

Social Audit Team Report Drenas

Project monitored "Construction of Wastewater collectors
in the Municipality of Drenas - Two-Year Project"

This report was prepared by the DEMOS project, implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Kosovo.

Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway.

The objective of the DEMOS project

The Project for Decentralization and Support of Municipalities (DEMOS) supports 38 municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo in achieving a more democratic local governance and better municipal management. The DEMOS project also supports the Government of Kosovo in developing policies that are more favorable for rule-based financing for municipalities.

The DEMOS project is currently in its third phase (2022-2025) building on top of successes made since the start of the project in 2014. The project is co-financed by the European Union in Kosovo, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Kosovo.

DEMOS support to Kosovo municipalities is part of the Performance Grant, as a tool that guarantees support for well-performing municipalities.

Municipal performance is evaluated through the Municipal Performance Management System (MPMS) of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLPA).

Furthermore, in order to increase the performance of certain indicators, DEMOS provides technical assistance to municipalities. A special focus of the project is the support to the central government, with DEMOS being focused on providing assistance in the drafting of policies for a more favorable framework for decentralized governance.

According to the first component of the project, DEMOS III aims to open the data for a wider public review of municipal performance and to initiate social audits to monitor the impact of the Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects on citizens. The purpose of this intervention is to involve civil society organizations and citizens in conducting social audits to monitor Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects implemented by municipalities.

To mitigate the reliability risks of Performance Grant funds, and at the same time to monitor the impact of projects on citizens, DEMOS has established social audits within the Municipal Performance Grant (in the system). Social audits will also include monitoring the performance and processes of project planning at the municipal level. The project will support the development of sampling tools and methodologies, including training to successfully conduct such social audits. The aforementioned Social Audits will be financed by a portion of the Municipal Performance Grant funds and will be developed by civil society organizations. For this, DEMOS will partner with the main CSOs (Civil Society Organizations).

BIRN Kosovo is an independent, non-governmental organization whose objectives are to inform citizens and contribute to the process of democratic transition in the country, promote accountability, rule of law and policy reform. BIRN Kosovo particularly aims to serve as an overseer of public institutions, monitoring the work of governing and public institutions. In addition, by producing quality and unbiased TV debates and by training youths in argumentative and debate skills, BIRN aims to promote and encourage a culture of debate in Kosovo. BIRN's vision is to secure its position as the principal organization of investigative journalism in Kosovo, addressing the need for objective, quality and sustainable reporting on the country's many challenges. BIRN Kosova has been engaged by DEMOS to facilitate the Social Audit process in the five selected projects in Drenas, Suhareka, Kaçanik, Hani i Elezit, and Vitia.

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Executive Summary

In 2022, the DEMOS project team implemented the capacity building program for a group of civil society activists, with the aim of increasing their capacities to facilitate the process of Social Audit in the community.

Being a new concept in Kosovo, Social Audit was being implemented by DEMOS and Civil Society Organizations in 2022, and the first reports published during that year enabled concrete changes in the audited projects.

Who finances the Social Audit?

Work in Social Audit teams is voluntary and does not require payment for the group members. Teams can make requests to independent donors to support them in covering their travel or visit expenses.

As the program continued, a team from BIRN trained by DEMOS mid 2023 began implementing a program aimed at creating five Social Audit teams in five different municipalities.

As part of this process, a group of citizens from the municipality of Drenas were involved in supervising the works of the project “Construction of Wastewater Collector in the Municipality of Drenas” for several months. The group established the “Social Audit” team and began implementing the methodology of analyzing and supervising the project, which was in the final stage of implementation. One of the tasks of the team was to analyze the process of public meetings and consultations in the Municipality of Drenas and the process of transparency.

The Social Audit Team

Social Audit Teams are groups of citizens that come together in order to get involved in increasing the transparency and accountability of public institutions. These voluntary groups analyze processes in order to provide recommendations and greater involvement of citizens in decision-making.

