ECA Sustainable Cities Initiative
Social Sustainability Assessment

Banja Luka
City Synthesis Report

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Banja Luka
City Synthesis Report

This City Synthesis Report for Banja Luka presents the results of a Social Sustainability Assessment carried out by the Institute for International Urban Development (www.i2ud.org), Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development (www.co-plan.org) and the US Alumni Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A summary of findings of the desk and field research that included focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and a participatory workshop is also available in a separate Banja Luka City Note. This assessment is part of the World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Sustainable Cities Initiative and the WB-Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPP) for Strengthening Local Governments in South-Eastern-Europe, funded by the UPP and managed by the ECA Social Development and ECA Urban Development departments and the World Bank Institute. For more information, please refer to the ECA Sustainable Cities Website: http://bit.ly/XWFMCG and www.seecities.eu. The analysis, results, and views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and do not represent the position of the World Bank or any of its member countries.

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City Synthesis Report

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Introduction

As part of the WB- Austria Partnership Program for Strengthening Local Governments in South-Eastern-Europe countries and the ECA Sustainable Cities Initiatives the World Bank Social Development unit in ECA has developed a Social Sustainability Assessment framework that takes into consideration two dimensions of socially sustainable and inclusive urban development:

- **Social Accountability and Participation** to increase accountability in the delivery of services and programs and empower urban marginalized and vulnerable groups to participate in their cities’ development; and
- Proactively addressing the challenges of Marginalization to identify the needs of socially excluded groups and associated inequalities.

The ECA SCI Social Sustainability Assessment seeks to contribute to increased knowledge and awareness of social accountability among local stakeholders including civil society, government officials and marginalized urban residents; and to strengthen integrity in public service delivery in five selected cities in the ECA region by increasing the demand for good governance, social accountability and civic participation. The five cities are Durrës (Albania), Prishtina (Kosovo), Skopje (FYROM), Banja Luka and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The assessment was conducted by staff of the Institute for International Urban Development (I2UD) in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development in Tirana with the participation of local experts to carry out the research and fieldwork.

Phase 1 of the project, completed in September 2012, resulted in detailed profiles of each of the five cities covering demographic, social, physical, economic, cultural, institutional and political issues. The results of this research are summarized in Section 1. The full report is available upon request. During this initial stage, the city teams also identified vulnerable groups to be the focus of the second phase of the Assessment. This selection was made on the basis of official information obtained from institutions responsible for the provision of various public services at the local level, findings from research studies made by international and national organizations, as well as other relevant documents (laws, provisions, local development strategies, etc.) and information provided by representatives of marginalized and vulnerable communities and NGOs.

Phase 2 involved extensive fieldwork and consultation with community members and other stakeholders. Each city team carried out six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and six In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). The FGDs were held with each vulnerable group, with men and women in different rooms for part of the discussion. The teams also conducted FGDs with NGOs. The questionnaires are available in an annex as a separate document. Focus group participants were recruited through a public call advertised via mailing lists and social networks and cooperation with local grassroots NGOs that work with the identified vulnerable communities. Each potential participant was asked to provide background information; this allowed the focus group organizer to bring together representative groups to account for specific characteristics such as age, economic status and neighborhoods where they live.

In-depth Interviews were carried out with representatives of three of the following groups of stakeholders: the local government, the central government, and the business sector. The selection of the interviewees has been based on personal background of the interviewee (gender,
ethnic identity, living and work location, etc.), and their professional background (employment history, civic engagement, etc.)

**Section 2** provides a summary overview of the issues raised during the FGDs and IDIs in Banja Luka. The summary is organized according to the three themes covered during the FGDs:

- Social inclusion in public services;
- Current levels of social accountability and participation; and
- Opportunities and constraints for social accountability and participation.

For Phase 3, a Participatory Scenario Development (PSD) Workshop was held in Banja Luka on December 11, 2012. The objectives of the PSD workshop were to:

- Raise awareness of the results of the previous two phases;
- Provide recommendations for the local government authorities, the wider civil society and intermediaries, i.e. NGOs, CBOs; and
- Map out solutions to reinforce socially sustainable city development and integrity in public services.

The workshop brought together stakeholders from multiple sectors and engaged them in identifying locally relevant pathways of autonomous and planned change (improvements) in the context of social accountability, sustainability and good governance.

The participants were encouraged to envision a future scenario for the introduction of various social accountability and social inclusion mechanisms. As a result, stakeholders developed a 'sense of ownership’ for the scenarios. Particular focus was placed on the use of ICT tools for drafting socially inclusive accountability initiatives. **Section 3** builds on the scenarios agreed on by the workshop participants, as well as their recommended detailed actions for implementation, and suggests three key interventions to set the City of Banja Luka on a Socially Accountable path.

Key considerations are also outlined in **section 4** regarding a number of issues and reflections from the PSD workshop that should be considered when designing and planning the proposed scenarios. A regional workshop will take place in Skopje, Macedonia in mid-March 2013 during which the five cities that were the subject of this Assessment will present and discuss with each other the results of the workshop and the proposed next steps.
1. City Profile

1.1. General City Profile

The City of Banja Luka is the cultural, political, administrative, economic and financial center of Republika Srpska, one of two entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter: BiH) and the second largest city after Sarajevo. The city’s Administrative Service estimates the population at approximately 250,000; it is composed of Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats. Administratively, the city’s 1,250 square kilometers are divided into 57 local communities (mjesne zajednice). The City’s Administrative Services operates 16 local offices spread throughout the city-region. The city budget for 2012 - originally set at 139,670,000 BAM - was increased to 194,604,000 BAM, a 40.05%. The main city institutions are the Office of Mayor, City Administrative Services and the City Assembly.

1.2. Vulnerable Groups and Exclusion

Marginalized groups in the Bosnia and Herzegovina socio-economic and political context include the following groups:

- Unemployed people, particularly youth, women, and the 30-55 years age group;
- Returnees and refugees;
- Ethnic minorities, including the Roma community;
- Persons with disabilities

Most of these groups experience both economic and social exclusion and their marginalization is primarily derived from unemployment and poverty.

Unemployment in Banja Luka has been steadily rising and it can be estimated that approximately 80% of the city’s population lives in difficult conditions. To put this into perspective, it is worth mentioning that, the RS Syndicate Union estimates monthly expenditures for an average family of four in December 2011 was 1,813.45 BAM2 (approximately 1,212.3 USD). The unemployment rate of persons with disability is difficult to determine as the Employment Bureau does not compile disability specific data. The unemployment level of Roma in the city is also unknown.3

The two marginalized groups in Banja Luka are the Roma and refugees/internally displaced persons. Local Roma live in Veseli Brijeg, an area in the Ada district, whilst a high number of refugees can be found in the following local communities: Vrbanja, Debeljaci, Dragocaj, Zaluzani, Laus, Motike, and Paprikovac. In addition, a high percentage of members of the Bosnian ethnic minority can be in Srpske Toplice; they are also present in other city areas.

