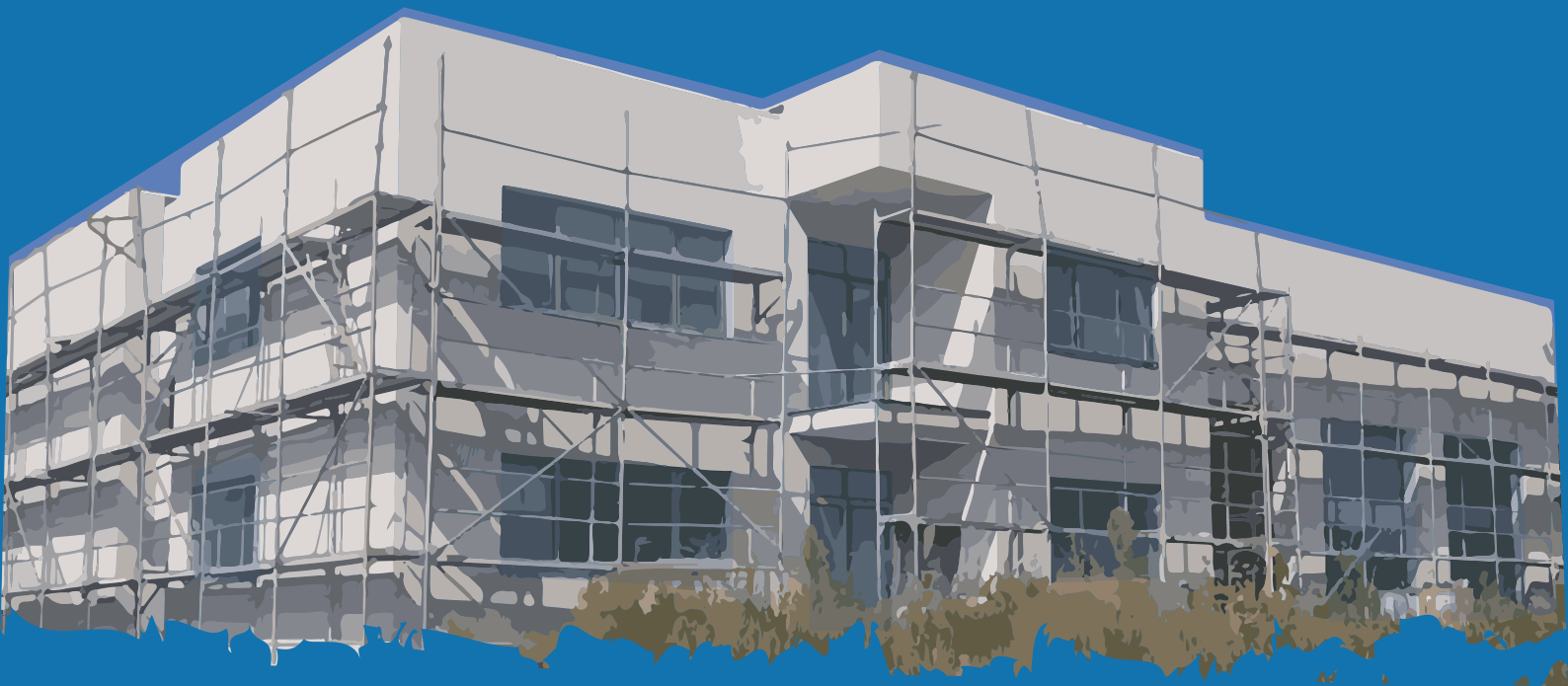


Social Audit Team Report Kaçanik

Project monitored "Construction of facilities for fire
brigade - Kaçanik - First phase"



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 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.

Kaçanik is one of the beneficiary municipalities of this program. In June, BIRN contacted and selected members of the Social Audit team in Kaçanik. After a two-day training, they started the 7-month Social Audit process.

In accordance with the established methodology and recommendations by BIRN, the group of citizens from Kaçanik founded the “Social Audit” team. Based on this methodology, the team engaged in analyzing and supervising the construction of the fire department facility in Kaçanik and in analyzing the process of public consultations and meetings in Kaçanik.

