

Inception Phase – Municipal Partnership Programme

Swedish applicant organization: Ekerö Municipality	Country of cooperation: Georgia
Amount applied for (SEK): 220 000	Cooperation partner – Local government in cooperation country: Municipality of Kutaisi
	Ref: 2018-0005

Summary of the application:

During the inception phase our aim will be to investigate how to develop cooperation between civil society (non-governmental organisations, institutions and networks) and our separate municipalities, Kutaisi and Ekerö. We will choose one focus areas, such as social inclusion, facilitating dialogue between the municipality and civil society, participation in municipal decision-making and collaboration between civil society and the municipality in joint projects. Our ambition is to formulate a municipal partnership application within the selected area.

Both Kutaisi and Ekerö municipalities have ongoing processes which aim to develop cooperation with civil society. We believe that establishing a partnership will be of mutual benefit and enable us to learn from our separate experiences. We also hope that it will create interest and understanding for how collaboration with civil society strengthens values such as trust, participation and transparency in our municipalities.

Potential areas of cooperation *(problems and challenges for local authorities that could be solved within the partnership):*

Kutaisi's vice Mayor has provided the following answer:

"We think that a partnership would enhance citizens involvement, from this perspective Kutaisi City Municipality will be sharing and take part of new experiences or methods, best practices which are used in countries of EU.

Several years ago the nature of community engagement in Kutaisi was passive due to several factors, such as:

? low level of civic education and civil way of thinking;

- ? low awareness of citizens about their rights and the competence of local self-governance;
- ? lack of interest and motivation to be involved in local governance activities;
- ? low level of participation amongst people in local governance activities;

It should be noted that Kutaisi City Hall and its services are closer to people than any other institutions on the local level. Due to this reason, Kutaisi City Hall, City Council and Services of Kutaisi City Hall play an important role in citizens' involvement process. Citizens' involvement is one of the crucial issues for our institution."

Remarks

Ekerö Municipality and Municipality of Kutaisi are new to the municipal partnership programme. Ekerö requested help finding a partner with an interest in developing strategies and activities to enhance collaboration with civil society. The Municipality of Kutaisi has previously had a participant within ITP, who now works for a local NGO. The NGO, Network of Centers for Civic Engagement, is supporting the application.

Recommendation from the Municipal Partnership Unit:

Approval

The ICLD considers the application to be relevant and feasible. The proposed Inception phase explores well-reasoned ways of working with the ICLD's core areas of equity/inclusion, participation, transparency and how they interact. The Inception phase addresses the thematic priorities mainly by associating them with Agenda 2030.