This report provides data collected by the team between July and November 2023. Using an established methodology, the team determined that:

- The wastewater collector construction project is vital for Drenas.
- The project began without coordination between institutions as there was no environmental permit from the Ministry and there was no coordination with the Ibër-Lepenci, public company.
- The project saw delays in the implementation, as the company ran into some of Ibër-Lepenci's pipes during the work and had to wait for about two weeks for the public company's team to intervene.
- The project has a high environmental and clean-water impact in the area.
- The project collects wastewater from the villages of Shtrubullove, Poklek i Ri, Poklek i Vjeter and the wastewater is discharged in a part of the village of Poklek i Vjeter. The project has a negative impact on the residents as the wastewater odor has increased.
- The team did not encounter/detect any violations in the procurement process for the selection of the company to implementing the project.
- The project was completed on time and in line with the Dynamic Plan, and without delays in carrying out the works.
- The contractor was obliged to dig deeper than planned in the project. The municipality has justified that the project was designed before the cleaning of the river bed, thus after the cleaning, the height of the jetty has increased, affecting the project quotas.
- Because the ditches had to be made deeper than was foreseen in the contract, the Municipality was obliged to pay additional money.
- Lacking coordination with the Ministry of Environment, it was not possible to have the collector pass through the road pavement and as a result additional investments were made.
- Investments have not fully met the needs of the community as the wastewater issue in Drenas requires other investments in the future.
- Works in the area have left behind damaged spaces, which need other investments. However, the municipality has confirmed that it has committed in its long-term planning to install walking and bike trails around the river bed.
- During the implementation of the project, the team found that the spaces were not secured in accordance with the laws in effect which regulate worker and workplace safety.
- After the completion of the project in the village of Poklek i Vjeter, the team has identified a pit that was left open during the works which presents a risk to the citizens.
- Although not foreseen in the project, the contractor and the municipality have decided to cover some of them on the grounds that residents requested it.

What does a Social Audit team need to know?

Social Audit teams do not need to be highly professional. Teams need civic will and courage, and it is recommended to have basic knowledge in how the following function:

- Municipality operations
- Access to public documents
- Public consultation process, especially during budget planning and investments in the municipality
- Public Procurement process

A special focus has been devoted to the transparency and publicity of the project. The team determined that:

- The Municipality of Drenas has not conducted a special public discussion for the collector project.
- The municipality made public the contract signed between the municipality and the construction company. The published material provided data on investment and types of materials.
- The municipality had not proactively published other documents; supervision reports or payment invoices are not public on the website of the municipality.
- The executive project document was not public on the website of the municipality.
- The Social Audit team got hold of the executive project after sending requests for access to public documents.
- In the projects information board, the Municipality of Drenas had not informed the citizens of the name of the project supervisor and contacts, but it had made the name public on the municipality's website.

A special focus in Drenas has been devoted to the process of meetings and public consultations with citizens. The Social Audit team in Drenas also addressed the municipality's activity in holding public consultation meetings and addressing citizens' requests. The team determined that:

- For a certain period, the citizens of Drenas had difficulty accessing materials of public consultations and meetings because the government-managed municipality website had technical problems.
- The municipality of Drenas makes serious efforts to involve citizens in public consultations.
- The municipality uses social networks and other platforms to invite citizens to public consultations.
- In the public discussions, infrastructural requests dominate, and for the most part, they are presented as individual requests.
- Citizens have little information about the destiny of the requests they submitted in the past years.
- The documentation of public meetings is carried out through short minutes, which do not entirely represent the content of the meeting.

Methodology

This report presents data gathered from interviews, requests for access to public documents, site visits and talks with the community. At the beginning of May, a team from DEMOS and BIRN, based on established standards, selected 5 projects in 5 municipalities of Kosovo to be included in the Social Audit process.

Who establishes the Social Audit team?

Social Audit teams are independent from institutions and can be established by representatives of the community but also by other groups. The teams function independently of the authorities and do not need approval from public institutions to be established.

The Municipal Performance Grant in 2022 financed 57 projects in 15 municipalities of the country. At the start of the assessment, the team excluded 4 municipalities from the selection, as they were included in a similar Social Audit project last year. In the other 11 municipalities, BIRN carried out field visits to see the situation on the ground and request information about the phases the projects were currently in. After receiving the report from the field, the team of DEMOS and BIRN evaluated the projects based on the following criteria:

- Project status (whether it is in completion, more than 50% of the works are completed, or it is in the initial phase);
- High or low impact on and targeting of marginalized groups such as women, youth, seniors, persons with disability and non-majority communities;
- Nature of project and area of impact, prioritizing the fields of education, health and environment;
- Value of grant allocated to carry out the capital project.

