ICT Based Citizen Participation in Supervision of Public Finances

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State Audit Office of Georgia

- SAOG – Example of how supreme audit institutions transform from the post-soviet style revisions (chamber of control);

- SAOG – Proactive communication with the citizens, parliament, civil society, public institutions and other stakeholders;

- SAOG – In 2013 started to enhance citizen participation in supervision process of public finance.
SAOG’s main **challenge** is to make its work and products understandable and user friendly for citizens and other stakeholders.

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**Why Citizen Engagement?**

- Improving Accountability
- Improving Participation
- Supporting Good Governance
- Increasing SAOG’s Visibility

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**Citizen Engagement Objectives**

**SAOG**
Prerequisites

- Economic and Financial crisis;
- Lack of available resources;
- Responsibility to meet the needs of society members;
- Public empowerment to engage in governing process and hold government accountable;
- Increased public interest on the budgetary process and transparent management of the public resources;
- OGP commitment - cooperation with the civil society & use of modern effective tools to increase the awareness and engagement of the general public.
SAOG Platforms

- First citizen participation - “Plan with us” module
- New ICT based web-platform - “Budget Monitor”
Stages of Budget Monitor Implementation

- Develop Idea of Creating Citizen engagement Web-Platform
- Elaboration of Conceptual Framework
  - Assessment of needs and resources for platform development
  - Sharing Citizen Engagement practices from colleague SAIs and Experts
- Identification of stakeholders needs
  - Elaboration of Platform
- Presentation to key stakeholders
ICT Based Platform “Budget Monitor”

Analytical tool – presents up-to-date analytical information about PFM process and related deficiencies;

Data visualization portal - delivers important information via an easy to interpret data visualizations;

An interactive platform – provides channel for bilateral communication and interface allows citizen input.
Budget Monitor
Budget Monitor

- **Tangible results** - SAO has already received complaints/suggestions from citizens.

- **Output** – 10 Performance Audits requested by the citizens.
Using ICT tools to communicate and deliver products to key stakeholders

Strengthens SAI’s impact and empowers stakeholders with:

- Increased public awareness and engagement;
- Increased transparency and government accountability;
- Opportunity to control public resources;
- Realization of SAI’s benefits;
- Development of channels for two-way communication.
Information presented on Budget Monitor

1. State Budget Overview
2. Municipal Budgets
3. Audit Findings

- 100 Audit reports per year
- 76 Municipal budgets
- 400 State Programs
- 62 Public agencies’ Expenditures

4/12/2017
• How is the State budget executed?
• What are the components of State budget?
• Which programs are funded from the state budget?
• How is the state budget allocated between programs of different spending agencies?
• How state programs are executed?
What is the amount of state budget revenues?
What is the composition of the tax revenues and its mobilization dynamics?
• How much is public debt?
• What is the impact of currency exchange rate fluctuations on public debt?
• How debt ratios compare with different thresholds?
- How many people are employed at spending agencies and what is their compensation?
- What is the amount spent on administrative costs for each spending agency?
- What is the share of bonuses in total compensation of employees?
• What is the share procurement in the state budget payments?
• What are the systemic deficiencies in public procurement procedures?
• What are the audit findings and recommendations related to public procurement?
• How does Georgia rank in international rankings of public administration?
• What are the key economic indicators of Georgia?
• What is the budget of each municipality?
• What is the amount of state budget transfers to municipalities?
• How much is spent on administrative expenses in each municipality?
• How many legal entities are in each municipality and how much is their funding?
Module gives the opportunity to access the audit findings and recommendations of State Audit Office by using simple visual filters:

- Public agency
- Audit Title
- Period
- Audit type
- Category of finding
- Budget level
Enables citizens to engage in the developments of annual audit plan and contribute to the improvement of the PFM:

- Inform us about the deficiencies in the PFM system;
- Contribute to the reduction of corruption risks;
- Suggest the priority spheres for future audit.
Conclusion

ICT Based Citizen Participation:

• Increases public awareness, transparency and accountability;
• Helps realization of SAI’s benefits.

But, is associated with some **Risks:**

– Independence at stake;
– Inefficient allocation of limited audit resources;
– Managing citizens’ requests (flood, politically motivated requests);
– Being late to citizens needs, concerns, etc.
Conclusion

Mitigation approaches:

- Define scope of citizen participation and provide clear explanations;
- Safeguard and focus limited audit resources on the audit requests/matters of high public interest;
- Automatically filter and reject audit requests which are not in compliance with predefined criteria;
- Segregate duties and develop operational manual.
Questions?