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1 This represents a significant increase from the 1991 census enumeration of 195,692. According to the estimates of the Institute of Statistics of Republika Srpska, in 2010, 226,459 people were living in Banja Luka (see their official web-page: http://www.rzs.rs.ba/English.htm).


3 Some estimates for the whole of BiH speak about 99% of Roma being formally unemployed in BiH. Their biggest source of revenue - as a rule - is collecting and recycling waste and secondary raw material. Source: BIH Council of Ministers 2010, Social Inclusion Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina Draft, at 32.
Research conducted by Banja Luka’s Social Work Center in 2008 documented the living conditions of refugees: from a lack of primary education and sanitary (and adequate housing for the Roma) to lack of water supply and adequate sewage system in Cesma, Motike, Simici, Rekavice, Potkozarje, Misin Han, etc.
1.3. Local Governance vis-à-vis Social Inclusion

The overall political environment in BiH is ethnically-centralized as a consequence of the co-associational model of rule determined by the Constitution, as established by the Dayton Accord. This model, applies to all levels of government, with elites representing the country’s three major groups: Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats. Since, one ruling party currently has a majority of seats in the local assembly, and given the centralized powers of local governments, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the local government is responding to the needs and interests of marginalized groups. The City assembly only has only one seat reserved for the elected representative of national minorities while only 29% of the representatives are women.\(^4\)

At present, the situation of marginalized groups is not systematically addressed and there is no comprehensive approach by the city authorities to target the multidimensional aspects of their social inclusion. However, the City’s Development Strategy prescribes as a goal the inclusion in the social and economic life of the City of persons with decreased working capacity, diminished mobility and persons in social need through the adaptation of transportation, infrastructure improvements and employment. Social inclusion and the reduction of poverty are among the operational goals of the Strategy, although it does not define the groups that are socially excluded and endangered by poverty except for persons with physical disabilities. Current City indicators do not go beyond measuring the social assistance packages (financial aid or providing social housing) that the City is providing for persons that are in a position of social need. Thematically specific city-policy documents do contain sections that are directed towards specific recognized as marginalized groups: children and youth; the Roma; returnees and refugees; persons with physical and mental disabilities.

1.4. ICT for Social Accountability

This lack of coherence between strategies on paper and the practices at a local government level extend to the use and role of ICT. Whilst the city’s most visionary policy document, the Development Strategy of the City of Banja Luka 2007-2015 depicts Banja Luka as an ICT city, the application of ICT remains a challenge\(^5\):

According to the study conducted by the Agency for Information Society of Republika Srpska Banja Luka has one of the more advanced ICT applications among the local governments, on account of the implementation of the USAID’s Governance Accountability Project (GAP6).\(^7\) Although the current city’s ICT level deserves recognition as a positive development within the broader BiH e-governance context, it is evident though that the City is not using ICT to involve citizens in participatory decision making processes. The current type of e-governance practiced by the City of Banja Luka is an emerging e-governance,\(^8\) characterized by static information presented on its web page and very little interaction with citizens.

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\(^4\) This ratio relationship de jure represents an example of discrimination, according to the Law on Gender Equality in BiH; in which article 20 states that discrimination in public life exists unless there is at least 40% representation of the less represented sex in an elected body on all levels of government.

\(^5\) The strategy does not mention/cover any e-participation features


\(^7\) Jusic, Tarik et al. 2011, The Development of Local E-Governance in BiH, Mediacentar Sarajevo, at 61.

**Internet Use**

A 2011 study on the use of internet and social media in Banja Luka, representative research conducted by the Local Civil Society Organization (CSO) shows that 75% of surveyed citizens of Banja Luka are users of internet and that almost half of them are using it on a daily basis. The population between 35 - 49 years old is the most active internet users while internet use is higher in the urban city areas (61.2% of city respondents use the internet on a daily basis as opposed to 34/4% of rural ones). However, its use by local stakeholders for increased participation and social accountability is unclear;

Social networking sites (Facebook and YouTube) have been used by the citizens of Banja Luka since May 2012 to share information and demand accountability from city officials concerning the demolition of the green area located in the central city area and the construction of a residential-business complex instead. However, based on discussions with identified local stakeholders, there have been no attempts by the Banja Luka municipality to introduce interactive community mapping that would specifically target deprivation issues. It seems that individual citizens are more ready to use ICT than the government, or even the business sector.

Recent research centered on evaluating the quality of life in Banja Luka has shown that the vast majority of surveyed citizens are not satisfied with the quality of information exchange between them and city administration, as they find that there are almost no opportunities to engage in a direct discussion with the elected officials and that there are but few events where citizens can ask question or state their opinion to the local government. Not surprisingly, 20% of government officials interviewed find that citizens slow down decision-making and that their participation is not necessary, despite the fact that 80% of citizens are willing to be more actively involved in the participatory process.

1.5.**Accessibility of Public Services**

Based on citizen perception on the provision of public services, it can be concluded that there are three priority areas for the local government to intervene significantly: employment, health service, and social protection. Banja Luka citizens are also concerned about the cost of heating, inadequate water supply and sewage system, and education. On a positive note, current major city infrastructural projects are revolving around the construction of the water supply and sewerage systems in specific suburban and rural areas (Karanovac, Ramici, and Potkozarje), building of healthcare centers in suburban areas and repairing of roads in urban city zones.

The current solid waste management practices, which cover 92% of the population in the urbanized parts of Banja Luka, have resulted in environmental damage whilst the high ticket prices on the public transportation system, which is at times provided by third parties, is not affordable to the lower-income populations.

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10 Jusic, Tarik et al. 2011, *The Development of Local E-Governance in BiH*, Mediacentar Sarajevo, at 57.
2. Summary of Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews
(Team led by Nenad Galić, US Alumni Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

In accordance with the stipulated Terms of Reference and desk review results, separate FGDs were organized for men and women from the following six categories: 1) unemployed, 2) low income employed persons, 3) persons with disabilities, 4) national minorities, 5) youth, and 6) NGO activists.

2.1 Social Inclusion in Public Service Provision:

The focus groups characterized public services as inadequate. Monopolies in the provision of certain services (such as electricity) were highlighted as the cause for high prices and sub-par service. Additionally, the rationale behind the pricing schemes is not well explained to the citizens and is also unaffordable for marginalized groups that have economic difficulties (the unemployed, the low-income employed, the national minorities). Another obstacle to obtaining public services mentioned was bureaucracy, which excludes those without the time and/or knowledge needed to navigate the system. The national minority group mentioned differences in services in the city center as compared to the suburban and rural areas especially concerning access to public transportation and the condition of roads in outlying areas.