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. The audited project is “Construction of the fire brigade facility in Kaçanik - Phase one”, financed as part of the Municipal Performance Grant.

Using an established methodology, the team determined that:

- The construction of the fire brigade facility was essential for the Municipality of Kaçanik.
- The team did not find any problems in the procurement procedures, but the team found problems in the design phase.
- Work on the facility started late due to lack of coordination with residents and objections by citizens to the location.
- The team found that the facility's planning had other problems as well. The space where the offices are located and the garages or the space where the fire trucks were to be parked are not at the same level.
- In the project, the insulation of the basement of the building was not planned. This was then added to the project.
- The space inside the fire department building has remained unused, especially the space above the rooms that are located in the truck garage. The municipality justified saying that the height of the garages is higher than the parts where the offices and the rooms are.
- The rooms in which the firefighters rest and sleep are located on the second floor, but a pole for quick descent has not been installed.
- The rooms on the second floor are not accessible for disabled people and the facility is not designed to be friendly for people with disability.
- The facility is planned to have only one entrance and trucks must be parked one behind the other.
- Fire department in Kaçanik has six trucks, but the newly built facility has only three entrances/doors through which these vehicles can enter and exit. Consequently, in order to get the trucks out, the parked trucks must be removed.
- The facility's front yard is too small to enable the washing of fire trucks.
- The team found a lack of good planning in defining positions when the project was divided into two phases.
- In the implementation, the team found that there was non-implementation of safety and health rules at work.

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 Kacanik has not conducted a special public discussion for the project.
- The municipality made public the contract signed between the municipality and the construction company, but it was not in full. In the contract published at the e-procurement platform, the works that were envisaged to be carried out, as well as prices for each position were missing.
- The municipality had not proactively published other documents; supervision reports or payment invoices are not public on the website of the municipality.
- The executive construction project document was not public on the website of the municipality either. The executive project of the fire department facility was provided to the Social Audit team after requests for access to public documents were sent.
- In the projects information board, the Municipality of Kaçanik had not informed the citizens of the name of the project supervisor and contacts.
- On the website of the Municipality of Kaçanik there is no list of names of municipal officials involved in the supervision of the projects.

In addition to analyzing the planning and implementation of the project, the Social Audit team in Kaçanik also addressed the transparency of the Municipality towards the citizens. The team determined that:

- The municipality of Kaçanik makes serious efforts to involve citizens in public meetings.
- Multiple platforms are used to encourage citizens to be part of public meetings and discussions.
- 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.
- When managing public meetings, municipal officials are not proactive in provoking debates and eliciting new ideas from the community.

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 Kaçanik?

In accordance with an established methodology, BIRN drafted a list of representatives and professions that were to be invited to the Social Audit Team. 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 DEMOS the tentative list of occupations. After coordination, BIRN contacted the citizens of Kaçanik to ensure that the defined categories were included in the team.

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 Kaçanik.

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 16 members of the Social and the report was drafted with the help and support of BIRN. The report was made public after addressing the comments received by the Municipality of Kaçanik.

Team composition: 16 members



5 women or 31%



11 men or 69%

- Journalist
- Architect
- Village administrator
- Engineer
- Firefighter
- Forest guard
- Activist
- Professor
- Student
- Resident



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
- Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipality of Kaçanik
- Visits of the Social Audit team on the ground
- Drafting requests for access to public documents
- Appointment of persons within the team for sending requests to the Municipality
- Checking accessible materials on open platforms

August 2023

- Sent requests for access to public documents
- Group meetings and document analysis
- Analysis of materials from public consultations
- Team meeting to analyze the public consultation minutes
- Group discussion on project documents that have been obtained online
- Resend requests for access to public documents to Municipality

September 2023

- Resend requests for access to public documents
- Acceptance of documents from the Municipality
- Meeting with the project manager
- Meeting with the director of Public Services
- Visits of the team on the ground
- Discussion and analysis of documents received by the Municipality

October 2023

- Visits on the ground by the Social Audit group
- Meeting of the Social Audit group to document the findings
- 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

- Meeting of the Social Audit group to write the report
- Drafting the report on the findings and recommendations of the Social Audit
- 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

Kaçanik is one of the smaller municipalities of Kosovo, with 33,409 inhabitants. In 2023, Kačanik had a budget of 9,193,167 euros. The data show that assistance from the Municipal Performance Grant project had a high impact on the community.

