



Urban Research Institute

## Improving local services with the participation of qualified observers

### Context

Urban Research Institute has shared with the staff of the municipality and its citizens experience in the evaluation of local services and improving citizen participation in the budget process focused on these results.

### Project Methodology

Evaluation Method which was attended from qualified observers brings a high degree of citizen participation in decision-making, because through evaluating service conditions on the ground, was created a quite soothing and transparent information that communicates very well with the citizens, it makes them active in setting priorities and helps LGU staff and the Council in the decision-making processes. Trained observers are groups of citizen volunteers of different professions, not employed by the municipality, but to cooperate with the LGU staff working with the municipality of Rrashbull, who are trained to use the same method of assessment on the ground. Trained observers can assess the physical conditions as the condition of roads and buildings, based on a simple method by imposing conditions 1-5 by a group of photos.

Observers compare current conditions under observation of written and



photographic instructions to determine which way to assign e rating. URI proposes the creation of a qualified monitoring system in Rrashbull to assess the physical condition of cleanliness and road conditions.

After an appropriate training, 22 members of the Qualified Observer group, using the same guidelines written or through photographs, will produce comparable estimates. Photographic guidelines consist in some selected pictures that show typical conditions defining the value of evaluation, the different elements of the road.

Evaluations are conducted by trained observers, after having received the proper training by the URI staff. After this, observers compared the actual conditions under the observation of photographic or written directives to decide which way to assign element evaluation of various roads and cleanliness, as pavement, waste bins, waste etc.

Other members of the team can easily understand these estimates because they have demonstrated the

instructions used to perform them. Estimates were associated with the costing of each identified problem, and then to prioritize these problems even the cost was made public and was gave to the municipal council for the purposes of allocating the budget.

### Project stages

1. Identify the physical aspect conditions that are more important.
2. The development of objective measures of aspects of physical condition.
3. The definition of problems for each aspect.
4. Development and documentation of grades for each condition to be measured.
5. Develop procedures/forms for collecting, processing and recording of the data for each element evaluated.

#### About URI

Since 1999 the Urban Research Institute (URI) has been delivering big results for development projects and programmes carried out throughout Albania. Our core business focuses on community development, local government strengthening, environmental protection, decentralization, and public services. We conduct studies, lobby the government, train local government units, increase public access to information, and connect development partners. URI has worked with donors such as USAID, Swiss Cooperation, the Netherlands Embassy, UNDP, World Bank, EU, SIDA, Open Society/Soros Foundation, etc.

Evaluation of the working group of the municipal budget document in terms of its communication with citizens and make recommendations to council staff, made it possible to bring citizen group in open public meetings to discuss the budget for selected services for about 80 inhabitants of the municipality.

On the other hand the mayor and council boost the demand to the staff to improve the presentation of the budget document in terms of its simplicity and its understandability from the residents.

Implementation of this program improved the current municipal budget, the budget only in value (lek) in a result-oriented budget, against measurable objectives in time for the medium term.

Municipalities using assessment results and report citizen took concrete services without additional funding, to improve cleaning service, through reorganization of the container, awareness of residents to lay waste to the countries designated by the municipality as well as increased control over municipal service sector, for better quality of service.



This project implemented in the municipality served not only to improve the method of budgeting with the participation of citizens, but of all the analytical documentation of actual quality assessment and clearing roads to every village, stating the basis of the outcome indicators that will help staff for setting clear objectives during the budgeting process based on the basis of performance management.

## MAIN FACTS

### PARTNERS:

- ✓ US Embassy

### DURATION:

October 2012 – June 2013

### BENEFICERS

- ✓ Commune of Rrashbull

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