Participants with physical disabilities were particularly critical of the monetary assistance packages they receive, which they deemed low and insufficient, and they felt particularly discriminated against when comparing them to the significantly larger packages given to those with war-caused injuries. While employment regulations are considered appropriate, they cited the non-compliance of employers as evidence of the marginalization of people with disabilities.

2.2 Existing Social Accountability Levels

2.2.1 Views on the current state of affairs at the local level

The participants expressed a general dissatisfaction with the performance of the City Government, with the unemployed group characterizing the local administration as inaccessible. The Local Communities or CSOs - the participatory mechanism closest to citizens – are also seen as lacking institutional competences and perceived as serving special interests. Communication between local authorities and citizens was characterized as troublesome.

Male participants in the NGO activist group differentiated between the types of service providers, stating that small services function on more accountable (e.g. garbage disposal) while other more essential service providers, which have a political stake, are not accountable.

A few participants, including in the disabled, youth, and low-income employed groups mentioned that the problems with instituting social inclusion and accountability lies not in the legislation, which is appropriate, but in its weak enforcement. This was related to a common theme of corruption and an unwillingness to help on the part of public employees.

With regards to the influence and accessibility of ICT in Banja Luka for accountability purposes, female respondents in the NGO activist group reported positive experiences in communicating with the city administration, who reply to e-mail queries and answer questions posed over the website, and negative experiences with other public service providers, who in general are unresponsive to e-mails.
Contact with service providers through written correspondence, over the telephone and in person - depending on the activity undertaken - was recognized as being more efficient than by ICT. Both groups agreed that people prefer direct communication methods with public service providers in Banja Luka. The men’s group explained that accessibility to information depends on whether the information is considered sensitive.

2.2.2 Methods for obtaining information about public services

During the focus group discussions, the participants were asked about available methods for obtaining information about services and other government activities. The majority agreed that in-person and such informal channels as the use of social networks were the best way to get current information about services; although participants in the national minority group mentioned that the information comes too late for them to raise concerns with upcoming changes. The printed press was mentioned by the unemployed group as a source of information.

While women of all groups overwhelmingly indicated that they rely on family, friends and neighbors for updates, men tended to also mention radio, television and the internet. Television and radio were also cited by the disability group (presumably because of their mobility issues) and the national minorities. In general, however, few participants mentioned the use of ICT.

ICT use was more common among NGO representatives. In the disabled group, those who were involved with the NGOs were also more likely to mention the internet as an information source. This subgroup also referred to the NGOs as an important source of information. The other group that stands out for ICT use is the youth, who identified the internet as the most important source for specific information, such as how to contact service providers.

Only a few participants (males in the employed low income group and the youth group) use the city website as a source, and described it as too difficult to navigate. Female youths stated that the website's unattractive design discourages them from using it, and that it is unreliable. Male youths, although they use the site to obtain specific information about the city administration, complained that important sections, such as access to official documentation and forms, are out of date. They recognized that ICT service access varies significantly among different administrative departments. One respondent stated that “one section doesn’t reply at all, while another replies and maintains good communication”. Furthermore, the “Your pages” section on the city’s web page - that enables posting questions and comments by users - was described as being censured and not regularly updated. The remaining participants do not consider the city website a source to be consulted. NGO activists further clarified that while the city government website, one of the best in RS, its interactive features are not as effective as those of social networks. They supported the youth's views that the site is not well organized and required knowledge of the bureaucracy to be able to find information. They also echoed the findings of other FGs by stating that the site is not accessible to marginalized groups.

2.2.3 Methods for placing questions or complaints about public services

When it comes to placing a complaint relating to problems with basic services, the participants overwhelmingly agreed that raising the issue in person at the relevant office was the most effective way to have the problem addressed. Among the unemployed, ICT was not seen as a viable method due to their lack of access to the needed technology. The low-income group indicated that complaints placed by any other method (telephone, written letters) more often than not remain unaddressed. The group with disabilities, however, was more reliant on the telephone.
2.3 Opportunities and Constraints for Social Accountability

2.3.1 Perception/Awareness of/participation in SA activities
Both male and female participants in the unemployed group and in the youth group were skeptical regarding the likelihood to achieve positive results through social accountability activities. None of them had taken part in direct initiatives through which they demanded accountability of local government officials for their actions and work. The same skepticism was present among the low-income employed, especially the women, and particularly in relation to the delivery of service in marginalized communities. As a justification, they brought up a telling example: a media-supported initiative to repair the heating system in the low-income neighborhood of Starcevica obtained 5,000 signatures, but resulted in no action from the local government. At the same time, the participants noted, the local government was repairing heating systems in other, more “important” neighborhoods. The youth viewed participatory processes as only *pro forma* activities; for example, public hearings on the adoption of the city budget were described by men as “places where everything is known in advance,” with officials running these hearings without addressing citizens remarks. The male NGO representatives also mentioned that public input is not being taken into account during these hearings, and added that information about upcoming hearings is distributed too late through the media (city website and newspapers) that are not accessible to all.

The group with disabilities was unaware of specific initiatives for increasing their participation in social accountability processes beyond the activities of NGOs. However, one man stated that he personally collected resident’s signatures in order to improve garbage collection in his community, which were submitted to the service provider and had a positive result in remedying the service deficiency.

The youth mentioned certain government ICT initiatives directed towards youth who are utilizing social media, such as Facebook, for the dissemination of information (i.e. “Youth of Republika Srpska”). These were recognized by both male and female groups as an improvement in communications from the RS government. They recognized that there are local accountability initiatives in Banja Luka, such as the recent protests in relation to construction works impacting a former city park and the signing of petitions and protests in certain local communities because of the changes in the regulatory plans in those communities. However, the NGO representatives explained that these protests came too late, as the plans for construction had already advanced by the time citizens found out about them.

2.3.2 Perceived obstacles to participation in decision making
The groups in general shared the view that much of the official local government communication cannot be trusted. Unemployed men and female NGO activists specifically mentioned the City Administration news bulletin (*BL info*) and newspapers in general as unreliable due to perceived censorship and bias. The low-income employed and national minorities mentioned the remoteness of rural communities as an obstacle to effective participation, as the city is not distributing its information brochures in these areas.