On the basis of these criteria, it was decided that the construction project in the municipality of Hani i Elezit of the “Isa Berisha” park will be audited, in the municipality of Drenas the project for the construction of the wastewater collector, in Kaçanik the fire department building, in Suhareka, the project for the construction of the walking path and the construction of the Mushtisht - Guri i Matozit road and the Topliqan-Gjinoc road, and in the Municipality of Viti, the project for the renovation and expansion of the “Kongresi i Manastirit” road.

Who established the Social Audit Group in Drenas?

In accordance with an established methodology, BIRN drafted a list of representatives and professions that were to be invited to the Social Audit groups. The selection criteria were set such that the group will include women and marginalized categories. The group was intended to have a range of professions and ages.

BIRN submitted to the DEMOS team a tentative list of professions that should be included, while after coordination BIRN contacted the citizens of Drenas to ensure that the defined categories were included in the team.

During the process, the team found that the Municipality of Drenas had benefited from the Municipal Performance Grant in five projects:

- Construction of wastewater collectors, Dobroshec - Drenas
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of asphalt roads in Drenas
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the sewerage network in the Municipality of Drenas
- Regulation of infrastructure, pavement and public lighting in the Municipality of Drenas
- Infrastructure construction (Asphalting and cubing) Drenas I II III and IV

As a result, the team assessed that out of the five projects, the project for the construction of the wastewater collector Dobroshec-Drenas was a major project with a high impact on the environment and of high social importance.

After the project selection, DEMOS and BIRN received letters of support from the mayors of the five municipalities to start the Social Audit process for the project. For this report, the Social Audit team established used several techniques to gather data.



The team engaged in online research of the municipality's public data, drafted a list of over 50 questions related to the project and requested information from the municipality, sent requests for access to public documents and analyzed documents received by the Municipality. To document the findings, the team made field visits and held meetings with officials of the Municipality of Drenas, community representatives, and implementing companies.

Who are the members of the Social Audit team?

The members of the Social Audit teams are members of the community, who do not have a conflict of interest with the project. Officials of the institution directly related to the project and the process of official supervision of the project cannot be in the teams.

The data in the report were collected by the 20 members of the Social Audit team and the report was drafted with the help and support of the BIRN team. The report was made public after addressing the comments received by the Municipality of Drenas.

Team composition: 20 members



10 women or 50%



10 men or 50%

- Retiree
- Activist
- Environmentalist
- Village administrator
- Former member of the KSF
- Electrician
- Farmer
- Construction expert
- Business owner
- Firefighter

Work map

June 2023

- Visits on the ground
- Targeting and identification of profiles that will be part of the team
- Preparation of the list with the profiles of Social Audit team members
- Selection of the Social Audit team

July 2023

- Two-day training for Social Audit
- Creating a group on Viber
- Appointment of persons within the team for sending requests to the Municipality
- Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipality of Drenas
- Drafting requests for access to public documents
- Visits on the ground by the members of the Social Audit team
- Checking accessible materials on open platforms

August 2023

- Receipt of public documents
- Analysis of documents with the group members
- Team meeting to analyze minutes of public consultations
- Team meeting to analyze the procurement documents
- Group meeting to analyze the project
- Group meeting with the project manager
- Group visit to the site and meeting with company representatives
- Team visit on the ground with the Technical Acceptance Committee

September 2023

- Analysis of work supervision reports
- Analysis of materials from public consultations
- Group consultations on identified problems

October 2023

- Team meeting to analyze all the documents received
- Documenting the findings by the Social Audit team
- Assigning team report drafting duties
- Establishing the structure and defining the points of writing the report
- Assigning report writing tasks

November 2023

- Drafting the report on the findings and recommendations of the Social Audit team
- Report editing
- Addressing comments and suggestions

December 2023

- Sending the report for validation to the municipality
- Presentation of the report to the municipal officials
- Carrying out a media campaign to promote the report

The environment in which the Social Audit process takes place

Drenas is a medium-sized municipality with about 67,000 inhabitants. The municipality's budget is over 18 million euros and the funds that are added to the budget from the Municipal Performance Grant have a high impact on the municipality.

For several years, Drenas has managed to be among the biggest beneficiaries of the Municipal Performance Grant. The municipality managed to be at the top of the list, being appraised for municipal management and benefiting in five projects from the Performance Grant in 2022. The municipality benefited from the Grant an amount of 905,812 euros, which was financed by DEMOS.