Kaçanik firefighters operate in an old and unsuitable facility for their work. As a result, the Municipality of Kačanik decided to invest the Municipal Performance Grant money in the construction of “Fire Department Building (Facility)”.

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 of Kačanik is among the municipalities with the most mountainous areas and the new facility which is being built in the outskirts of the city makes the response time faster in case of fire in the mountains of Kačanik.

The project, which was financed by the Municipal Performance Grant, “Construction of the fire brigade facility”, has a contract value of 239,996 euros. The contract for this project was signed on July 4, 2022 with the company “NPN EUROING” SHPK.

The project “Construction of the fire brigade facility” was designed by a company contracted by the Municipality of Kačanik, with Ilir Koraqi being appointed project manager for first one, by decision of the mayor, and with Valmir Krasniqi being appointed in phase two.

The Social Audit team estimates that Kačanik needed the fire department facility.

Key findings

During the Social Audit process in Kačanik, the team addressed a range of topics discovered during document analysis and field visits. The team found that there were problems in the planning phase of the project. Also, problems were found during the implementation of the project.

What is the impact of Social Audit?

The Social Audit in the Municipality of Kačanik had an impact in the provision of concrete recommendations for improving the quality of works in the facility.

Challenges were also identified in the process of community consultation and citizen involvement in the decision-making process. The findings are grouped into four chapters:

- 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

Kaçanik has 33,409 inhabitants. The Municipality of Kačanik 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 Social Audit Team has analyzed the minutes of the public consultations of the years 2021 and 2022. The group has determined that in public debates aimed at citizen involvement and presentation of their demands in order to be included in budget planning, the citizen turnout is small.

Insufficient documentation in minutes

During the analysis of documents, it was determined that in public debates, most of the participants were men, and their requests were usually related to infrastructural problems, lighting and drinking water.

The Mayor of the Municipality of Kačanik has an advancement in organizing public debates, calling all the stakeholders that work and operate in Kačanik. He has called a special public debate with youth, NGOs that represent youth interests, students, sports clubs, and representatives of Handikos.

From the analysis of the minutes, but also from discussions with representatives of the organization Handikos, the group found that the Municipality of Kačanik includes people with disability in public discussions and provides spaces that enable their participation.

During the analysis of the materials, the group found that the municipality did not present the entire content of the meetings in the minutes. Some of the members of the Social Audit team that participated in this public discussion, consider that the mayor spoke at length about their request.

Individualization of group requests

Another element that the group has highlighted during public discussions is the individualization of requests. In the minutes analyzed, the group found that requests that are often done in groups are attributed to only one citizen and this shows a loss of legitimacy of the request.

In the meetings the public consultations of which were analyzed, several challenges were identified that should be addressed in the future. The group has determined that municipal officials that organize and carry out public consultations, do not provide enough information at the start of the meetings regarding what happened to their requests submitted in the previous year. In the absence of this information, requests are repeated or not submitted at all, thus causing a decline of trust in the process.

Poor performance by facilitators

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. From the analysis of the minutes, it has been determined that facilitators turn into listeners of citizens' requests, but they do not ask questions or do not make discussions that would ensure the community puts forward requests.

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.

The team determined that facilitators should be proactive and provoke the community whether they need certain investments.

Discussing the project with the community

The team has also analyzed the discussion of the project with the community. In the Social Audit group, the representatives of the village of Kovaqec, in which the facility was built, indicated they have opposed the construction in that location, claiming there is their ancestral cemetery. However, the justification by the Municipality of Kaçanik for the construction in that location was that a washing company is located nearby, as well as they are trying to make that area a municipal companies zone.

Publicity of project documents

The team also addressed the issue of whether the project documents were public and easily accessible to citizens. As far as the publicity of the project materials is concerned, the team found that on the website of the Municipality there are some materials published about the project, but some important materials are missing. It was found that the the contract signed between the municipality and the construction company had been made public, but it was not in full. In the contract published at the e-procurement platform, the works that were envisaged to be carried out, as well as prices for each position were missing. This important document was then made accessible to the team after sending requests for access to public documents.