Another problem identified by most groups, including the low-income employed, the disabled and the youth was the uncooperative attitude of the local administration employees. This seems to be a major source of frustration. Among the focus group participants there is a perception of corruption and nepotism in public appointments and a lack of disciplinary measures. The youth
indicated that older public employees do not have the ICT literacy required to support the city's ICT initiatives. Some groups, including the low-income employed and the disabled, recognized the need to be familiar with the complaint mechanisms in order to obtain a response. They also note that the public employees could be more helpful in assisting people to become familiar with the system.

The disability NGO stated that there is no follow-up mechanism for the local government to engage NGOs in city planning. Although they regularly send annual reports to inform the city administration of their projects and needs, they receive no feedback. Seven NGOs involved in disability issues and the city administration established an informal board for joint planning activities in 2005; no meetings have taken place since 2009. This has led male participants with disabilities to conclude that although the city authorities have the adequate information about the problems faced by the disabled community, they are not willing to address the issues.

Furthermore, female respondents in the NGO group stated that while the city administration and service providers are improving their practices towards their users, information continues to be difficult to find or access. Examples cited the web site, small sections in newspapers, broadcasts of city assembly sessions on local Simić TV limited in cases of appointments of certain commissions or passing decisions concerning monetary allocations).

Interestingly, most groups mentioned that the lack of participation among marginalized groups is partially due to the citizens' own ‘passivity’. Some participants in the low-income employed group recognized that the constraints of time demands and the demoralizing impact of unsuccessful attempts to address their issues can contribute to this passive attitude. The male participants in the disability group also justified this low level of motivation on account of lack of mobility and the huge personal efforts that people need to invest in order to participate in social processes. Females of the same group, though, referred to the sense that the authorities are either unapproachable or not interested in their problems.

NGO activists referred to the lack of knowledge about the legal framework and their rights. They also suggested that the lack of data about marginalized groups limits their inclusion in city accountability processes. Participants in the national minority group mentioned that legislative provisions need to be simplified in order to be understandable and thus accessible to the everyday person. Demoralization and the general passiveness of people, followed by the non-responsiveness of institutions were identified by the youth group as the biggest obstacles for people to practice accountability mechanisms and protect their rights. Ultimately, however, NGO activists recognized that raising citizens' interests is the responsibility of the local authorities.

2.3.3 Suggestions to improve SA

Participants were asked to suggest activities that would improve the level of social accountability in the city. Unemployed female participants and NGO activists recommended "open-door days" in the city administration, during which citizens would be able to bring issues of concern and discuss them directly with the local authorities.

In order to increase transparency and the accountability of service providers, male respondents noted that it would be important to decrease corruption and increase a sense of moral responsibility among public employees. Low income employed participants suggested placing an interactive information desk in the city center, for example, to distribute service information. Similar ideas were put forth by female participants of the disability group and the national
minority group, although NGO activists mentioned that the city already does this. Low income males and NGO representatives requested the strengthening of local community council (CSOs) or other such bodies to act as the messenger translating citizen's needs to the city government.

Essential preconditions for improving social accountability according to the participants in the youth and NGO groups are: increasing the expertise of city employees, reducing bureaucracy, introducing institutional supervisory and monitoring solutions, and easier access to and the professionalization of services.

The national minority group recognized CSOs as important players in promoting participation, since citizens' general disengagement is seen as an obstacle. The youth and NGOs also mentioned the importance of CSOs, as well as the media, as key social actors to increase motivation and engagement among "passive" citizens. They believe that city authorities need to place a larger emphasis on dissemination of information, especially about people’s legal entitlements, in order to diminish marginalization and social exclusion.

NGO activists stressed that using ICT to improve accountability - if it is to be feasible - needs to be complemented with additional channels of communication and take into account people’s practices and habits. ICT also needs to be promoted, given the low level of computer literacy. The following solutions were discussed within the women’s group:

- Local authorities need to keep records of the demands that citizens have raised during one month time span and based on most frequently asked questions produce a city web page with a practical outlook;
- Communicating via social networks (e.g. Facebook);
- Sending complaints over SMS - it needs to be a free service, in order to be functional and complemented with other methods of complaint;
- Live streaming of city assembly sessions on the city’s web site.

In addition, male respondents recognized that for an ICT solution to be efficient it needs to be institutionalized - through a general city assembly act, memorandum, internal administrative rulebook, or by devising an official post, that would further on enable an obligatory response on a quarry/letter within a specific time frame. Male respondents agreed that every public service provider should have an information officer and that online access to automated information/forms/documents should be available.

*Photos from Focus Group Discussions*
2.4 Views of IDI respondents

Mr. Milenko Malinovic
Function: Head of the Section for Education, Health and Social Protection, Department of Social Affairs, City of Banja Luka Administration

Ms. Ljubica Milanovic
Function: Head of Department for Development, European Integrations and Investments, City of Banja Luka Administration

Ms. Milanka Sopin
Function: Assistant Minister for Local Self-Governance, Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance

Mr. Sasa Acic
Function: Secretary of the Union of Associations of Employers of Republika Srpska

Mr. Dragan Popovic
Function: Head of the Department for Legal Affairs, Republic Secretariat for Legislation, Government of Republika Srpska

Ms. Biljana Popovic
Function: Administrative Legal and Financial Sector Manager, CIDEA (City of Banja Luka Development Agency)

According to all but one of the interviewees, the citizens of Banja Luka, including the marginalized groups, have adequate access to information on public services, since adequate standards and methods have been put in place by the city administration; for example, the web portal, a central administrative office where citizens have access to notice boards and city newsletter; and the CSOs where citizens can access information and collaborate with the local government. Most interviewees stated that citizens should be more active and directed towards searching for information, despite recognition of the digital divide. It was mentioned that there is an emphasis on the importance of innovative projects initiated by the international organizations (e.g. ‘GAP’ project and UNDP run ‘LDP’ project) that aim to standardize participatory engagement/strategic planning processes.

The city administration’s inner ICT practices have been evaluated to be at a high level and externally responsible towards citizens. Free Wi-Fi access points, non-existent at the current time, are expected to be introduced by 2015 in accordance with the City Development Strategy. The city website was deemed to have the most potential for effective two-way communication, but web 2.0 capabilities have yet to be put in place. Web sites were also identified as a good solution for communication between service providers and users. The proposed alternative for those without access to internet was the existing complaints and suggestion box in the main city administration building. For ICT initiatives to be further strengthened at the city level, financial moment and budget capacity (in correlation with different city budgetary priorities) was recognized to be of primary concern. Interviewees were divided on the potential of social networks, with state-level actors seeing it as more positive. Local authorities and the business sector saw it as counter-productive given the low levels of ICT access.
The city administration’s Section of Public Relations has the obligation to gather monthly reports about information flows (e-mail queries, posed questions and comments over web site, telephone questions, etc.) from citizens. These reports are distributed to competent city units responsible for providing the response to citizens. This institutionalized process has been described as fully functional. Likewise, the PR Section produces regular monthly analytical materials that describe the conditions of citizen’s awareness about the local government’s work. At the state level, there is an awareness of the importance of e-governance at the local level in improving institutional accountability and the need to properly train public employees.

