

Methodology on rewarding the most active MA member

Background

The Law on Local Self Government establishes the legal basis for a sustainable local self-government system in Kosovo. The same law anticipates that the highest organs of a municipality are a) the Municipal Assembly (hereinafter referred to as “MA”) and b) the Mayor. Respectively, the Municipal Assembly is the highest representative body of the municipality consisting of all its elected members, whereas the Mayor is the highest executive body of the municipality elected through direct elections.

The last local elections in Kosovo were held in 2021. According to the results of such elections, the elected MA members are exercising their position for the first time, namely their first mandate. About 22.71% of the MA members belong to the group age under 30 years, whereas 61.29% of the MA members have their first mandate¹. Due to the aforementioned reason, there may be a possibility that the MA members may need help in better understanding their role, responsibilities, competences and be equipped with more insights on local government processes such as public procurement, budget and taxes, etc., in order that they become a proper mechanism to oversee and hold the executive accountable.

Over the previous years, the DEMOS project has been directly working with MA members on building their capacities to better exercise their roles and responsibilities. However, our experience with MA members in the previous mandate, as well as regional meetings held in February and March 2022, has shown that there is needed more work to be done in relation to MA members’ daily work – namely, meeting and cooperating with citizens in terms of encouraging them to participate in budgetary hearings and bringing forward their requests and needs, requests and needs which need to be followed up by MA members.

Since DEMOS III will provide technical assistance combined with capacity building for MA members on oversight and citizen engagement, this methodology has been developed with the intention to reward the most active MA members in selected municipalities in Kosovo. The award will inspire MA members to be more active and understand better their role and exercise their power.

DEMOS III will work with CSOs, media and MLGA to award the most active MA members for their contribution to increasing the citizen engagement and work towards effective oversight over the executive bodies. The awarded MA members will serve as role models.

Methodology:

The aim of this assignment is to increase accountability and incentivize Municipal Assembly members to perform their functions in three areas: citizens` representation and community engagement, decision – making and oversight role.

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SJZo1rc3_kJVRsdfIkAk4chLeuclWJ_/view?fbclid=IwAR1tt3G2DD1jckZW9TXZm_95cAR4-cz2iqxOJO9rxAh5o_qz82srsTZVer8

Selection criteria

DEMOS project will select six municipalities to monitor and evaluate. The composition of those six municipalities shall be as follows:

1. Two large municipalities;
2. Two medium municipalities;
3. Two small municipalities.

Additional criteria to be considered for selection the municipalities are:

1. Municipalities that show interest
2. Balanced selection of municipalities based on political composition
3. At least one municipality governed by minorities;
4. Exclude the municipalities in which the project DEMOS is piloting one of the activities (SA, BIT, CSOs/user friendly report on budgeting process²)

It should also be considered that if a larger number of municipalities qualify for the competition, then out of those qualifying, six municipalities will be randomly selected. This type of selection was proposed by the focus group.

A committee comprised of DEMOS project representatives shall be established in order to select the eligible municipalities who meet the predefined criteria.

Selection of monitoring CSO/s

Upon the selection of the municipalities to be monitored and evaluated, the CSO/s that will serve as the supervisory body of the MA members shall be selected by means of an open call, namely a ToR. It shall be drafted and published. The ToR shall include background information related to the requested experience, objective of the assignment, timeframe and specifics of the engagement, program schedule.

The main criteria for CSOs that will serve as supervisory bodies for MA members shall be:

1. Demonstrated experience of monitoring national and/or local level activities.
2. Demonstrated experience in monitoring municipalities covering issues of local governance, public consultation processes, citizen engagement, and/or related issues.
3. At least five-year experience working on local governance issues.
4. Demonstrated experience with elected representative in national or local legislative bodies
5. Experience in drafting monitoring reports (please provide examples, links etc).
6. Preferably experience working with performance systems (e.g. PMS, award systems, assessment of electoral promises, performance audits, project evaluations, etc).
7. Expertise in the team (knowledge of performance systems, experience with local level, experience with monitoring, experience with elected representatives).
 - Team leader experienced in project management and monitoring of public institutions
 - Performance expert experienced in monitoring systems
 - Experiences monitors in monitoring municipalities

² SA (Rahovec, Skenderaj, Peje, Kamenice - 2022); BIT (Kacanik, Mitrovica e jugut, Ferizaj, Mamushe, Prishtine, Viti); MP/CSO (PZ, SU, IS, GJA, LI, PO)

8. Demonstrated in house organization capacities
9. Composition of the team (advantage given for women, minority communities, disabled staff, etc).

