

Citizen feedback dashboard for the Government of Armenia

UNDP Armenia project

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International practices of citizen engagement

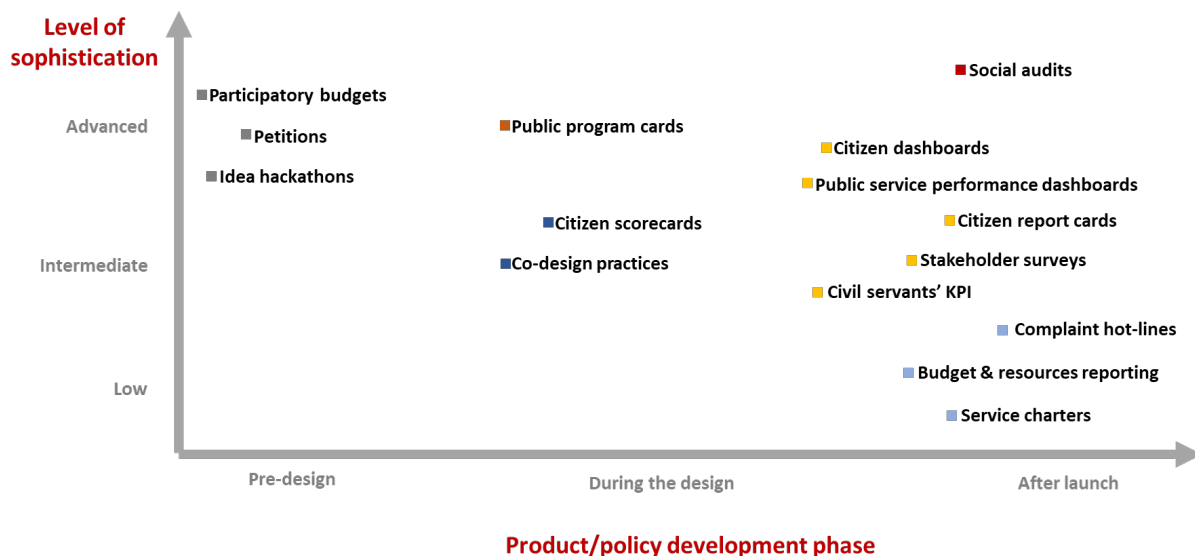
The international practices of citizen engagement vary significantly not only by level of sophistication but also by the initial set of goals they pursue. There is a big number of names, terms and definitions for different types of platforms, but most of the times those solutions overlap with each other with slightly different focuses.

There are different reasons why the governments at national and subnational levels want to hear their citizens' voices. The most strategic among those goals are:

- To **identify** issues in public administration domain and to **take action** towards solving them;
- To **measure** performance of civil servants;
- To **improve** public service delivery;
- To be transparent and **accountable** to citizens and to promote other principles of open government practices;
- To **minimize** the government's role and to promote and invest into ideas of "Government as Platform" and "Citizens as Producers of Public Services".

The citizen engagement platforms engage citizens at different stages of policy making. The phases to intervene depend on the goal the platform pursues.

Picture 1: Citizen engagement tools by phases



The sooner the governments engage citizens into public decision-making the more sophisticated the tools and solutions used for that are. In most advanced cases the citizens' voice is not just asked, but they are encouraged to initiate and design changes themselves transforming the traditional governance model into P2P service provision.

The group of most simple tools includes platforms that give the citizens opportunity to submit complaints about the existing problems and issues. The good performance of complaint handling systems can lead to improvement in policies and processes; however, the fact that this happens only post-factum lowers its significance largely.

There are a few more advanced tools to collect the citizens' feedback after the public service or a legislation is launched. These tools include more sophisticated surveys which are hearing the voice of not only complaining citizens but of a selected sample of population as well. In addition, these tools are applied periodically, and the results can later be analyzed in dynamics. The list of these platforms includes citizen dashboards, citizen report cards, social audits and others.

There are many progressive practices where citizens get engaged within the process of the product design or policy development. This is done by different ways, such as public hearings, public voting, public program cards, citizen scorecards and others.

The most advanced experience of citizen engagement refers to petitions, idea hackathons among citizens, participatory budgeting and similar solutions when the public is involved in policy making even before the design process.

A few well-known successful examples of citizen engagement platforms include citizen dashboards in different cities, Indonesian Lapor complaint handling system, "Check my School" Community scorecards project in Philippines, Decide Madrid platform of co-creation in Madrid.

Despite the fact that the final target of each platform is the same – to hear the voice of the citizens - these kinds of platforms differ in more micro level goals, with different approaches to communication with citizens, different levels of technology inclusion, etc. Furthermore, there is an analysis of the exemplary cases of each group of citizen engagement tools discussed above.

Centralized complaint handling systems: Indonesian LAPOR

Phase	After launch
Level	Central government
Areas covering	All-inclusive
Goal	Issue identification, "No wrong door policy"
Target group of users	Active citizens
Approach	Passive
Specifics	Focus on negative feedback

LAPOR is a Public Participation and Information system created by President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight (UKP4) of Indonesia to engage citizens to actively and publicly post their self-initiated feedback. The system was launched in 2011 in

pursuit of better, more transparent open government in Indonesia.

The initial goal of the Central Government was to create a mechanism to track and assess the performance of the ministers and the progress of their progress. For a better result the Government decided to crowdsource the task and engage the citizens in performance



assessment as well by giving them a tool to report on issues in public service delivery. Very soon the system has evolved into centralized complaint handling system with large number of users and critical mass of public opinion regarding various

issues – corruption cases, infrastructure problems, inefficiencies in public institutions, imperfections in public services delivery processes, and others.