Municipal Performance Grant

The Municipal Performance Grant is a fund that is allocated to municipalities that have had good governance. In 2022, 14 municipalities benefited from this grant thanks to their good governance. The grant is funded by the EU, the Government of Switzerland, Sweden and Norway. In 2022, the municipalities have benefited about 8 million euros from the Municipal Performance Grant. The project is managed by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Kosovo.

The municipality decided to invest the Municipal Performance Grant money in the construction of the wastewater collector. The wastewater collector is a major project that aims to extend to most villages of Drenas, through which runs the Drenica river. Through this project, the construction of the three kilometer long collector was financed, which affected two cadastral areas, Drenas and Poklek. The project is expected to continue in the next years to reach its final goal, which is Dobroshec.

The Drenica River is one of the rivers of Kosovo which was considered to be a clean river and a potential for the area for a long time. Constructions around the river and the development of the economy made for the river to start being polluted. The waters of the area are discharged into the river, seriously affecting the clean waters.

The collector construction project aims to divert wastewater from clean water and create a clean area. Through this project, the wastewater is intended to be removed from the area and sent to a wastewater treatment plant, which is expected to be constructed in the future.

Sewage and pollution of the river come with consequences for the residents of the area. In the areas around the Drenica River, the citizens have developed agricultural activities and they are irrigated by the river water as well. The project affects the cleaning of the water and as a result will have an impact on the development of clean agriculture.

Key findings

During the Social Audit process, the Drenas group addressed several topics and managed to draw some conclusions. The findings are grouped into four categories, with evidence for each findings in documentation and category.

What is the impact of Social Audit?

The Social Audit process in the Municipality of Drenas affected the improvement of damages caused during work in the construction project. The team asked the municipality to fix the river bed in the area damaged by the works.

The grouping of findings was carried out based on the research focus and the involvement of citizens in the process.

- Findings in the process of consultations with citizens
- Findings in the planning process
- Findings in the contracting stage
- Findings in contract implementation

Chapter I - Findings in the process of consultations with citizens

Drenas has about 67 thousand inhabitants. The Municipality of Drenas consults citizens throughout the year using various techniques, including direct meetings with citizens and formal public consultations. In the initial analysis, it was found that the Municipality held public meetings and consultations and published the materials on their official website. The team analyzed the minutes and documents provided by the municipality drafted in these processes.

The group determined that the municipality has held a large number of public meetings with citizens in three years and was focused on engaging them in these meetings. The meetings were held in premises close to the citizens, using schools and public spaces in villages and neighborhoods to make it easier for citizens to come.

Male dominance in public meetings

When analyzing the minutes of public consultations, the group found that participation in meetings continues to be dominated by men, and the community's demands continue to be mainly for investments in infrastructure.

Also, the group found that the municipality did not contain the entirety of meetings in the minutes, as the demands of the citizens were described very briefly and without any rationale as to why they should be implemented. Usually, requests were attributed to a person without confirming whether there had been a request submitted or supported by other citizens participating in the meeting.

In the minutes of public consultations in Drenas, the group found that in the meetings the municipality was represented by senior officials, mainly the mayor, directors or deputy mayor. The practice in Drenas shows that at the entrance to the meetings, citizens are given a list with an investment plan for that area and other details about the meeting. The Social Audit group analyzed this practice and found that it is a good practice and provides citizens with information. However, it is not recorded in the minutes whether the municipality has provided answers to the citizens for the requests addressed last year. As a result, the group determined that in the absence of this information, citizens remain with no answers to requests from previous years. The group has deemed it necessary that in the next meetings the municipality informs the citizens about the destiny of their requests made in the past

Performance of meeting facilitators

During the analysis of the processes, the group found that there were debates and answers from the municipal officials to the citizens in Drenas, but what the team determined is a lack of initiatives to start new debates. The Social Audit Team has concluded that the facilitators of public discussion meetings fail to provoke debate and pose questions to the community regarding their needs. Especially in rural areas, facilitators should be proactive and provoke the community whether they need certain investments.

The role of facilitators in public discussions

The role of facilitators in public discussions should be more proactive. Facilitators should encourage citizens' involvement in discussions about municipal projects and budget. They should provoke debate and elicit ideas and proposals from participating citizens.