The team also found that the Municipality of Kaçanik had not proactively published other documents; supervision reports or payment invoices are not public on the website of the municipality. The team also got hold of these materials through requests for access to public documents.

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 team also addressed other elements of accountability. An important element that the team determined was the fact that the citizens of the area had no knowledge of who the project supervisor was. The supervisor is a significant official to whom any problems and irregularities in certain projects can be reported. The team determined that In the projects information board, the Municipality of Kaçanik had not informed the citizens of the name of the project supervisor and contacts.

Furthermore, on the website of the Municipality of Kaçanik there is no list of names of municipal officials involved in the supervision of the projects. After a request for access to public documents, 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

To check whether during the design of the construction of the fire brigade facility in Kaçanik the municipality had a good performance, the Social Audit team analyzed the design documents and the effects that the quality of the design had on the implementation of work on the ground. The team found that improper design of some issues challenged the progress of the project and created a need to change the project along the way.

Lack of design capacities in the Municipality of Kaçanik

The Social Audit Team analyzed the manner in which the project “Construction of the fire brigade facility in Kaçanik” was designed and checked whether the design was envisaged to meet the needs of the citizens. The project was designed by a private company contracted by the Municipality, since the municipality does not have its own designing team. As a result, the analysis of the project by the municipal officials could not be done in detail either. The team found that the municipality did not conduct a debate or presentation of the project in front of the community and experts in order to receive comments on possible errors in design. In the absence of discussion and constructive criticism, the team has found that some defects in the design have created problems in the implementation of the project on the ground. Also, the team initially found that the project did not envisage the insulation of the basement, which was done later.

Lack of designing access for people with disabilities

The first issue that was addressed by the team was the adaptation of the project for people with disabilities. The group found that the designer did not make sure to guarantee access for people with disabilities.

The building has two floors and a basement, but there is no elevator. The municipality justified that there are not many floors in the building to have an elevator. The team has estimated that the lack of an elevator will also cause a problem for firefighters injured during work, and which will have to come to work or visit the facility for administrative purposes.

The building and its functioning

The investments of the Municipality of Kaçanik in the fire department facility have been divided into two phases. In the first phase, there was the rough construction of the object, whereas finalization was foreseen in the second phase. The group has not been notified by the municipality whether it has taken measures regarding the company, which during the first phase did not foresee the insulation of the basement of the building.

The facility was located in an area of the village of Kovaqec where the cleaning company is also located. The team noticed that the building has a narrow space, which makes it impossible to have entrances and exits on both sides of the building, but in fact there are only 3 entry doors for the 6 machines owned by Kaçanik fire brigade.



The team assesses that when dealing with objects of public character and high investment value, it is beneficial to have design competitions. In this case, since the municipality contracted a design office, it would have been advisable to form a committee of experts of the field, since in most cases projects have functionality problems.

Analysis of the facility constructed

The location in which the fire department facility is constructed has advantages due to its connection with the M2 highway and roads that connect the villages of Kaçanik. Also, there are positive advantages in terms of water supply, in the water system and in the Lepenc river.

The main deficiency found by the Social Audit team in the fire department facility is the non-matching levels in the middle of the facility, the area where the administrative space and the fire department truck garages are divided. In this area, the team has found that unevenness or stairs in areas where people are expected to be running are not recommended.

The team also found that there is no pole in the fire department building, which allows the firefighters to go down from the upper floor where they have their rooms.

During the analysis of the documents and field visits, the team found that in planning, the design company had forgotten to envisage insulation of the basement. Also, it has been noted that the building has unused spaces, and there is a lack of a space that would be dedicated for physical exercises.

Chapter III - Findings in the contracting phase

The municipality of Kačanik has announced a bid for the construction of the fire brigade building on June 1, 2022. In this phase, the group found that the contracting process went without problems, however challenges have been found in the planning of bid. The municipality decided to split the tender for the construction in two phases and doing so for a single project has created problems in implementation.