The integrated platform enforces “No wrong door” policy and thus redefines the citizen-government interaction. The citizens do not have to be informed which state agency is responsible for the specific problem

they encounter. No matter what the topic of the complaint is the citizen can reach out to the Government via the same single platform. After the submission of the report the LAPOR’s administration directs the complaint to the responsible agencies and tracks the progress of the complaint handling. Agencies are supposed to answer the complaint within 5 days after the receipt. LAPOR administration works with “Liaison officers” in each state agency responsible for coordination of complaint handling. If the request of the citizen gets no response within the required timeframe LAPOR mediates the process by contacting the responsible institution or reporting to the President’s or Ombudsman’s office, if necessary. In this way, LAPOR becomes a unique intermediary in the interaction between the state and the citizens. In addition, LAPOR also serves as a bridge between the state agencies. It also serves as a source of open government data.

The omni-channel system allows the citizens to knock on the Government’s door easily and minimizes the negative implications of digital divide. LAPOR is accessible by SMS, web portal, mobile application and social media platforms. The anonymous feature of the system makes it a platform for whistleblowing, too.

The long journey of LAPOR system has resulted in significant achievements and fostered the development of open government practices in Indonesia to a great extent. The LAPOR case has become one of the most exemplary and discussed stories of “digital democracy”. Still, even the fully functional and operational system poses a few critical issues, such as:

- The compliance of the state agencies to the system. Right now, the cooperation with LAPOR and the enforcement of its findings is voluntary and is mainly based on public pressure or the efforts of LAPOR administration. The further enhancement of the concept needs higher political commitment.

- Awareness and level of training of population. There is still significant work to do to increase the level of awareness about the system and skills to use it efficiently. In addition, a certain level of public fear also restrains citizens from reporting on issues.
- Large number of similar platforms. The big variety of channels of communication based on both state and private platforms confuses citizens and dissolves critical information about public opinion among those platforms. Additional efforts and resources are required to centralize and streamline all information into one point of contact between the state and the citizens.

The usage statistics and impact

Unit	Belum	Proses	Selesai
Kementerian Badan Usaha Milik Negara (BUMN)	115	42	138
PT PLN (Persero)	22	22	507
PT Pos Indonesia	0	19	190
Perum Bulog	11	3	75
PT Telkom Indonesia	60	23	2
PT Jasa Marga (Persero) Tbk	23	16	8
PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia (Persero) Tbk	16	8	2
PT Timah	1	1	0
PT Pelabuhan Indonesia I (Persero)	0	1	0
PT Pelayanan Nasional Indonesia (Persero)	1	0	0
PT Perkebunan Nusantara III (Persero)	1	0	0
PT Perkebunan Nusantara V (Persero)	0	0	1

The LAPOR users have access to the statistics on the statuses of all complaints handled through the system. It summarizes and publishes data by statuses of complaints (rejected/unsolved, in the process, resolved), topics of issues, regions, etc. In addition, a completion report on each of the submitted complaints is traceable on the website by its unique tracking number.

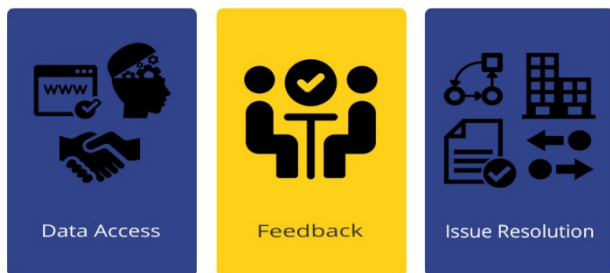
- The system receives over 300,000 complaints per year.
- The list of connected institutions includes 34 ministries, 97 state agencies, 302 local governments, 116 SOEs, 130 universities and 131 embassies.

Social accountability tools: “Check My School” in Philippines

Phase	After launch
Level	Community
Areas covering	Selected public domains – education, health
Goal	Issue identification, transparent resource allocation, participatory monitoring
Target group of users	Volunteers

Philippines’ “Check my school” is one of the most popular tools of social accountability. The history of the tool creation dates back to 2006 when the country undertook the Basic Education Sector Reform

Agenda which addressed the issues of significant inefficiencies and demolition of state resources. The core philosophy of the reform agenda was to look into decentralizing the huge public education sector of Philippines and create participatory mechanisms thus “outsourcing” a number of important functions (most specifically surveillance) to the citizens. The program started to design and invest in processes and platforms to enhance capacities of the school administration to carry out independent decision-making and to equip and educate communities to monitor the performance of schools thus leading to transparency and accountability in the public education domain.



In the scope of the reform the Philippines' Department of Education launched a joint social accountability project "Check My School" with the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the East Asia Pacific region (ANSA-EAP).

The flow of "Check My School" framework is the following: a) the Government provides administrative data of public education sector to ANSA-EAP (such as procurement of schools, the state of school buildings, other infrastructure, textbooks, etc.); b) the Agency recruits and trains volunteers from communities who visit the schools and check the provided data; c) ANSA-EAP reports back the collected information about public schools; d) the comparison of data from two sources, with identified discrepancies is published to ensure transparency.

The usage statistics and impact

The pilot program started in 2011 with:

- 243 schools across 14 regions in Philippines.
- Required 170,000 USD investments during 2011-2012.
- Included 20 infomediaries – community representatives responsible for submitting data, and more than 1,000 volunteers.

The roll-out plan was to extend the program to 44,000 schools throughout the country.