Lack of discussion on the project

The team found that the project was a request of the citizens and a need of theirs. The team checked whether a public discussion was held with the citizens of the area for the project in question. The municipality has confirmed that such a meeting was not held and there was no presentation of the project to the residents. The team assessed that in such long-term projects, residents should be informed about the impact of the projects on their daily lives and routines.

Lack of publicity of documentation

The project contract, signed between the municipality and the construction company, was published on the municipality's website. During the analysis of documents, it was noticed that the executive project for the construction of wastewater collector in the Municipality of Drenas has not been published on the electronic platform for public procurement, "e-procurement". The document was obtained through a request for access to public documents.

The team also found that the municipality had not proactively published other documents; supervision reports or payment invoices are not public on the website of the municipality. The materials were made available to the team following requests for public documents.

Citizens not notified about the project supervisor

An important element that the team found was the fact that the citizens of the area had no knowledge of who the project supervisor was. The group found that the citizens were not aware of who the contract manager was for the project being implemented in their neighborhood or city. The project information board did not contain such information, whereas the name of the supervisor appeared on the municipality's website. In order for the citizens to be aware of this fact, the team recommends that the name, surname and contact of the contract manager be placed on the information table (sign) that is placed at the entry of project implementation, so that the citizens are aware of who is the person they can turn to for any request, complaint or even to provide any information.

Contract supervisor

The contract supervisor is a person or company engaged by the municipality. They are responsible for overseeing each phase of contract implementation. The supervisor drafts reports for each phase.

The supervisor is a significant official to whom any problems and irregularities in certain projects can be reported. The team found that names of municipal officials involved in the supervision of the projects had been placed on the website of the Municipality of Drenas. After a request, the team managed to find the name of the contract supervisor and discussions with him helped the team to understand more accurately and clearly the project implementation process.

Chapter II - Findings in the planning process

The Social Audit group also analyzed the design process of the collector's construction, identifying some lessons-learned and recommendations. The project for the construction of the wastewater collector in Drenas was designed by Studio Hapesira LLC, since the Municipality of Drenas does not have the resources to design such projects.

The problematic design of depth

Due to a faulty design, the Municipality of Drenas was forced to sign an annex-contract for additional work. During field visits and after documentation analysis, it was determined that the designed excavation level of the main ditch was done incorrectly.

The sewer pipes that had been installed a long time ago ran deeper than the new collector, namely the pipes coming from Komoran were 1 meter deeper than the new collector planned. The municipality was obliged to increase the depth of the collector's placement. This error and the need to increase the depth of the collector's placement led to an increase in the volume of soil excavated, increase the amount of gravel used, and increase the depth of the wells. This was one of the reasons that the Municipality of Drenas signed an annex-contract for additional work in the amount of 68 thousand euros.

Lack of coordination

Another problem in design and coordination was the planned crossing of the collector under the main road Drenas-Skenderaj. The municipality and the awarded company had proposed to cut through the Drenas-Skenderaj main road, but they failed to obtain the necessary permits from the Ministry of Infrastructure, under whose management this road is.

On June 12, 2023, the Municipality of Drenas sent a request to the Ministry of Environment, namely to the Department of Roads, as well as to the Minister, Liburn Aliu, to enable a cut through the asphalt, in order to install the pipe with a diameter of 1200 mm. Although the request had been sent two months before the contract was signed by the Municipality of Drenas, the ministry did not respond. The team found that the permission was not provided and the project had to be diverted in order to be carried out. Additional money had to be paid for this diversion.

As far as design is concerned, the group also found other issues. Due to the lack of maps and information on the extent of the infrastructure, the designing company had not noted that the project passed close to the Ibër-Lepenci system. As a result, the work on the project stalled for two weeks until Ibër-Lepenci company intervened to enable the laying of the collector.

Impact to other projects

The Social Audit group found that the project also affected the investments made in the Drenica river bed. At the entrance to the city of Drenas, a part of the river bed laid in stones had to be demolished to make way for the laying of the collector. The municipality needs to invest additional money to correct the damages caused by this intervention.

Collector project unfinished

The collector project is a large project and has not been fully accomplished by the Municipal Performance Grant. The municipality will be obliged to invest a few more kilometers in the following years to extend the collector to the village of Dobroshec.