Interviewees acknowledged that residents are not familiar with their rights and that the sometimes complex and formalized bureaucratic procedures used by local government – discourages citizens from communicating with the government. CSOs have a role to play and require capacity building as well and should be better organized.

On the other hand, interviewees believe that the city administration has provided avenues for citizen’s inclusion and participation, e.g. 10,000 citizens were engaged in the process of developing the City Development Strategy. Annual user satisfaction polls are being conducted, and participatory bodies are established in which representatives of CSOs and the private sector are included.

Local communities were recognized as the first address for citizens to gain information about public service provision. Interviewees agreed that the role of the CSOs should be strengthened and institutionalized. They also mentioned a need for capacity building and that, if councils of local communities are not productive and effective in their work, they can be replaced through elections. According to Mr. Acic, amending the provisions for the election of councils of local communities, with upgrading the censuses required for electing the council members and enabling voting by post and by e-mail, would provide more legitimacy to the local communities’ councils and their work and promote the use of ICT within the local democratic procedures.

Under a pilot project conducted in 2011 with the support of RS Government, the municipality Kotor Varos - acting on the initiative of the head of local administration - devised a 48 hour timeframe under which citizen’s requests (by telephone, e-mail or SMS) needed to be answered by the local administration and public service providers. This was the only initiative of this kind in RS; while the evaluation of results is ongoing. A business sector representative mentioned the example of a newly introduced practice in the city cleaning service where the bills have been standardized and payment information is clearly visible. The implementation of the enacted Law on Electronic Signature for improving practical communication processes between government and citizens was identified as particularly important.
3. **Workshop Report: Strengthening Social Accountability in Banja Luka**

The Participatory Scenario Development Workshop (titled “Strengthening Social Accountability in Banja Luka”) for the city of Banja Luka was organized by the US Alumni Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The event, which was held on December 11, 2012 in the premises of the Cultural Center of the city, gathered 24 participants representing local government institutions including the city administration, city chamber of commerce, citizens, and civil society representatives. The workshop agenda incorporated two conceptually distinguishable activities: presentation of research findings and working group sessions, separated by a break.

The first combined part of the agenda included three block presentations covering emerging findings of the social assessment for Banja Luka, related social accountability aspects and the use of ICT; these were further elaborated through a number of examples offered from international best practices. The presentations were delivered by local consultants for BiH, who were directly involved in the desk research, and focus groups discussions previously held, namely Nenad Galic and Elma Demir. The two speakers covered the following topics:

- **i.** The project “ECA Sustainable Cities Initiative: Social Sustainability Assessment” (elaborating on its main goals, activities, methodology, implementing organizations);
- **ii.** Social accountability processes, mechanisms, and stakeholders’ roles and relationships (i.e. rights and responsibilities of main actors engaged in social accountability);
- **iii.** Preliminary research findings from preceding stages;
- **iv.** The identification of three main issues building upon these findings:
  1. *Social inclusion vis-à-vis service provision;*
  2. *Existing social accountability and information exchange mechanisms between the local government officials and civil society;*
  3. *Opportunities and constraints for social accountability – matters of transparency, participation and monitoring;*
- **v.** Use of ICT for increased participation, transparency and overall accountability;
- **vi.** Examples of good practice of how ICT has been used at an international level for increased social accountability.

The second part of the workshop agenda focused on participatory scenario development in three groups that addressed major issues that had been identified during the preceding research:

1. Current one-fit social accountability practices further marginalize certain groups because they are not tailored to the special needs and circumstances of different community groups (*Participation component*).
2. Information asymmetry between all three actors vis-à-vis one another’s rights and responsibilities (*Information - Transparency component*).
3. Poorly maintained and promoted current feedback and monitoring mechanisms with low institutional responsiveness rates to citizen requests and complaints (*Monitoring - Feedback component*).
As part of the group work methodology, problem and solution cards\(^\text{15}\) were provided for groups - as resolved examples or a starting point for further discussion and elaboration of a scenario. Group sessions were followed by a plenary review of devised results. The final result of the scenario development process - through dynamic and productive group and plenary sessions - was to envision strong and effective initiatives aiming to strengthen social accountability and social inclusion mechanisms and practices in the city. A complete report covering the multiple aspects of the participatory development scenario workshop is available as a separate document. The following summary delineates the most agreeable and realistic scenarios designated to increase social accountability and sustainability in the city of Banja Luka.

\(^{15}\) In case participants did not agreed with the proposed solution cards, additional sets of questions were provided for the moderators to guide the potential brainstorming activity, in search for the most adequate group solution.
3.1. Current, one-size fit social accountability practices further marginalize certain groups because they are not tailored to the special needs and circumstances of different community groups.

3.1.1. Identified problem and corresponding potential solution

City vulnerable groups are highly dependent on certain public services (e.g. social assistance) on account of their lack of access to resources. Likewise, findings reveal that citizens do not have a functional channel to voice their concerns in terms of improving the delivery of public services and that service providers, in general, are acting in a non-transparent and unprofessional way. In line with the above, public (bus) transportation was positioned as an inaccessible and unsatisfactory service for multiple vulnerable groups (e.g. persons with disability, residents of rural areas, elderly citizens, and single parents with children in carts) with cross-cutting social accountability implications.

Problem - as identified - lies primarily within the cultural aspect, i.e. how the transportation is utilized (e.g. impossible/difficult to use for certain groups); uneducated drivers; deficiencies in understanding the issue of quality of transportation; and weak and inefficient direct communication between citizens and public transportation service providers. This situation not only diminishes the quality of service, but likewise hinders the potential for citizens' activity in local decision making by limiting opportunities for citizens to use this resource as a vehicle of transportation which enables potential participatory engagement. Envisioning a combination of social accountability mechanisms which would monitor service delivery was devised as a potential solution in order to boost citizens' participatory input and ultimately increase social inclusion of marginalized groups at the city level.

3.1.2. Vision: (desired situation)

Improved public transportation service delivery and incorporated Web-SMS platform with an aim to increase participation of vulnerable groups (especially of persons with disability and elderly citizens).