The Check My School program was so successful that ANSA-EAP enhanced the model and started to export it to the monitoring of other government projects within Philippines or to monitoring of public services in various countries. The list of most successful international projects includes Cambodia, Indonesia and Mongolia.

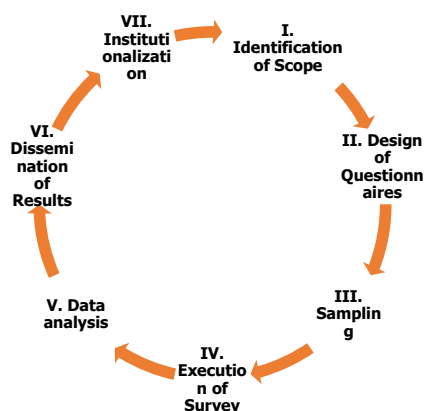
Citizen report cards: India/Bangalore Citizen report cards

Phase	After launch
Level	Public services
Areas covering	All areas
Goal	Assess citizen satisfaction and increase the level of accountability by disseminating assessment results
Target group of users	Sample of population

Citizen Report Cards (CRC) are participatory surveys among population about their satisfaction with the public services. The idea first originated in India back in 1990s. For higher efficiency the tool was developed to replicate the similar practices in the private sector

when the private companies urged by severe competition undertake periodical assessment of the customers' satisfaction and juxtapose the company's performance to its competitors' satisfaction indicators. However, as the governments are not under pressure of competition, the CRC was designed to streamline in a participatory process and be accompanied with wide media coverage and inclusion of civil society. This makes CRC a more complex tool compared to ordinary polls and surveys.

The first initiative of CRC was undertaken in 1994, in Bangalore, India and was implemented by “Public Affairs Center” NGO. Within the scope of the survey the citizens assessed the quality of a set of indicators of public service delivery.



The “participatory” component of CRCs highly dominates in all phases of the survey – design of questionnaires, collection of information through interviews and dissemination of the survey results and public pressure for solving the identified issues. The most important stage of CRC implementation is the “institutionalization of the results”. The CRC assessments can be used in different ways, such as ratings of different

state agencies, performance-based budgeting of projects, performance assessment of civil servants and performance-based remuneration, etc.

Statistics

- The sample of the first CRC in Bangalore (1993) included 480 middle-income and 330 low-income households.
- The questions aimed to assess the public service delivery of 8 state agencies, which reported to have the biggest number of interactions with the citizens.
- The second CRC (1999) surveyed 1,339 middle-income and 839 low-income households.
- The results of the first CRC were quite dramatic. The satisfaction of the citizens with services of some agencies was as low as 1% and the dissatisfaction as high as 65%.
- The institutionalization of the results happened in a way of creating new and more efficient complaint handling systems and platforms for citizen engagement in service design.

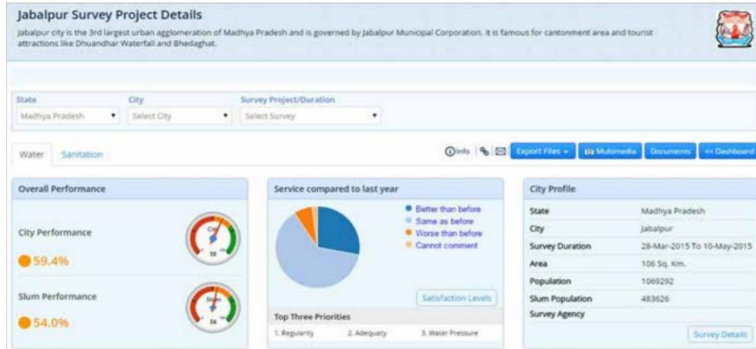
Despite its success and wide application in different governments both on national and subnational levels, the CRC is a complex tool and poses a number of significant challenges, such as continuity and periodicity, financial resources to organize surveys, active engagement of civil society, and political commitment.

Data validation surveys: India’s SLB connect

Phase	After launch
Level	Public service delivery in water economy
Areas covering	Water, waste management
Goal	Monitoring of outcomes in infrastructure investments
Target group of users	Users of services

In the scope of the World Bank’s Water Sanitation Program the WB together with India’s Ministry of Urban Development designed and launched a framework to assess Ministry’s Service Level Benchmarks called “SLB connect”. The main

intention of the program is to collect demand-side data about the performance of water supply, wastewater, solid waste management and storm-water drainage services. The juxtaposition of information from two sources – citizens’ reports about their satisfaction with the provided services vs. services providers’ reports on their performance indicators - identifies the issues in service provision.



The citizen feedback surveys within the scope of “SLB connect” have been carried out both face-to-face (household surveys) mediated by specially trained interviewers and by online survey management module. The collected data on the assessment of services by predefined set of parameters is presented real time in the citizen

satisfaction dashboard. To ensure the transparency and accountability in the sector the collected information together with identified gaps and discrepancies is provided both to decision-makers in the public sector and the general public.

After the initial pilot the system of citizen feedback was enhanced by new tools – software-based telephone interviews and SMS polling – to reach out to citizens after issues were reported and solved, and to assess their satisfaction in that stage.

The statistics and impact

- The system was launched in 2012 with a survey among 5,200 respondents in one city and rolled out to a large survey of 35,000 sample in 6 cities within 4 years.
- The quantitative data reported by service providers and users generally matched each other. However, there were serious discrepancies in qualitative assessments of the provided services. The level of compliance with certain criteria of quality was reported 96-98% by service providers and 42-73% by population, depending on the location.

The survey methodology has been elaborated based on the findings during the project duration and has been used as a baseline for similar initiatives, such as City Sanitation Ratings across 73 cities (80,000 respondents) and Karnataka Urban Water Supply Modernization Project (150,000 respondents).