The challenges of dividing the project into two tenders

The tender was titled - first phase and it had only the rough construction planned. One of the problems identified by the team was dividing this facility into two phases and two tenders. Initially, the team found that the division of the project into two parts was done on an ad-hoc basis and without a preliminary analysis. In the first tender, positions foreseen in the second phase were also included. The contract manager justified that the request for dividing the project into two parts was made in a very short period of time, which prevented him from conducting a more accurate analysis. The municipal officials have said that the division of the project into two parts was made due to a lack of funds.

Elimination of the cheapest offer

In the first tender, in which only the construction of the rough part was planned, the Municipality of Kačanik received five bids. The company "NPN Euroing" SHPK was recommended for the contract, after offering a value of 239,996 euros. There was also a cheaper offer, the consortium "Hidroing2sh" & Triangle" which had offered 233,553 euros for this project, but the same was eliminated from the competition on the grounds that "it did not provide valid evidence for the tender insurance, respectively it did not submit the insurance of the tender".

Chapter IV - Findings in contract implementation

The most important phase of the implementation of works in an investment contract is project management. The Social Audit team analyzed whether the works were performed according to the contract and the deadlines.

Based on the contract management plan, the project started on August 4, 2022, but it was planned to be completed in 60 working days.

Delays of works

Immediately after the start of the works, the foreman was forced to stop the works because the citizens protested claiming that there were several cemeteries in the location where the construction of the facility was planned. The works were stopped on August 11, 2022. After 10 days, on August 22, 2022, the company resumed the works an the agreement with the residents. The company was obliged to stop the works also due to the fact it had come across an electric cable. After the dislocation of the cable, the works resumed on September 9, 2022.



Another problem identified during the contract management was the creation of a mismatching levels between the garage where the fire trucks are parked and the part of the building where the offices are located. According to the contract manager, this happened because of scheduling. He showed that it was not planned in time for the leveling to be done in the office area, and this caused a 10-centimeter unevenness.

Change of contract - removal of heat pump

The team found that the contract was changed after the works started. Initially, a contract change was made in which the amount of works to be carried out in some positions increased and decreased in other positions. These changes that were made based on a request dated December 22, 2022 did not change the value of the contract, which means that there was no need for a new contract. One of the changes that was made in this contract was the inclusion in the tender of a “Thermal Pump”. The company contracted offered only 1,300 euros for the heat pump. But, changing the contract, which was made by a proposal of the contract manager, Ilir Karaqi, the heat pump was completely removed as a position. In the justification of the contract manager, it is said that the change of the contract is necessary as a “result of non-compliance of the main project with the bill of quantities”. In a response from the municipality, it was said that “this is not about the heat pump as a device, but the heat pump’s conveying elements (pipes), which could not be worked without the other equipment of the II phase”.

Contract for additional work

During the implementation of the project, the manager had requested a new (emergency) contract for additional work, allowed by the Law on Procurement. In the request made by Ilir Karaqi, contract manager, it is stated that “additional work foreseen for the dislocation of two low-voltage electric cables and some other positions in the facility, positions necessary for the completion of the project”. Based on the request of the project manager, the Municipality of Kaçanik had signed the contract in the amount of 23,672 euros with the same operator.

The project manager said that the facility was planned without basement insulation, which he says is necessary in order to avoid later damages. He said that with the designer’s permission, it has been included as a new position and the foundations of the building were isolated.

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 contract signed on August 4, 2022 was scheduled to be finalized in 60 working days. The works were finalized only in April 2023, or 8 months from the time of signing the contract. The job acceptance commission was established on April 25, 2023. On the following day, April 26, 2023, the Commission went out on the ground and drafted the decision for acceptance of the works, which according to them were carried out in accordance with the contract.

Site safety

Another important element that the Social Audit team has analyzed is safety at work. During the group’s visit to the facility safety measures were looked at, the facility had an information board that there are works. The data show that the area was fenced and there were scaffoldings during the construction of the building. However, during the visit, the team observed that some workers were working without work equipment, specifically without helmets.

Conclusions/recommendations

At the end of the project, the Social Audit team analyzed the work and reached some conclusions. The Municipality of Kaçanik has been willing and ready to cooperate with the team and address the issues raised. Also, the team drafted a list of recommendations for the Municipality of Kaçanik.