Under this scenario, social accountability stakeholders, with the City at the top, can incorporate new ICT mechanisms in order to ensure massive inclusion of citizens (especially from rural areas) and vulnerable groups in participatory activities by demanding good public service and monitoring public transportation delivery, thus strengthening local social sustainability processes. Likewise, such an activity would achieve functioning, efficient, and effective communication channels between citizens and service providers - facilitated by the city administration. As the end results, the initiative would, 1) strengthen partnership at the city level between local administration, service providers and citizens, and 2) strengthen social inclusion of vulnerable groups by incorporating their needs within the revised service delivery.
3.1.3. **Specific Proposal: Web and SMS-based monitoring of public transport**

**WHAT** A **Web-SMS Platform** that monitors public transportation services, together with **City Supervisory Activities** that catalyze change in service delivery. The resulting service standards would apply to companies that provide transportation service.

**HOW**
1) The City will consult with vulnerable groups and NGOs representing persons with disabilities and other groups. Initial contact with the City needs to be established by interested citizens and NGO representatives.
2) The City and subsequently enter into official contract revisions with public transportation service providers in order to introduce monitoring tools (ICT and other formal) and to define standards of service delivery/monitoring.
3) Service providers will be responsible for the introduction of educational activities for their employees, facilitated by the City and NGOs.
4) ICT participation and monitoring system should contain: a) free SMS platform for sending complaints and a website (providing information/monitoring) b) direct telephone line within the City Administration (if possible, available inside the Department for Public Utilities, Housing and Traffic); c) bus stations complaint boxes.
5) The City will provide promotional coverage (maintain information dissemination).

**WHO** City of Banja Luka, private service providers, NGOs, ICT experts, interested citizens.

**WHEN** 1-2 years

**INDICATORS** The Web-SMS Platform; revised contracts between the City and service providers; the education of transportation employees; the installation of complaint boxes at bus stops; the number of complaints collected through multiple channels, etc.

**HOW MUCH** Difficult to calculate the incorporation of this new supervisory instrument; cost of for web and mobile platforms, maintenance of web platform; telephone line fee; promotional costs; etc. Estimate: 15 - 20,000 USD.
3.2. Information asymmetry between all three actors vis-à-vis one another’s rights and responsibilities.

3.2.1. Existing problem and corresponding potential solution

The FGDs and IDIs have revealed the gap between information availability and citizen information access. The lack of access of vulnerable groups to information channels; the inadequate utilization of existing information channels; and passive attitudes from vulnerable groups all contribute to diminish the effectiveness of the local government’s existing efforts at transparency. Given that unemployment support was identified as the most deficient public service in Banja Luka, the group decided to engage with the issue of increasing the access to information in the area of employment. As the most important factor for a successful information transfer from service providers to service users, the group identified the importance of adaptability of practices of placing the information; i.e. that employment related information can be placed in accordance with the needs of different groups of unemployed persons.

The main identified problem was the nonexistence of employment information that is tailored to different groups of unemployed citizens. Existing information mechanisms were identified as sporadic and widely inaccessible to potential service users. In order to convey information about employment to vulnerable groups (especially young people and elderly persons in rural areas) the group suggested two solutions that fit the needs of marginalized groups: utilization of both ICTs and traditional mechanisms (information desks/carrier days and notice boards).

3.2.2. Vision: (desired situation)

Increased transparency - access to information relating to employment opportunities.

This scenario envisions that citizens receive timely information on employment through effective and transparent institutional channels. Finding new avenues of information placement (e.g. info desks) and properly utilizing the existing ones (e.g. notice boards) provides an opportunity for increased transparency among service providers and the local government. Likewise, this would increase communication practices in service and social accountability between local government, service providers, educational institutions and citizens. In connection with this—and as a desired outcome—opportunities for engagement with vulnerable groups (youth and elderly especially) in the job market would increase.

3.2.3. Specific Proposal: Employment help and info desks

**WHAT**

Improved **Information Channels** on employment opportunities for citizens (especially youth and the elderly) through incorporation of new practices of information dissemination in the form of **Info desks** and **Notice boards**.

**HOW**

1) First, the City will sign a memorandum of understanding with employment service providers in order to create a single, streamlined source of employment information. It will facilitate information exchange with
universities that will run information desks on employment opportunities for students. Via info desks - which would be placed at the University of Banja Luka and the Workers University - once a month students would receive information about jobs and prequalifications offered in the job market. Information channels will include a mailing list and/or social network page (e.g. Facebook) that enable access to employment information. A full-time/volunteer post would have to be opened at universities for providing information services and maintaining data bases.

2) The City will utilize notice boards of the local administrative units to place the same type of information for the residents of local areas on a specific day of the week. Persons working in local administrative units (i.e. local communities), on behalf of the City Administration, at a specific day should provide information to citizens and directly gather information from citizens about their needs, e.g. do they need additional explanations about employment openings, assistance with applying for jobs, etc.

**WHO**
City of Banja Luka, local administrative units, University of Banja Luka, Workers University, Employment Bureau of Republika Srpska, private companies (employment mediator services), students, interested citizens.

**WHEN**
1 year

**INDICATORS**
Number of info desks; person(s) employed/volunteering at info desks; memorandum of understanding signed and implemented; number of mailing list subscribers or number of social network users, etc.

**HOW MUCH**
Difficult to calculate given that it is a comprehensive intervention involving multiple stakeholders. Given that this is partly an institutional process, the City could cover this action with own funds. Estimate: 15 - 20,000 USD.
3.3. Poorly maintained and promoted current feedback and monitoring mechanisms with low institutional responsiveness rates to citizens’ requests and complaints.

3.3.1. Existing problem and corresponding potential solution

Bureaucratic procedures hold back effective two-way communication between citizens and local authorities or service providers. Lack of responsiveness and third-party monitoring, as well as poorly maintained feedback practices (e.g., overdue or incomplete answers) of the city administration contribute to feelings of apathy and skepticism towards emerging accountability initiatives among the citizens. Likewise, current IT solutions which could solicit engagement and open the doors of participatory governance to citizens with IT access are not perceived as collaborative tools.

There is significant space for institutional and technical improvement. However, rather than individual large measures, a series of interventions within the existing e-governance structure, as well as introduction of institutional supervisory processes, is a necessary and realistic starting point for increasing social accountability and sustainability within the city.

3.3.2. Vision (Desired Situation)

Direct engagement through two-way communication between citizens and local government is promoted and strengthened through improved City Website and City Council supervision.

Improved ICT tools are used on a daily basis by citizens and actively contributing to holding local government accountable through monitoring. Likewise, feedback processes are simplified and improved, thus raising the responsiveness of local government. Finally, two-way participatory online communication is producing mutually beneficial results (i.e., for local government and citizens alike) that are ultimately strengthening local good governance.

3.3.3. Specific Proposal: Improved city website

WHAT

1) An improved City Website as the medium for interaction between all stakeholders in line with Web 2.0 standards. 2) City council supervisory procedures for monitoring the functioning of queries/grievance response. (Follow up / secondary action\(^\text{16}\): strengthening the role of local administrative units as intermediaries between the citizens and city government by providing IT literacy education activities to local council members and employees.)