The group determined that the investment fails to meet all the needs of the area for several reasons. The investment in question prolonged the collector route for an additional 1.5 kilometers, but the short route causes issues for the residents of a part of the village of Poklek i Vjeter and a part of the village of Shtrubullojë, where wastewater is discharged. The group concluded that other investments should be focused on addressing this issue.

Environmental impact

The project is envisaged to have a positive impact on the environment due to its cleaning of the river. However, the Social Audit team found that the area in which the project is located had large removals of soil. In this direction, the municipality does not have a revitalization project that includes planting trees or grass.

A resident of the village of Poklek i Vjeter complained that his agricultural property was damaged during the implementation of the project. The municipality has formed a Damage Assessment Commission to compensate the damage claimed by the resident. The group has not been able to verify whether all residents whose properties were damaged during the construction of the collector were compensated.



Chapter III - Findings in the contracting phase

The Social Audit team has also analyzed the contracting process of the project. For this phase, the group found that the contracting process went without problems and without complaints to the contracting authorities. However, the team found that the municipality had been obliged to sign a contract for additional work in this project due to inadequate planning of works in the project.

The contract notice for the project “Construction of wastewater collectors in the Municipality of Drenas - Two-year project” was published on July 13, 2022 on the official procurement website. The estimated value of the wastewater collector project in the Municipality of Drenas was 699 thousand euros. According to the file, the deadline for accepting bids was August 2, 2022.

A complaint regarding the contract notice published by the Municipality of Drenas on July 13, 2022, was made by the company “Diamanti Sh.p.k”, which claimed that discriminatory criteria were in place. This company’s complaint was rejected by the Municipality of Drenas on the grounds that the company’s claims are unfounded and that all the criteria have been submitted according to the nature of the project, works on the ground, and in harmony with the project value, which was high. After a request for reconsideration was rejected by the Municipality of Drenas, the complaining company did not appeal in the second instance, the Procurement Review Body.

Four operators and groups of economic operators had bid for the construction of the wastewater collector. According to the minutes of the opening of bids, four economic operators for the construction of the wastewater collector presented bids at different amounts.

1	LimitProject SHPK & Delta-CCD SHPK & Rinesa SHPK	693,353 €
2	Aksi Projekt SHPK	690,091 €
3	Valdrini SHPK	709,423 €
4	NNT Milazim Shala & Bujar Shabani B.I & EL Bau SHPK	644,424 €

The Municipality of Drenas recommended for contract the economic operators group LimitProject SHPK & Delta-CCD SHPK & Rinesa SHPK, who had offered a price of 693,353 euros. This was not the lowest bidding company. The group of economic operators NNT Milazim Shala & Bujar Shabani B.I & EL Bau SHPK offered the lowest price, namely 48,929 euros less than the winning company.



The reasons for eliminating this economic operators group were tender insurance, support letter from the bank, complete list of staff by the economic operator group, engineer trained for asbestos, and machine for horizontal underground drilling with a laser control system of the diameter DN250-DN1400. The companies eliminated from this tender had not submitted a request for reconsideration to the Municipality of Drenas or a complaint to the Procurement Review Body.

Chapter IV - Findings in contract implementation

The municipality of Drenas appointed Granit Karaqica as contract manager for the project worth 693,353 euros, entered into with the group of economic operators LimitProject SHPK & Delta-CCD SHPK & Rinesa SHPK. In the signed contract, the deadline for the completion of the works is not set at all, but it is stated that the duration of the works will be determined in the “Dynamic Plan” and the “Contract Management Plan”.

The Social Audit team has made several visits to the field, during the time when work was being carried out on the opening of ditches or the installation of pipes. The team found that in some cases the company covered the wells, and in some cases they were above ground. This issue was raised with the contract manager, Granit Karaqica, and with the foreman of the implementing company on the ground. The representative of the company said that this was a request of the citizens. He has said that there are cases when residents/land owners request that wells not be visible above ground to enable them to work the land freely.

Delays due to coordination

Additionally, the contract manager mentioned the delayed response they received from the Ibër-Lepenci company regarding the pipes that were encountered during the construction of the collector. During the works, the company had come across the pipes of the Ibër-Lepenci company, had not damaged them, and had notified the Municipality, so that they could notify Ibër-Lepenci to intervene. According to the contract manager, Granit Karaqica, this delayed the process for about three weeks until Ibër-Lepenci company sent a team to intervene. The Municipality also said that during works on this project, namely when the company ran into the water pipes, they had to wait for permission from the Ministry of Environment, since the portion near the bridge at the entrance to Drenas is managed by this department.