Co-creation platforms: DecideMadrid

Phase	Pre-design
Level	Public services and standards for service delivery
Areas covering	All-inclusive
Goal	Participatory design
Target group of users	Active citizens

In 2015 the Council of Madrid City launched a new civic engagement platform to enhance the participatory decision-making and transparency of the city governance.

The new generation tool backed by legislative infrastructure allows and

encourages the citizens not only to have a say in the ongoing processes but also to propose, initiate and design new ones. The citizen engagement is empowered through four main features, which are citizen proposals, voting for the purpose of budget spending (only portion of City's budget), consultations and debates. The platform employs both bottom-up (in case of citizen proposals) and top-down (voting and consultations) approaches to citizen engagement.



In order to submit or vote for a **Proposal** you need to be a registered user on Decide Madrid and a verified citizen of Madrid city. The proposals vary by topic but are not limited by the formats in which they are presented. Each of the registered users can easily create a new proposal. After the submission of a proposal other verified citizens have 12 months to vote for it. The citizen

proposals that get voted by at least 1% of Madrid population (age 16+) which means 27,662 supports, move to the next level of discussion. In this stage the supporters are requested to do more in-depth research on the topic and engage in debates and discussions over the issue. After the given timeframe they are required to make an informed decision in the final voting for the proposal. After the citizens' final voting Madrid City Council examines the issue together with the proposed solutions, evaluates it based on a complex set of criteria and publishes its report – either positive, which will be followed by an action plan for legislative changes, or negative, with reasons to reject the proposal. The "Single ticket for public transport" and "Madrid 100% sustainable" projects are two successful examples of Citizen proposals component of Decide Madrid. Both are large-scale projects which were proposed and supported by large number of citizens and approved by the City Council.

The whole city		The whole city		
	Title	Votes	Total price	Available budget € 30,000,000
Barajas				
Carabanchel				
Arganzuela	✓ Solar panels on roofs of 70 municipal sports centers (sports centers)	5408	€ 1,000,000	€ 29,000,000
Center	✓ Free municipal music schools in public schools and cultural centers	5126	€ 60,000	€ 28,940,000
Chamartín	✓ Use of water from municipal swimming pools for street cleaning	5008	€ 18,000	€ 28,922,000
Chamberí	✓ For a GREENER and CLEAN city: Integral plan ARBOLADO and GREEN ZONES	4731	€ 9,000,000	€ 19,922,000
Linear City	✓ Support to the sparrow population in Madrid. Its population descends rapidly.	4603	€ 200,000	€ 19,722,000
Fuencarral-El Pardo	✓ Madrid flowers: The green hands permit.	4497	€ 25,000	€ 19,697,000
Hortaleza	✓ Workshops to raise awareness against LGTBfobia for schools	4306	€ 73,500	€ 19,623,500
Latina	✓ Encourage the use of bicycles	4105	€ 60,000	€ 19,563,500
Moncloa-Aravaca	✓ Convert the Paseo del Prado into a world reference	3946	€ 18,000	€ 19,545,500

In the **Participatory budgeting** the citizens are given opportunity to submit projects that would be financed from the city budget. In this way the citizens are empowered to decide how a predetermined part of their taxes will be spent. The projects can be designed for both the city or a separate district. The process following the submission of

the projects is quite similar to the Proposals component of Decide Madrid. The website also provides detailed tracing statistics by the statuses of the expenditure projects for each year, including the projects in the phases of: Finished; In execution; In process; In study and analysis; Technically unfeasible.

Through **Debates**, **Consultations** and **Voting** components of the platform the citizens can submit opinions regarding processes and other aspects of city governance before they get the

final approval by the City Council. These tools do not lead to direct implications but rather have a consultative role and serve as a source of public opinion for decision-makers. The remodeling of Plaza de Espana is one of the success stories of Madrid city's public consultation platform. The entire process of the project concept design was carried out through public consultations which took over 12 months. The platform also enables practices of Crowdlaw by asking citizens' opinions in various stages of lawmaking.

The usage statistics and impact

- As of 2018 Decide Madrid had 400,000 registered users, with 240,000 users verified as citizens of Madrid, which is 8% of Madrid population.
- The system received over 20,000 submitted proposals so far.
- Proposals passed: 2 proposals so far reached the final voting stage and got positive evaluation from the City Council. The two proposals were the "Single ticket for public transport" and "Madrid 100% sustainable".
- Participatory budgeting 100 mln Euro for 2017 and over 91,000 participant citizens; 3,300 proposals submitted, about 700 proposals get to the final phase, and 200-300 are reflected in the City's budget.

Due to its success the concept and model of "Decide Madrid" has been exported to many governments (over 90 cases) on national and subnational levels. The platform runs on a free software Consul almost fully developed by Madrid City Council, which currently shares both the technological platform and its knowledge and experience of participatory processes free of charge.

Despite the significant achievements recorded by the system, it has several flaws which challenge the efficiency of citizen engagement. The duplicate entries of the same issues do not let them cross the minimum threshold of the supports by "wasting" the voting resources. This and other issues signal about the need of serious educational and information awareness campaigns for citizens.

Shared platforms of citizen engagement

Nowadays governments starting the journey into citizen engagement have far more opportunities to make a quick leap than ever. In addition to lessons learnt from both success and failure cases, a number of technological platforms are available and ready to go with already designed functionalities to solve identified issues. Some of these platforms are free with open source codes, some of them are paid – with different subscription options.

