely difficult economic situation in the post-war period.

---

[1] Drawn from the « Guide to Participatory Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro »

Analysis by the Mayor, Local Elected Representatives, Administrators and Citizens

The Mayor

Speaking of the Office for Public Relations as it was titled, the initiative was started by OSCE FO, Prijedor, in July 2002. After the first talks and exchange of ideas, we understood the necessity of turning the municipal administration towards the citizens, the direct users of its service. It was then suggested to form a Working Group which consisted of representatives of the Municipality and NGOs in Prijedor. As local NGOs dealt with problems of access to public administration by the citizens, it was suggested to have local NGOs delegate one representative to the Working Group.

Soon after in the autumn of 2002, the Local Democracy Agency joined the project to support it proactively, principally because there was a similar Office of Public Relations in Trento which would present a positive experience and a model of how to accomplish it in Prijedor.

There soon followed a regimen of differential training for members of the Working Group. In the end, the democratization of the different fields of social life led to the conclusion that the municipal administration must be more accessible to the citizens. The most important innovations with regard to the opening of the CIC and OSS are the following:

- citizens just after entering the town hall can obtain all information
- no customers are left wandering up and down in the town hall
- no unnecessary visits to offices because virtually everything can be done in one place
- clerks can do their regular jobs and so solve citizens' requests more efficiently

The support of both public and international organisations operating in the area of the Prijedor municipality was available. The assistance of the Local Democracy Agency in equipping the CIC and a desk-project for USAID, the implementation of the Docunova programme and the necessary training of staff was greatly appreciated.

The challenge was not so much the ideas as the lack of understanding by the public. So we faced the skepticism of some elected representatives.

The ballot is now in progress and we will check if specific cases are successful in:

- accepting this idea of opening the municipal administration towards the citizens regardless of all the challenges.
- providing the means to continue the project which includes the putting of its own server at our disposal and orienting all information towards the citizens via electronic mail as well as the intranet start-up.

Representatives of the Municipal Assembly

In talks with representatives of the Assembly we have learnt that they see as the main motivation the need of democratization and the further opening of the local authorities towards the citizens; they see NGOs as a direct mediator in relations with the citizens and the authorities. The mere process of a constant opening of the local administration towards international relations demands the further development of this process. Some of the innovations so far include the website of the municipality, CIC, OSS, the free presence of the citizens at sessions of the Assembly as a direct product of the Law on Freedom of Access to Information.

Its significance reflects a completely new way of co-operation between the local authorities and the citizens which brings a quality of work and leads to getting closer to each other with the assistance of the NGO sector.

The factors that influenced the success of the aforementioned changes are, first of all, the readiness of the municipal administration and the clerks to make positive changes in their work and relations with the citizens. As a result of the permanent co-operation with the international organisations (OSCE, ADL, USAID), the opportunity for contact and access to concrete information, the Law on Freedom of Access to Information had far greater influence on the local administration. This has led to a transparency and openness towards the public as a first real result. All municipalities, whose financial capabilities and human resources enable it, should move in this direction. In the process of implementing the new mechanism there was an initial resistance. But after achieving the first results which were very positive, this resistance ceased.

Administrators

The CIC, OSS and Web Page are very positive both for the citizens and the local administration because the citizens have everything in one place. They do not have to go to the offices of municipal clerks but receive direct instructions and all necessary help at the scene. Inside the OSS, a clerk gives concrete help to persons that wish to start or expand an existing job. The information networking of the municipal departments enable direct access for all departments' heads to the actual processing and solving of the received requests. Both the efficiency of subordinate clerks has resulted in faster responses to requests and the ending of the practice of the mountains of files.

All these processes in fact are the result of the revolution in the municipal administration. The information networking of local offices will facilitate this process and satisfy the expectations of the citizens. Municipal administrations that have not made these changes should do so without delay and budget for the next year to implement the new mechanisms. As an initial problem we recognise the lack of skills in dealing with the new technologies, the lack of the custom to distribute all accessible information.

Citizens' Panel

In order to obtain information from the municipality a new post of responsibility was established in the expert service of the Mayor in order to work with NGOs. A Working Group consisting of representatives of the municipal administration, local and international NGOs, was formed and finally the Information Centre in the corridor of the town hall and a desk information One-Stop Shop was also established.

An even closer relation between the Information Centre and citizens should be encouraged. Our interest and activities of the municipality is closely connected with local management; we have a direct connection with the Working Group as representatives of the NGOs and for the two other mechanisms we participate directly in the Working Group. As this is a first pilot phase with good co-operation, our estimation is that we have succeeded in completing certain activities together.

The most efficient (but not sufficient) mechanism proved to be regular meetings of the Working Group, the education of the municipal administration and the participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations at different joint seminars. The Working Group has justified its existence. As for the decision-making process, there is a certain degree of progress but it is still necessary to work hard and make efforts to reach a higher level of transparency in that process too.

Experience: The experience proved that the most important thing was to be well informed and acquainted with the work of the municipal structure. Certain mechanisms exist within the law / regulations but the essence must be known well to apply them in an efficient manner.

Recommendation:
The work with the citizens at the level of local communities and their education and introduction to the work of the municipal structure inevitably leads to a greater participation by the citizens, the exchange of information and as a result the greater influence by citizens on elected representatives and a better transparency in the work of the municipal structure.