Additional costs due to central level

During contract management, the lack of institutional coordination has caused problems and additional costs to project implementation. Despite the fact that the Municipality of Drenas had asked the Ministry of Infrastructure in time for permission to cut the asphalt on the main regional road, the latter never responded. In the contract management documents it is stated that the team found a solution to carry out the project by diverting the collector. This change meant that the length of the pipe had to be increased, two new wells added, and additional concreting work to reinforce the collector, which was planned to pass through the bridge. This caused the Municipality of Drenas to sign an annex-contract worth 68,916 euros, on November 10, 2022. The Public Procurement Law allows the signing of such contracts in cases where unplanned work results during the implementation of a project. These contracts can go up to 10% of the base contract value.

Infrastructure damage from project investments

When the intervention was made around the river to open way for the construction of the wastewater collector at the bridge near the entrance to the city of Drenas, the decorative stones around the bed of the river Drenica were removed, which had been placed before. This was raised as an issue by the Social Audit group while the works were being carried out. The Audit Group, after the last visit, has found that the decorative stones were returned to their place as the residents' had requested. Residents have found that the work to return the stones to the riverbed have not been carried out in proper quality, as they have not been returned yet the way they were before the start of the project.

At the part where the construction is finished according to the current project, the wastewater is still discharged into the river. Residents who live in that part have complained about the odor of sewage. Even the residents who own agricultural land or cattle have complained about the impossibility of use the river's water. The Social Audit team assesses that the next phase of the construction of the wastewater collector should start as soon as possible so that these problems are eliminated and the collector performs the work for which it was constructed.

Residents recommend that the space over the entire flow of the Drenica River, on which the wastewater collector is constructed, to be used for recreational spaces, to have walking paths built, seats, waste bins, and green spaces planted.

Site safety

During the field visits, the Social Audit team also checked for the aspect of safety and health at work during the implementation of the investment project. The team found that the implementing company did not put secure the site with fences to prevent unauthorized people from accessing the area where they were excavating up to 3 meters deep.

Preparation and safety of the workplace is the responsibility of the companies that implement the work in the field. However, during the visits, the team found that the area where the project was implemented did not have any protective measures that would prevent people and animals from entering the area where work was being done.

During a visit, the team found that an open pit remained in the village of Poklek i Vjeter due to the construction of the collector. This open pit poses a risk to citizens, especially children, as there are no warning signs in that part. The Social Audit team recommended placing appropriate signage and safety tape around the pit. This issue has been raised by the team to the Technical Acceptance Committee. The Social Audit team realized that after raising this concern, the company had intervened by placing a tape.

Technical Acceptance Committee

The Commission for Technical Acceptance is a professional team of the municipality, which at the end of the project inspects the works and based on the report of this team, the works are accepted and then payments are made.

The team found as well that the company's employees were not wearing protective equipment.

Conclusions/recommendations

At the end of the project, the Social Audit team analyzed the work and reached some conclusions.

- Because the Social Audit was performed at the end of the project, the group's interventions were small.
- However, as a result of the work of the Social Audit team, the municipality has taken action to fix the damaged river bed.

What happens to recommendations?

The recommendations of the Social Audit groups serve to improve governance. The recommendations will be used to improve future projects and to improve the current project.

The team has come to the conclusion that the Municipality of Drenas was willing and ready to cooperate with the team. It has also shown willingness to address the issues raised and provided ample information for the team to carry out the Social Audit process. At the end of the process, the team drafted a list of recommendations for the Municipality of Drenas.

Recommendations for the involvement of citizens:

- The municipality should hold special meetings with citizens for major projects, which discuss projects and implementation plan.
- In order to carry out a process of citizen supervision, the municipality is recommended to publish more documents about the projects, including the design and the full contract with the economic operators.
- The municipality is recommended to make public to the citizens other documents produced during project supervision, such as the supervisor's reports or the technical acceptance reports.
- The municipality is recommended to place on the information boards the name of the contract supervisor or the address where citizens can send information.
- The municipality is recommended to promote the names of the persons involved in the supervision of municipal projects on its Facebook page.
- In the process of meetings and consultations with citizens, the Municipality is recommended to advance the agenda of the meetings, focusing on providing more information in the beginning regarding what has happened with projects requested in the past.