The list of such solutions includes:

CitizenLab: www.citizenlab.co

CONSUL: <http://www.consulproject.org/en/#>

OpenGov: <https://opengov.com/products/citizen-engagement>

SmartCitizen: <https://smarcitizen.me/>

Government GitHub: <https://government.github.com/community/>

CiviQ: <https://www.civiq.eu/consultation-platform/>

Horizon State: <https://horizonstate.com/platform/>

Digital Civics: <https://digitalcivics.io/about/>

Lessons learnt

There are a few important lessons learnt from the international practices that Armenia should consider before designing a new platform.

- Technology and funding are usually the smallest problems in this domain. The key challenge is the commitment of the government to institute the reform and to use the citizen feedback assessment as a cornerstone for policy making.
- As a matter of fact technologies can help the citizens better express their opinions, but the challenge is to make these opinions decisive by making citizens politically strong players.
- From the start of the system design the compliance standards of the state agencies should be formulated and communicated to the state agencies very clearly.
- The citizen engagement should start in the problem formulation phase. This requires educating citizens and empowering them with informed decision-making.
- The citizen feedback system should not base only on people who have complaints. A representative sample should serve as a base for data-driven decision-making.
- Any existing or newly designed platform will need an enhanced communication campaign to increase the usability of the platform.
- In parallel with public awareness incentives for citizens to be actively engaged in public policy making should be designed and promoted widely.
- The inclusion of civil society and empowerment of population and CSOs with relevant toolset let the public pressure do “most of the job”. This is especially important, considering that the level of self-organization, shared vision and unity towards prioritization of community issues is very low even in the advanced societies.
- Follow-up activities and institutionalization of the results of any applied tool is the most important aspect of civil engagement.
- Citizen engagement practices should not be viewed as a one-time effort but rather planned for a long-term period with systematic interventions.
- Citizen feedback systems can be viewed as “competitors” to the governments which are considered to be monopolists in their fields and unlike the private businesses in competitive markets do not have motivation and vigor for higher efficiency.

- Educating civil society to become part of participatory processes should be done in parallel with the design and launch of the platforms.
- Inclusion of technology into citizen engagement platforms may bring to political dividend, reasoned by existing digital dividend, that is low access of technologies for certain groups of population.

Citizen feedback systems in Armenia

Study methodology

The assessment of the existing practices of collecting citizen feedback in Armenia was conducted based on the examples of 7 state agencies.

The main criterion for the selection of agencies was the extent to which the agency is in direct communication with citizens as end users of provided public services.

The study comprised two components:

1. field study on the customer journey – the communications channels, the ease of access to them, their web presence and visibility,
2. face-to-face interviews with representatives – in most cases chief secretaries and persons responsible for information freedom at each of the state agencies. The interviews covered questions regarding the current practices, gaps, needs and future development plans.

The list of state agencies included in the study involves:

- Government
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Committee of Real Estate Cadastre
- State Revenue Committee
- Passport and Visa Department of Police
- Yerevan Municipality

The core subject of the study addressed the mechanisms of collecting, analyzing and proceeding complaints of citizens regarding public services.

The study results are summarized into both general tendencies which are specific to the majority of cases and stand-alone observations.

High-level recommendations regarding the complaint handling system were designed based on the study results.

Regulation of the sector

The procedures and the mechanism of submitting citizens' complaints, suggestions, proposals and information requests is regulated by:

1. The [Law on Freedom of Information](#) (adopted 23.09.2003)

The Law regulates the principles of ensuring freedom of information, access to information, the limitations of information freedom, the procedures for formulating and proceeding with information requests, the conditions for the provision of information, the foundations necessary

to refuse the provision of information, the responsibilities of the information owners and the persons responsible for information freedom.

According to the Law, the official response to the information request should be given within 5 days, if the information already exists in the requested format either in published or unpublished sources. Otherwise, the response with the requested information is provided within 30 days, if it requires additional work.

2. The [Law on the Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure](#) (adopted 18.02.2004)

After this Law went into force the Law on "The order for submitting and proceeding citizens' proposals, requests and complaints"(adopted 22.12.1999) continued to apply only to citizens' proposals and expired on 27.01.2018.

The Law defines the order and prerequisites for initiating administrative proceeding, the form and the required package to submit a request or complaint regarding the administration, the phases to deal with the administrative proceeding, the right and the order to appeal the responses to the complaints and other important aspects of administrative proceedings.

3. The [Law on Petitions](#) (adopted 21.12.2017)

The Law gives definitions of petitions – individual, collective, double, electronic, public. The petitions submitted by the citizens are recorded in a special journal. The collective petitions should be publicized in a dedicated web-portal within 2 days of submission. The petitions should be replied within one month upon the receipt. This period can be extended up to 1 month if there is a need of additional study or there is another submitted petition on the same topic. Public petitions can be started on the dedicated web-portal by any individual. Public petitions should be presented and submitted in the predefined form available on the web portal. Individuals other than the main initiator can join the petition within 30 days of the submission of the petition.

Study findings

Communication channels

The citizens are offered various communication tools and platforms for communication with the state agencies:

- Hard copy letters: by post, submitting in person to receptions of state agencies, dropping to citizen service centers,
- Telephone calls: hotlines, telephone numbers of departments and department heads, persons responsible for information freedom, web-calls in rare cases (MOJ),
- Electronic letters: e-request, "leave-a-feedback" form on websites, electronic one-window, electronic form on websites,
- Facebook: the official Facebook profile of the agency, personal profiles of individuals, high-level state officials,

- Personal visits: to the citizen service centers and high-level state officials.

Telephone calls are most popular for primary inquiries and information requests or technical difficulties with various platforms. The busiest hotlines belong to the ministries with the greatest number of citizen services, such as health, social matters and tax and customs.