HOW

1) Introduce new features and improve the existing features of city website.
   a. Adoption by the city administration of an act authorizing the intervention.
   b. New features: live-stream video and on-demand coverage of city council sessions; employee performance monitoring; voting section; FAQ section (to avoid Q&A repetitions); discussion forum or a link to social networking site (e.g., Facebook).

\(^{16}\) Note: doubt in feasibility of secondary scenario was raised by workshop participants due to its presumably necessary high financial allocations (for educational activities). More information about the specific secondary scenario can be found in the Report on Banja Luka PSD Workshop.
c. Improved features: more visible Q/A section.
2) Institutionalization of a new IT system for replying to queries/grievances. 
   This system will incorporate an automatic reply message, containing a notice on obligatory deadlines for responses, and instructions on legal remedy. 
   Official deadline for response (suggestion: within 4 days of receiving a complaint) should be institutionalized in the form of a binding decision by the Office of the Mayor.
3) An analysis of responses to citizen’s queries/grievances should become an obligatory item on city council hearings
4) Specific section within the city administration should become in charge of overseeing / supervising the citizen responses.

WHO
City, local administrative units, NGOs, IT experts, interested citizens.

WHEN
1 year

INDICATORS
Frequency of content updating; the number of users voting; the number of users live streaming council sessions; Q&A section data; number of local administrative units’ council members attending IT courses, etc.

HOW MUCH
The cost of modifications to the website / technical interventions for adjustment; maintenance of the site; promotional costs. Given that this is an institutional process, the City could cover this action through its own funds. 
Estimate: up to 10,000 USD.
4. **Key Considerations for Next Steps**

Based on the overall desk and field research findings and relying on the participatory scenario development workshop results and interaction between participants representative of local stakeholders, the following briefly outlines the most important emerging issues to be taken into account for further actions:

1. All scenarios envision that activities be undertaken within the realm of institutionalized decision making. Thus, they perceive the city administration as the key stakeholder in the process of strengthening social accountability. Although representatives of civil society and citizens are willing to partake and share ownership of proposed interventions aiming to increase social inclusion of city vulnerable groups and/or strengthen social accountability processes, the official position of the centralized local government will act as a determinant. This will presumably entail the necessity for establishing official partnerships between key responsible stakeholders, in forms already described above. Likewise, existence of a partnership relationships between the local government and city NGOs acting as intermediaries is regarded as one of the key preconditions for collaborative governance (local government representatives consider this issue of crucial importance for participatory engagement in local decision making).

2. Legal regulation enables social accountability input, while city policies make room for intervention. What is lacking on the side of the local authorities is determination of the city administration and allocations of financial resources that could operationalize activities. By and large, participants agree that without instigating outside pressure on the local government improvements of social accountability practices - as envisioned by scenarios - will remain at levels of wish lists. In connection, change - that needs to happen - within the local government budgetary planning and spending was identified by certain participants as an important and pressing issue for social sustainability.

3. There is a lack of reliable data on vulnerable groups and lack of official analytical procedures by the local government. The quality of micro-level data processing by local government and the utilization of this information sent by the local administrative units on local resident’s needs were questioned. The need to introduce new practices of local government’s data presentation was emphasized.
Annex 1: Social Sustainability Index

Concept note

The objective is to assist the municipalities, civic groups and NGOs to develop indicators that gauge progress towards increasing social accountability and access to services by marginalized communities or vulnerable groups.

Based on the three-phase process undertaken by the project teams in the five municipalities—Municipal Profile, Focus Group Discussions and Participatory Scenario Workshops— the study team intends to outline parameters for selecting (a) indicators that could be tailored to each municipality; and (b) indicators that can be applied across all the municipalities. The indicators should reflect the priority issues within each municipality and how key actors involved in the Participatory Scenario Workshops can use these indicators to further action.

Assumptions

The preference is to identify indicators and any possible index deriving from these indicators that are in the domain or competency of the local authorities. This means that the indicator measures activities that the municipality can influence through its policies, programs and specific projects or by designated representatives of civil society such as intermediary NGOs or community-based organizations.

The selection of indicators should reflect the ‘four pillars’ of social accountability as outlined in the study methodology, these include:

a) Participation—defined as implementing mechanisms that enable citizens to become part of the decision-making process.

b) Transparency—defined as making city stakeholder information and operations publicly available and useful.

c) Feedback (Response) — defined as ensuring citizen-government communication goes in both directions, that expressed citizen needs are matched with responsive action.

 d) Monitoring — defined as the ability to track performance and evaluate effectiveness.17

Participation and Transparency are the primary focus when selecting indicators with Feedback and Monitoring combined as feedback mechanisms. The index also needs to capture the role of different stakeholders in strengthening each pillar. The responsibility and opportunities of promoting city accountability acknowledges the role played by the local authorities, citizens, and intermediaries (NGOs, CBOs, businesses).

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17 Adapted from Social Accountability in Palestinian Local Governance and Service Provision
Framing the Index

Within this framework of the ‘four pillars’ that has guided the Assessment’s process, it is suggested that the index is organized around the five suggested dimensions outlined below. The choices of questions to address within each pillar reflect the issues that arose across the five municipalities during the course of the Assessment.

1. **Participation - Opportunities**: an indicator of the local government’s openness to citizen engagement and inputs into decisions that affect them. Measures could include the city's provision of various forms of consultation such as open door days and interactive Q/A sections of the website, as well as measures of democracy such as publicly elected city councils.

2. **Participation - Engagement**: as a complement to opportunities that are available, this indicator takes into account, the level of initiative taken by citizens, individually or in representative groups, to take part in civic life. An important indicator is the degree to which local councils are representative of the community (in particular marginalized groups). Measures of attendance to city-sponsored participatory activities and use of the interactive city website features are also descriptive of citizen self-driven involvement.

3. **Transparency - Information Availability**: the disclosure of information related to local decisions. In particular, budgets, plans and formal proceedings should be made available to the public. Both virtual and physical sources - information centers and the city website, for example - are necessary components of a transparent local government.

4. **Transparency - Information Access**: the city's readiness to make productive use of open government data. The use of communication methods that reach multiple sectors of society, ICT capabilities, and the production and publication of clear documents that present city processes and functions in an accessible way are steps towards ensuring socially-inclusive accountability.

5. **Feedback** - the effectiveness of two-way communication between citizens and their local governments. The reach of redress mechanisms, the response rate to complaints, and the existence and acceptance of evaluation and monitoring ensure that accountability practices result in positive change.
A cross cutting theme within these five dimensions is the use of information technologies.