- The municipality is recommended to train meeting facilitators through special programs in order to develop their capacities for provoking debate and promoting topics as well as eliciting new project proposals.
- The municipality is recommended to change the process of documenting public meetings. Minutes and reports from these meetings should be more detailed and comprehensive.
- The municipality is recommended to start developing online platforms to involve more citizens in public consultation meetings.

Recommendations for the planning process:

- Perform a survey of the area where the project is being carried out to avoid problems such as the one with the depth of the collector.
- Before designing, companies should have maps and information about the public infrastructure located at the site.

Investment design must also take into account the rules of safety and health at work.

- The municipality must provide complete information to project designers, so that the project is as accurate as possible.
- In cases where the design is done incorrectly due to the fault of the designer, the municipality must take measures in accordance with the signed contract.

Recommendations for the planning process:

- The supervision of the works process should be more active and prevent the possibility of various damage to the project.
- Supervisors must identify damages before the end of the project.
- Supervisors must record in every case when the company is not respecting the rules of safety and health at work.
- The contract manager must keep minutes after each visit and meeting with the contractor.

Recommendations for new investments in the project:

The Social Audit team discussed and determined that investments should be continued in the collector project. Therefore, the group recommends to the municipality:

- To continue the project all the way to the boundary between Drenas and Fushe Kosove.
- To continue with constructing sewer connections for the villages and areas around the collector.
- To continue investments in improving the river bed.
- To invest in the regeneration of the area and the remediation of collateral damage of the project.

Letter of the Mayor of Drenas

I highly appreciate and thank the participation and support of the community and other stakeholders in the implementation of our projects.

Our responsibility and commitment to Social Audit is closely linked with ensuring efficiency and suitability for our programs. Maintaining high standards of social responsibility, we are committed to transparency, accountability, equity and ongoing support for all stakeholders.

We have a responsibility towards the environment and society, therefore we are committed to improve the positive impact, through good, sustainable and innovative practices. For us, Social Auditing is a key tool to contribute and ensure a fair and sustainable environment.

Our commitment to transparency and integrity, in cooperation with the media as an important partner on this path, as well as the Social Audit, will further deepen our relationship with citizens and encourage their active participation in informed reporting about our projects, benefiting the citizens.

Thank you!



Letter of the Social Audit team in the Municipality of Drenas

For us and other citizens of Drenas, the Social Audit was something new and never experienced before. The team learned first of all the importance of Social Audit and supervising projects that affect citizens. So far we have seen workers working near our properties and our houses and we were perhaps not aware to monitor and demand accountability whether the works are being carried out according to the plan and on the basis of the project.

From the two-day training that we held with BIRN representatives, we understood procurement procedures, the way to analyze documents, and how to send requests for access to documents to the Municipality.

This project has been a good experience for all of us, making us aware as citizens to feel free to demand accountability and transparency from the municipal government and beyond.



Social Audit Team in Drenas

No.	Name and surname	Occupation/Function
1	Avni Miftari	Environmentalism
2	Afrim Gjeli	Administrator of the village of Poklek i Ri /Chief of the fire department
3	Jakup Haxhiu	Retired/ Owns property near the wastewater collector
4	Shaqir Gashi	Retired/ Worked in construction
5	Fadil Prenku	Retired from KSF/Representative of village of Dobroshec
6	Imer Qerkini	Retired
7	Hamdi Fazliu	Electrician
8	Hajrush Muslija	Farmer
9	Abedin Selmani	Farmer
10	Teuta Haxhiu	Writer/ Owns property near the wastewater collector
11	Zadrie Podrimqaku	Activist
12	Zekë Kluna	Head of village of Poklek i Vjetër / Bricklayer
13	Halime Kuliqi	Business owner
14	Bahrije Kiqina	Business owner
15	Jehona Halilaj	Activist
16	Selvete Ramadani	Housewife
17	Razije Uka	Housewife
18	Ganimete Halili	Business owner
19	Lutfie Hysenaj	Housewife
20	Mahije Smajli	Director of NGO "Bliri", which advocates for women's rights



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