Hard copy letters are the most frequently used forms on complex issues. The requests are often addressed directly to the Prime Minister's office, or are at least copied with the second example to the PM's office, which makes the load at the central government really big.

The Facebook pages of most agencies are very active for more serious complaints that need public attention and support by the public voice. Most of the state agencies are responsive to the requests by this channel and consider Facebook as an official communication channel.

All communication channels tend to provide too many options for contacting the agency. Mainly there is no centralized channel employed and operated by the agency. In some cases, there are several hotline numbers.

The omni-channel communication is also reasoned by the availability of personal contacts of various high-level state officials which are often addressed with issues.

Reporting and organizational structure

The complaint handling units are placed in slightly different positions in the organizational structures of state agencies. Most often these units are parts of departments for administrative methodology, procedures and service. In all studied examples the person responsible for freedom of information is the direct supervisor of the units at operational level, and the units report to the chief secretary of the agency.

The reporting mechanism varies from one agency to another, depending on the organizational structure within the agency. The frequency and format of the reporting is also different based on the internal management protocol. In most cases the reporting to the Chief Secretary is done on a weekly basis.

In some cases, the state agencies deploy quality inspection procedures by special quality monitoring departments as independent assessment of the quality of the complaint handling unit's services and performance.

All state agencies are obliged to compile statistics and report to the Prime Minister's office on a monthly basis. The statistics include information about the number of complaints, suggestions and requests received from the citizens by the state agency, the breakdown of the requests by the following: positive responses, negative responses, clarifications and work in progress.

Analytics

Data-driven decision-making is not a widespread practice for the studied examples; however, the agencies have many cases when legislation or business processes were changed based on the requests and complaints of the citizens. At the same time, this is a case-by-case practice.

The general practice is a primitive quantitative analysis of the number of complaints submitted by the citizens. In most cases the agencies collect and analyze monthly statistics of the citizen feedback by:

- Channels,
- Types of problems,
- Statuses.

The main channels analyzed are letters (hard copy or email) and telephone calls. The classification of problems varies based on the specifics of the agency. The classification mostly comprises 1-2 sub-levels of issues.

In some cases, the information about citizen satisfaction is gathered through the customer care specialist, the hotline operator or front desk at customer service center. In all other cases there is no practice of using citizens' feedback to assess the performance of civil servants.

Publicizing the statistics

The practice of publicizing the statistics differs greatly from one agency to another. There are no unified requirements or formats – content or design-wise, and no unified frequency of statistics publication. The visibility of the analytics part on the websites is also very low. That means that even if the information is publicized periodically, it is not easy for users to find and use it in various formats, subject to analytics.

There is no analysis of the dynamics of the performance of complaints in Armenia. What does the change in the number say, how it was caused, what was done to decrease the complaints, how effective the measures undertaken were – these are the questions that are not only unasked, but also unraised.

Development plans

When talking about the development plans in the domain of citizen feedback platforms the state agencies claimed to be very open to development opportunities. However, there is a lack of clear-cut strategies and action plans in this regard specifically. The key focus of the agencies is to ensure the citizen's voice is heard and the citizen is satisfied with the public services.

At the same time, the general evaluation by the responsible institutions shows that the existing mechanisms are sufficient for ensuring the desired level of citizen engagement. The citizen engagement level in policy making has been assessed as satisfactory and no further extension in this regard is considered to be necessary.

In addition, the agencies also report that the existing toolset fully serves for receiving comprehensive feedback from the citizens. The key decision-makers do not see any need in developing new tools or technical platforms such as mobile applications to expand the list of channels for communication with citizens.

The existing communication is believed to be so intense that the state agencies see no need to receive any further information by proactive mechanisms to work with larger samples of populations. Such examples could be periodical surveys, guided focus groups, etc. State officials

find that these kinds of studies should be done by 3rd party organizations, such as NGOs, community groups, academia, etc.

The further development is anticipated to proceed in an inert logic, rather than with groundbreaking moves.

Yerevan Municipality

Website	https://www.yerevan.am/am/
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/Yerevanofficial/
"Hotline"	https://www.yerevan.am/am/hot-line/ https://www.yerevan.am/am/official-person-responsible-for-information-freedom/
Submit report	https://www.yerevan.am/am/one-window/
Statistics	NA

The Municipality operates 12 hotlines – one for each of the administrative districts and 2 hotlines for the central branch. In addition, there are service centers for each of administrative districts and one centralized "One window" center in the central branch.

The Municipality adopted "No paper" policy, which means that all the feedback from the citizens is collected, transferred to electronic systems and inserted into the Municipality's "El-Pass" electronic management system.

The information freedom officer who is the deputy to the Chief Secretary of the Staff is the key person responsible for collecting and reporting about the citizen feedback. The statistics is reported to the Chief Secretary and the Mayor on a weekly basis. The Control Department is in charge of monitoring the quality of citizen service and citizen satisfaction with the resolution of the complaints.

There is no systemic way of publishing information on the citizen dashboard. The statistics on the citizen complaints is reported to the Mayor each Monday, and the press release on Mondays (in the news section of the website) may or may not contain information about the complaints. However, the published information does not follow the standard format.

The central hotline receives and serves about 350-500 phone calls per day. The Hotline call center has 3 telephone operators responding to citizens' questions. About 70-95 requests are transferred into assignments and formulated as documents in the el-pass system. The number of calls during October was 10,170.