The simplest form can be the selection of 25 indicators/issues organized into the five dimensions measured only using a 1/0 format (1: yes, 0: no), giving each dimension (or sub-index) a score of 0 to 5. This index, using yes or no responses, provides an easy to use measure of the effectiveness of existing social accountability practices and identifies areas that can benefit from improvement. It is important to note that the index does not intend to measure each city against an ideal. Rather, it was designed to compare cities with a common history and some shared characteristics. The format allows for the index to grow as do the cities and their social accountably practices. Although in their current form they are somewhat tied to the evaluator's judgment of the availability and functionality of social accountability tools, these measures can be made more complex and precise over time.

The present index can be a valuable tool throughout a social assessment process. Firstly, given the lack of city and community-level data, this format provides an alternative way to assess social accountability levels. Secondly, the specific indicators and definitions can be adapted to each city or target group and used during the Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews and the responses averaged to gauge the key social accountability issues. The results can then be used during the Scenario Development Workshop as a diagnostic tool to help the participants identify opportunities and challenges. In this way, the index becomes an integrated component of the Assessment process.

Furthermore, the index provides a monitoring tool that can be applied by a city’s stakeholders to regularly evaluate progress over time. City authorities, or intermediaries such as universities, can potentially carry out an annual update of the index independently, thus building a track record of the city’s work on social accountability. All cities highlighted the need for monitoring social accountability activities. The yearly index results can become a powerful tool in recognizing the efforts of city stakeholders every year and motivating all actors to contribute to strengthening social accountability in their city.

The tables below contain the proposed 5 indicators for each dimension.
**Index Results for Banja Luka**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation - Opportunities</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>yes =1</th>
<th>no = 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the city hold consultation meetings with the public?</td>
<td>Face-to-face interaction with city leaders was considered valuable in an environment plagued by bureaucratic blocks. These consultation meetings could be anything from open door mayor days to public hearings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there elected neighborhood councils or equivalent structures?</td>
<td>Local Community Council, Local Administrative Units, etc. were widely recognized as key intermediaries, yet not currently operating to meet this potential. Public election of members could make them more accountable to their constituents and lead to more efficient councils.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the city administration present municipal budgets to neighborhoods as part of the formal fiscal preparation cycle?</td>
<td>The city should have an adopted mechanism to obtain citizen input on budget allocations in relation to service provision, infrastructure and neighborhood facilities. Making presentations to neighborhood councils and community groups provides opportunities for gathering neighborhood priorities that are not often possible in larger Council public hearings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are vulnerable groups consulted when devising strategic policy documents?</td>
<td>To determine whether marginalized groups are part of the city’s decision-making process for city-wide policies such as the City Development Strategy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the city have a program to engage with CSOs when reaching out to vulnerable groups?</td>
<td>To assess the city-intermediary relationship in working to increase visibility and outreach to these groups to vulnerable groups. &quot;City&quot; meaning the municipality or other local authority.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation -Opportunities total score**: 3/5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation -Engagement</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>yes =1</th>
<th>no = 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are minority or vulnerable communities represented in the current city council?</td>
<td>Within multi-ethnic context of the ECA region, to gage the level of diversity and participation of minority community on the city council.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are NGOs actively engaged in representing the interest of vulnerable groups?</td>
<td>To determine whether vulnerable groups have a go-to organization to provide support as well as pursue their interests in the public arena.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are neighborhood councils (or similar structures) effectively linking the citizens to the city (or municipality)?</td>
<td>To evaluate the degree to which citizens consider their interests taken into account in neighborhood level governance/projects.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there youth-based outreach programs for civic engagement?</td>
<td>To determine the level of engagement and civic education of the youth as a strategic cohort.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is the website considered to be a reliable source of information?</td>
<td>To measure the effectiveness of the city's main ICT portal/communication channel.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation - Engagement total score**: 2/5

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18 as part of the general public only - in that case the answer is yes: 1
## Transparency - Info Availability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are citizens given sufficient notice about upcoming city council meetings?</td>
<td>To determine whether city council meetings are open not only in theory but also in practice, since a common finding was that citizens cannot attend meetings because they find out about them too late.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are municipal council decisions posted online in a timely matter?</td>
<td>To determine whether the outcomes of council meetings are made available even to those who cannot attend.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are city budgets available online?</td>
<td>Budget transparency as part of open government practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the municipality have an open data policy?</td>
<td>Meant to gauge how open the municipality is to making data public from different sectoral programs (such as schools, hospitals).</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are CSOs required to have open data practices?</td>
<td>To determine whether there are transparency stipulations for intermediaries.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transparency - info availability total score** 3/5

## Transparency - Information Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there an active information desk available for citizen information?</td>
<td>Another common suggestion during the field activities: a physical information booth with helpful staff to help citizens find the information they need without having to navigate complex city administration structures.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there a document (charter) outlining the responsibilities of both government and citizens that is publicly accessible?</td>
<td>Citizen charters have been a successful tool for eliminating information asymmetries and misunderstandings.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the municipality provide support to citizens regarding access or navigation of its ICT tools?</td>
<td>To maximize the impact of using ICTs, citizens should be able to manage at a basic level the technology from the user end, thus addressing the digital divide.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there ICT training opportunities for public employees?</td>
<td>To maximize the impact of e-government and other such tools, government employees should be able to manage at a basic level the technology.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the city utilize the various forms of media to disseminate information?</td>
<td>Throughout the workshops, solutions included using the available slots in TV, radio and print media to disseminate city information. Local governments should take advantage of this possibility given that citizens embrace the media option.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transparency - Access total score** 2/5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback/Monitoring</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>yes =1  no = 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the time limit for grievance response abided by?</td>
<td>The effectiveness of grievance redress mechanisms depends on a mandatory response time that is satisfactory to the users and implemented.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do grievance/complaint systems use multiple types of technology?</td>
<td>ICTs can be very valuable in extending engagement opportunities, but there need to be a set of options to accommodate the varying levels of technology access among groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there a system for tracking the responsiveness to grievances of various departments/service providers?</td>
<td>To determine whether the departments responsible for redress mechanisms are functioning effectively.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there an annual citizen service satisfaction survey?</td>
<td>Regular evaluations of city wide or specific department's functioning in terms of service provision.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is the city website updated regularly?</td>
<td>To determine whether the city website can be part of a fluid communication system, information needs to be kept relevant, especially the Frequently Asked Questions section.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feedback/monitoring total score** 3/5

**Visualization:**

![Social Accountability Index - Banja Luka](image_url)
Comparison to Other Cities

**Durres**

**Sarajevo**

**Prishtina**

**Skopje**