Social Sustainability Assessment Framework and Reflections

John Driscoll, I2UD
Dritan Shutina, Co-PLAN

Regional Dissemination Workshop
Skopje, March 19, 2013
Objectives of the Social Sustainability Assessment

• a participatory, **city-specific assessment** of the social accountability in service provision

• a **framework for analysis** of social accountability issues and including indicators/index to monitor and compare progress.

• a people-led solution-identifying process leading to stakeholder-owned **proposals for change**.
ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>City Background</th>
<th>FGDs and IDIs</th>
<th>PSD Workshops</th>
<th>Dissemination Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception</td>
<td>Research template</td>
<td>City Profile</td>
<td>FGDs and IDIs summary</td>
<td>ICT Note (SA framework); 3 key issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Inception</th>
<th>Identification of Vulnerable Groups</th>
<th>Assessment of Findings in context of ICT and SA theories and best practices</th>
<th>Reflection on scenarios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

PROJECT Workflow

Social Sustainability Assessment
Social Accountability Framework

PARTICIPATION

CITIZENS

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

INTERMEDIARIES

TRANSPARENCY

FEEDBACK/MONITORING

Social Sustainability Assessment
Implementing mechanisms that enable citizens to become part of the decision-making process.
Summary of Results
3 Key Issues

Participation
Current “one size fits all” social accountability practices further marginalize certain groups because they are not tailored to the special needs and circumstances of different community groups.

- Current participatory activities are not reaching marginalized groups
- Low motivation and citizen engagement
- Gender-specific considerations

“One of the main obstacles to social accountability is the “generalization of problems””
- FGD participant

- “we are aware that if we don’t ask, we won’t be given anything. We need to get more organized. Here, a great help will be the NGO sector and the media”
- FGD participant
Making city stakeholder information and operations publicly available and useful.
Summary of Results

3 Key Issues

**Transparency**

Information asymmetry between all three actors vis-à-vis one another’s rights and responsibilities.

- Complex bureaucracy and cumbersome administrative processes
- Opaque or abstruse government data
- Lack of neighborhood-level information

“Decision-making does not reflect the needs of our neighborhood.”
- FGD participant

“Once, they have sent me to seven different offices in order to report my taxes. Each time I came to one office, somebody would say ‘We are not in charge, go there’. I spent the whole day walking across the city... The procedure I was trying to do was submit my tax report.”
- FGD participant
Ensuring citizen-government communication and that expressed citizen needs are matched with responsive action.
Summary of Results
3 Key Issues

Feedback / Monitoring
Poorly maintained and promoted current feedback and monitoring mechanisms with low institutional responsiveness rates to citizens’ requests and complaints.

• Undervalued Local Community Councils
• Impractical and distrusted redress mechanisms

“authorities are distant and detached from citizens’ worries and concerns”
- FGD participant

“authorities are not interested in our problems and authorities are unapproachable”
– FGD participant
Social Accountability Index

Concept

• The choices of questions to address within each dimension reflect the issues that arose from the assessment across the five municipalities.

• Use of ICT is a cross-cutting theme.

• Start with a simple approach that can be implemented now and made more complex and precise over time.

• Based on evaluator's judgment of the availability and functionality of social accountability tools.
Social Accountability

DEMAND
For good governance

PROVISION
Of good governance

CITIZENS

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

INTERMEDIARIES

ALL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY
Social Accountability Index
5 Dimensions

ENGAGEMENT
Indicators of level of initiative taken by citizens individually or collectively to take part in civic life.

PARTICIPATION

OPPORTUNITIES
Indicators of Local Government’s openness to citizen participation in decision making.

INFORMATION ACCESS
Indicators of the City’s readiness to make productive use of Open Government Data

TRANSPARENCY

INFORMATION AVAILABILITY
Indicators of disclosure of information related to local decisions

FEEDBACK/MONITORING
Indicators of the effectiveness of 2-way communication between citizens and their local governments
## Social Accountability Index

**Example: Participation - Opportunities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation - Opportunities</th>
<th>Banja Luka</th>
<th>Sarajevo</th>
<th>Durres</th>
<th>Skopje</th>
<th>Prishtina</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the Mayor hold open days that are accessible to all citizens?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there elected neighborhood councils?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the city administration present municipal budgets to neighborhoods as part of the formal fiscal preparation cycle and solicit inputs for priority projects from neighborhood councils?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there an active consultation process for involving residents, and specifically vulnerable groups, in municipal planning decisions?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there a formal process for incorporating citizen comments and feedback into city strategies and planning decisions?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation - Opportunities TOTAL** | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 13
Participation – Opportunities:
All cities have elected neighborhood councils and/or processes for incorporating citizen feedback into planning decisions.

Participation – Engagement:
All cities have NGOs representing vulnerable groups. 3/5 have minority/vulnerable group representation in city council.

Transparency – Info Availability:
None has an open data policy but all cities have budgets available online. No easy to use ICT.

Transparency – Info Access:
All using media to disseminate information but still not enough outreach. Need to build e-governance capacity among municipal staff.

Feedback:
2/5 have SMS query capacities but overall absence of effective feedback systems.

Proposals address:
1. Feedback (e.g. interactive websites, improved monitoring systems, response requirements).
2. Information access & availability (e.g. info centers, websites, calendar and charter).
Key Considerations—City Perspective

Other observed requirements for the success of proposals:

• All cities already have social accountability practices. Most of the solutions proposed aimed at making them **functional and efficient**.
• Need for Social Accountability, monitoring, improved communication and social inclusion to be **integrated into a city strategy** rather than ad-hoc and project dependent.
• Need for better **data collection and analysis** at the community level that highlight the needs of vulnerable groups.

The 5 cities identified the following roles:

• **City Administration** is the key implementing actor given the need for an institutional framework to support initiatives.
• **Citizens** need to be proactively engaged with the local authorities to ensure the realization of proposals.
• **Intermediaries** should become partners in the process through partnerships (such as MoUs).