State Revenue Committee

Website	http://www.petekamutner.am/DefaultCs.aspx?sid=cs
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/petekamutner/
"Hotline"	http://www.petekamutner.am/ContactSrc.aspx
Submit report	http://www.petekamutner.am/ContactSrc.aspx
Statistics	http://www.petekamutner.am/si.aspx?itn=siCallCenter

The SRC hotline was established in 2011. The system records and archives all phone calls for monitoring. The ticketing system creates a "ticket"

in a predefined form for each of the phone calls.

There's a short survey assessing the satisfaction with the provided complaint handling service at the end of each call. The survey is comprised of 2 questions – "Was the answer helpful?" and "Was the answer exhaustive; and was the operator's service satisfactory?".

The basic statistics is analyzed and reported to the Prime Minister's office each month. A more comprehensive report is published once per semester.

For the email communication several email addresses, both personalized (such as the President's email) and institutional are available. Tax and customs services have separate emails for issues in their domains.

The call center receives and serves about 700-800 calls per day (maximum busy seasons – up to 3,300 calls per day). The call center has 10 employees – operators of the telephone calls. Quality monitoring is done selectively by the head of the hotline department.

Ministry of Justice

Website	http://www.moj.am/
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/mojarmenia
"Hotline"	https://e-hotline.am/en/
Submit report	https://e-hotline.am/en/application/
Statistics	https://e-hotline.am/en/statistics/

The communication with citizens is provided through multiple communication channels. The feedback platform of the Ministry of Justice is comparably advanced: it has opportunities for a web call,

registration for receptions, etc.

Citizens can find and access platforms of communication to the Ministry at the Ministry's website, at e-hotline.am and at e-request.am, which is a unified electronic communication platform for all state agencies. E-request is an autonomously working system without a human factor. Each agency under the Ministry has its own hotline and other forms of communication platforms.

Each request by the citizen is provided with a tracking number and can be tracked until the date of the response. The requests are categorized into 12-digit categories which will be soon transformed into 16-digit ones for more in-depth classification of problems.

The hotline is based on Oktell system, which will soon connect to the newly launched Mulberry-2 system.

Simple information requests and complaints are resolved on the spot by the operator or by joint efforts provided by the operator. More complex tasks are formulated as assignments and submitted to Mulberry system.

The further plans include creating chatbots for easy communication with citizens and launching platform for e-petitions.

Ministry of Health

Website	http://www.moh.am/#1/0
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Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/ministryofhealthcare/	The Oktell system is installed for the Ministry's hotline since 2018. The hotline has a ticketing system.
"Hotline"	http://www.moh.am/#1/180	
Submit report	http://www.e-request.am/	
Statistics	http://www.moh.am/#1/68 http://www.moh.am/uploads/3-rderamsyak.pdf	

The Ministry has several telephone numbers for hotline for different telephone operators – 8003 (Beeline) and 060808003 (VivaCell-MTS). The calls to the hotline are not free of charge.

There is no systematic feedback mechanism to monitor the quality of the citizen service. The complaint handling unit is reporting to the deputy minister who performs selective quality monitoring.

The call center employs 4 operators and works 24/7. The statistics of calls is about 13,000 for the quarter.

The Ministry would like to have an assessment tool embedded in the hotline system to estimate the operators' service right away.

State Cadastre

Website	https://www.cadastre.am/	The Cadastre operates a single centralized hotline. The communication channels include email communications to the employees' emails, info@cadaster.am , Facebook, visits to the service centers or to
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/cadastrecommitte/	
"Hotline"	https://www.cadastre.am/ (home page)	
Submit report	https://www.cadastre.am/feedback https://citizen.cadastre.am/index/login	
Statistics	https://www.cadastre.am/ (home page)	

IT Center's department, meetings with the head of Cadastre and deputies.

In addition to the electronical archiving system the Cadastre keeps a hand-written journal of records about received calls and complaints. Each recording in the journal holds information about the applicant's contacts, the application date, the address of the real estate, the subject matter and the results.

The hotline has a separate telephone number to receive complaints about the service in the service centers.

The target of the development of complaint handling system of the Cadastre is the elimination of corruption risks through easy and trusted communication with citizens and fair responses to any of their complaints. In this regard, the Cadastre highly promotes and raises awareness about the azdarar.am portal.

The monitoring of complaint service is performed by the sample-based method and is conducted by the CrossNet operator. The Cadastre also regularly assesses the service quality through unplanned visits to the 40 service offices throughout the whole country. Live

monitoring is performed through the surveillance systems which are available in the offices of the Cadastre management.

The 2018-2022 Cadastre Optimization Plan considers the establishment of a single service center of Cadastre in the country. The Cadastre will employ single service center, single archiving system and single GIS system.

The new ecadastre.am will have much wider opportunities in terms of collecting feedback and suggestions from citizens.

The number of calls during the last quarter was 5,277.

4 of the Cadastre's service centers have a system of satisfaction measurement. The Cadastre plans to improve the existing system with a more extensive survey questionnaire and include other cadastre offices as well.

The complaints are mainly redirected to the Department of Monitoring and the Department of Complaints.

Passport and Visa Department of RA Police

Website	http://www.police.am/home.html (no dedicated platform for PV)
Facebook page	Follow the link
"Hotline"	http://www.police.am/home.html (home page)
Submit report	http://request.roadpolice.am/ (no dedicated platform for PV)
Statistics	NA

Currently the PV Department is designing its own website which will have a separate citizen feedback window.

The PV Department is actively engaged in customer communications through Facebook (both through the Department's account and personal

accounts of high-level officials). The inquiries are responded case by case.

The hotline service is 24/7, operated by 2 employees (who are not operators by their job position) responsible for answering the calls. One operator is responsible for non-working days and hours.