Mode of operation of selected CSOs

DEMOS project has drafted several options regarding the mode of operation of the selected NGOs that were discussed in a focus group in order to select the most favorable option. Options proposed include:

1. To appoint a monitor to follow the sessions of Municipal Assemblies and one or more monitors outside the sessions to oversee the work of the MA members in the field - e.g., in social networks – and draft reports based on the information gathered during Municipal Assembly sessions and MA members’ work in the field which will provide an analysis and reflection of MA members’ performance and impact;
2. Prepare a questionnaire to be filled out by MA members. This questionnaire shall include questions related to their activity outside the sessions and it shall request evidence to be attached (attached links from social networks, media, portals, photos, etc.); In addition, NGO will monitor the assembly meetings and prepare a report about it.
3. To establish a committee of MA representatives (e.g., chiefs of parliamentary groups, MA head) in order to choose the most active MA members in cooperation with NGOs;
4. NGO in cooperation with the municipality to compile an online questionnaire and distribute it in the official channels of the municipality so that it can be completed by the citizens for the MA members who have helped the community the most. Citizens can attach photos, lists or other proofs of the MA members' work.

The most favorable and unchallenging option for the selected CSOs to operate is the first option

Target group

The target group of this activity shall be the MA members of six different municipalities. MA members shall be the only exclusive group to be monitored, evaluated and awarded as the Heads of Parliamentary Groups and Heads of Assembly Members enjoy more rights in assembly sessions and scope of action. (These individuals also will be part of the evaluation municipal committees). In information sessions held in the months February and March 2022, this has been a request of the MA members in order for the awarding process to be fairer. This was also confirmed during the focus group discussion held in the beginning of November.

It is also envisaged that more than one reward will be given. In order to have as many inclusion of different groups as possible of MA members, three rewards will be given; **1) active member**, **2) the most active woman member³** and **3) the most active new member**.

³ In case 1) the most active member is a woman, the second award, namely 2) the most active woman member, shall not be applicable and the award shall not be granted.

Indicators to evaluate the MA members

The indicators cover three fields of responsibilities: a) Citizen representation and community engagement; b) Decision-making and c) Supervision.

- a) 1. Number of meetings organized by MA member with village councils and/or citizens on common public interest
- a) 2. Number of citizen requests/issues addressed in the MA sessions and/or executive, that came out from the organized meetings by MA

- b) 1. Initiatives proposed for public interest by MA members
- b) 2. Engagement of MA member in the budget hearings about MTEF and Annual Budget development"

- c) 1. Number of infrastructural projects that are monitored during implementation and maintenance

Timeframe

For this methodology to take place, all MA members shall be notified in advance for the period they will be evaluated. The evaluation period shall last eleven months, more precisely from February – December 2023. The determination of the period to be considered as the evaluation period was done in cooperation with the focus group comprised of MA members in the meeting which was held in the beginning of November⁴.

Evaluation process

The selected NGOs will monitor and evaluate MA members according to the selected method. During the eleven-month monitoring period, three meetings shall be organized with MA members from the selected municipalities. This periodically report will show the impact and progress achieved by the MA members and the process in general. This will facilitate the process, identify gaps and problems, and will certainly ensure that entire process is transparent with all parties included in the final evaluation of the MA members. Based on these reports, the committee members will hold a closing meeting to review the progress and impact of the MA members. to elect the winners.

Composition of evaluation body

The Evaluation Committee (EC) and the Complaints Committee/Commission (CC) are the bodies for evaluating and reviewing the complaints.

⁴ The focus group discussion was held on 4th November, with Heads and AM of four municipalities (Gjakove, Kacanik, Lipjan and Rahovec)

The EC consist of 4 members:

- 1 or 2 members from CSO
- 2 members from municipalities (Heads of assembly and a member of parliamentary group)
- 1 member/observer from DEMOS

The CC consist of 4 members:

- 1 or 2 members from CSO
- 2 members from municipalities (members of parliamentary groups)
- 1 member/observer from DEMOS

The minimum score for an assembly member to be qualified for the award shall be 50 points out of the maximum score of 100 points. The prepared draft by EC will be sent to the municipal assembly of the respective municipalities for their information and remarks (approval).

After the draft proposal is shared with municipalities, the complaints can be submitted within 5 working days to DEMOS staff. The CC has 5 working days to review and decide on any complaints.

After the complaining phase, the results will be announced.

Award

Promotion of the most active MA members during this period in social networks, radio and television. Also, the MA member will be rewarded with capacity building in a field determined by themselves, e.g., training, course, education, etc.

Also, a monetary value can be allocated to invest in a project in the community.

Information and publication

The DEMOS project will develop an information campaign about this activity before its implementation so that MA members and citizens are informed about this process.

Whereas, the publication of the awarded MA members will be done in official channels of the respective municipalities, official channels of DEMOS project and national radio and television.