Banja Luka - basic indicators

- 226,459 inhabitants (estimate)
- Strong migration flows
- High number of refugees and internally displaced persons
- Dominant nature of vulnerability: socio-economic (poverty and unemployment)
- 23.4% unemployment
- No official figures on current levels of poverty and extreme poverty
Institutional framework – social inclusion

- Strategy of Rural Development of the City of Banja Luka (2010 - 2015)
- Plan of Improving the Life of Persons with Disability in the City of Banja Luka (2008 - 2013)
- City of Banja Luka Youth Policy (2007 - 2011)
Social Accountability Audit

FINDINGS
Challenges in service delivery I

**Employment**
- high levels of unemployment and inactivity and high share of informal employment

**Heating**
- system outdated and unsustainable

**Road infrastructure**
- low quality

**Public transportation**
- expensive, lower quality in rural areas, incompatible with needs of people with physical disability

**Sewerage system**
- not systematically solved in rural and suburban zones
Challenges in service delivery II

• Difference in quality of service delivery between city central areas, suburban and rural areas

• Citizens dissatisfied with availability of information on public services / costs & conditions of use
Existing Social Accountability
City Practices
Local Administrative Units  OCD  Private sector

CITIZENS

PARTICIPATION

FEEDBACK

TRANSPARENCY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

INTERMEDIARIES

MONITORING
Transparency - Information access & availability

**Right to access to information**
- PR Section
- Guide on access to information
- Monthly informational newsletter “BL info” distributed in printed & e-form
- Deficient use of notice boards within local administrative units to post information

**Official Gazette / City Website**
- City Council & Office of Mayor decisions and other acts (e.g. budget)

**City Council Sessions**
- Nominally open to general public and media
- Practice - interested parties need to prove their legal interest in order to participate
- Broadcasted via local television station (2013?)
- Live streaming or video view not available via city website
Participation

Direct mechanisms of citizen participation
- Referendum, citizen assemblies, citizen initiative, **local administrative units**, public hearings, citizen panels, and “citizen hours” in assemblies

Public hearings
- Mandatory form of public participation in the adoption of regulation (drafts: city statute, budget, urban and regulatory plans and other acts); lasts 30 days.

Annual budget drafts
- Available on-line for comments prior to adoption

City website
- Sections: 1) Q/A section, 2) suggestion proposals and 3) polls
Local Administrative Units

• Most important direct mechanism of citizens participation in decision making
• Number: 57 LAU
• High mediating capacity

Problems

- Lack of jurisdiction
- Lack of capacity of working councils
- Lack of funding

- Difference in quality of work between different local units
- Unprofessional staff

- Unsatisfactory feedback
Monitoring / Feedback mechanisms

Local authorities must provide official response on submitted complaints (deadline: 30 days)

Capacity building – project based activities
To members of councils of local administrative units and individual interested citizens

Monitoring & performance measurement of city service provision - project based approach
The Department of Public Utilities, Housing and Traffic of City Administration conducts annual service satisfaction survey
E-government features

“Bureaucratic model”
- Direction: enhancing IT efficiency of internal government structures

City website
- Informative function
- Participative features enabled (Q/A, suggestions, polls)
- FG participants unaware of these mechanisms or perceive them to be ineffective
- Website’s interface described as complicated and impractical

City Development Plan: free wi-fi spots in city centre and info points
Social accountability in Banja Luka – opportunities and constraints

**City Government**
- Bureaucratic (centralized) institution
- Unsatisfactory feedback to citizen’s problems
- Public employees professional behaviour not adequately recognized

**Citizens**
- Inactive and disenfranchised
- Lacking trust in local government
- Lack of representation of their interests

**Intermediaries (local administrative units, CSOs)**
- Left out of the local decision making
- Lack of financial and administrative support
Thank you for your attention!

NENAD GALIC