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.

Recommendations for citizen involvement:

- Before deciding on major projects, the municipality must conduct meetings with the community to explain the project.
- In projects of infrastructure which will see professional teams, the municipality must also include its employees in the planning.
- 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 publish the names of 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 manner of organizing meetings. To focus on providing more information at the start of the meeting on what happened with projects requested in the past.
- The team recommends that the Municipality train public consultation facilitators through special programs to develop their capacities for provoking debate and promoting topics, as well as eliciting new project proposals in the community.
- 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 project planning process:

- In the planning of large projects, the municipality is recommended to plan the carrying out of all works and not only a part of it.
- The municipality must ensure that each project is carried out in accordance with the standards so that the spaces are adapted for persons with disabilities.
- The municipality is recommended to have public tenders for buildings of significance.
- Projects like the one for the fire department facility must be designed according to the needs and guarantee that they are easily usable in order to provide fast services.
- The spaces in which such objects are located must provide easy access and space for operation.
- Project time planning should be better, in order to guarantee timely implementation of projects.

Recommendations for the project supervision process:

- The supervision of the works process should be more active and prevent the possibility of various damages to the project.
- Supervisors must identify damages before the end of the project.
- Supervisors must record 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 has discussed and determined that the fire brigade facility in Kaçanik needs new investments and interventions. Therefore, the group recommends to the municipality:

- To install a pole for the firemen to descend from the second floor of the building.
- To intervene and eliminate unnecessary stairs inside the building.
- To start a process of installing hydrants in urban areas.

Letter of the Mayor of Kaçanik

Transparency, accountability and supporting active citizenship in monitoring the daily processes of municipal leadership is and will remain a priority of governance in our municipality.

The support from DEMOS (Project for Decentralization and Support to Municipalities), through the Performance Grant, in addition to the financial aspect, has been deemed by our municipality as an important mechanism in providing assistance in the construction of the most favorable policies for decentralized governance.

Social Audit of the project “Construction of the Fire Brigade Facility” created additional opportunities for the civil society and engaged citizens in contributing with different ideas, creativity, increased transparency and accountability of municipal institutions for the work performed and the investment of citizens’ taxes in different infrastructure projects.

The municipality of Kaçanik has welcomed this new monitoring format and at the same time wishes to thank the Social Audit team and BIRN team for the project and it commits to support any initiative in this field in order to provide space for the civil society in the project evaluation and their impact on the beneficiary, being the citizens of our municipality.

Sincerely!

*Besim Ilazi,
Mayor of Kaçanik*



Letter of the Social Audit team in the Municipality of Kaçanik

Social Audit was a new topic, that some of us had heard of but didn't have much information. After a two-day training by BIRN and DEMOS, we began to learn how important it is and what the benefits are that come from the Social Audit process.

During this training we learned that Social Audit is important for citizens for several reasons: institutional accountability; improvement of public services; citizens' participation in various decision-making processes, and raising public awareness.

Through this process, engaged citizens can contribute towards increasing the transparency and accountability of institutions by exposing various issues and shortcomings during the implementation of projects, but also by giving recommendations to improve them.

We think that the Social Audit has been very necessary for the improvement of the life of the community and we hope that it will continue in the future as a process, enabling citizens to influence and be directly involved in the projects that are carried out in their neighborhoods or municipalities.



Social Audit Team in Kaçanik

No.	Name	Occupation/Function
1	Erlida Mulaku	Journalist/Student of journalism
2	Naim Hysa	Secretary/Red Cross
3	Remzi Raka	NGO Gjethi
4	Ylber Shehu	Fire Department Commander
5	Xhelal Asllani	Firefighter
6	Qëndrim Vogliqi	Architect
7	Shiqeri Koraqi	Teacher
8	Azem Koraçi	Administrator of the village of Kovacec (where the facility is being constructed)
9	Sahide Brati	Journalist
10	Alejdin Troni	Forest guard
11	Elmihane Malsiu	Handikos/Director
12	Aulona Bela	Student
13	Shpat Bulica	KVRL
14	Flaka Krivanjeva	Student
15	Atdhe Neziri	Engineer of electric studies
16	Besmir Troni	Student



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