Most calls are for information inquiries and clarifications. Currently the hotline system is not omni-channel which leads to a big number of unanswered questions.

The Ministry of Social Affairs

Website	http://www.mlsa.am/
Facebook page	Follow the link
"Hotline"	http://www.mlsa.am/?page_id=2877
Submit report	http://www.mlsa.am/?page_id=9325 https://www.e-request.am/hy/
Statistics	http://www.mlsa.am/?page_id=2625 http://www.mlsa.am/?page_id=722

The hotline is outsourced to Nork Analytical Center.

The Ministry sometimes conducts market analyses and outsources them to the National Institute on Social Studies.

90% of the calls to the hotlines are about information request.

The Prime Minister's Office

Website	http://www.gov.am/am/
Facebook page	Follow the link
"Hotline"	http://www.gov.am/am/ (home page) http://www.gov.am/am/staff-structure/info/93/
Submit report	The email address in e-citizen system is mentioned on the home page.
Statistics	http://www.gov.am/am/Statistics/

The communication channels with the citizens include bringing the letter to the admissions office (these letters are coded by 12-digit codes which will soon be classified by 16-digit codes), placing it in a box, sending by the Post, e-mails to the Government, e-request, Hotline's email, the

Information freedom person's email, PM's email.

The Central Government receives about 200 written requests each day. There are 6 operators working in the call center, another 6 employees are working in the complaint handling unit.

The 1-17 hotline is free of charge for the citizens; it has been launched for 2 years already and is a 3-channel line. All calls are recorded and archived. The old telephone number is communicated for callers outside the country.

The call center is working based on Infinity system. The system does not deploy electronic platform. The operators take notes on paper and then transfer them into a Word document.

The monitoring is done case by case. The head of the department calls selected cases to inquire about the citizens' satisfaction with the result. This particularly refers to requests that have been delegated to line ministries.

The statistics of calls is about 17,000 per month, the number of answered calls – 10,000. About 95% of the calls are about basic information requests.

Right now, the Government is reviewing the coding system of the areas; the aim of this project is to unify and sophisticate the system of request coding in accordance with the fields of complaint. The new coding system will be single and 16-digit. Currently the level of coding is 2 subcategories.

The Cabinet collects reports from all agencies under the PM also requesting information about the official meetings of the Ministers with the citizens.

Projects for enhancing citizen engagement practices in Armenia

The study of international citizen engagement practices and the analysis of the situation in Armenia showcase several serious gaps in collecting, analyzing and implying citizen feedback in public policy making domain.

Three of the most urgent issues with the highest strategic importance are briefly presented in the table below. A dedicated project with detailed list of project goals is suggested to be designed and implemented for each of the discussed problem areas/issues.

Issue	Project name	Goal
Transparency. There is no public pressure and mechanisms for accountability to the public towards resolving the complaints.	Dashboard for citizen complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically gather, analyze data • Design standardized approach for information • Centralize the analysis and monitoring of data from all state agencies • Systematically publish data for citizens and CSOs • Track the dynamics of performance and include the targets of performance in the Government Program • Publicize the situation regarding the meeting of the targets
Measurement. There is no overall picture of citizen opinion. The current mechanisms only support complaint-driven feedback.	Design and periodical measurement of Citizen Satisfaction Index.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct methodology of CSI - composite sub-indices with their weights • Define data collection techniques – surveys, mystery shopper, focus groups, or combination of tools • Define survey methodologies, including face-to-face, online, telephone and SMS surveys • Design survey questionnaires, design the sample, data analysis methods, survey periodicity
Metrics. Information collected through feedback mechanisms does not have any implications.	Citizen Satisfaction Index in Civil servant performance assessment system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align citizen engagement practices with the public administration reform in Armenia • Design Civil servant performance assessment system and include Citizen satisfaction index as part of Key performance indicators • Design an indicator showing the level of sophistication for citizen engagement practices and include it in Civil servant performance assessment system

Issue #1: Transparency

In order to rethink the importance of citizen engagement the transparency and accountability mechanisms should be significantly enhanced. The examination of the current platforms in Armenia demonstrates insufficient level of infrastructure – both technology and content-wise, and the need to make the information not only publicly available but also usable by citizens. For example, information about citizen complaints and the success rates of the complaint resolution is published in separate cases only. Even if published, the information is not easily analyzable, aggregated and does not provide holistic picture about the situation which leads to weaker public pressure towards resolving and decreasing the number of complaints.

Project: Dashboard for citizen complaints.

The project of creating a “Dashboard for citizen complaints” will be aimed at collecting, analyzing and providing comprehensive information about all aspects of citizen complaints in Armenia.

➤ Conceptualizing the “collection”

This phase of the project should include:

- The definition of the scope of information that should be collected regarding the complaints. The scope should include all criteria by which every complaint should be accepted and stored, including the topic, type and detailed description of the complaints, communication channel, information about the citizen, etc.
- The classification of the types of complaints. The classification should be unified for the whole public administration domain and should be able to codify the types of complaints by at least 3 sub-categories.
- The definition of the rules of storing the information. All state agencies should locate the databases in unified formats in respective folders in Mulberry system. Practices of exchanging information horizontally within agencies should be defined and standardized.

➤ Conceptualizing the “analysis”

At this stage a clear-cut approach should be designed regarding:

- The forms of reporting and the periodicity of reporting on complaints from state agencies to central government.
- The level of aggregation and disaggregation at which information should be analyzed.
- The parameters by which the information should be analyzed. The list of parameters should include the type of complaint by subcategories, the agency receiving the complaint, the status of complaints, the reasons for unresolved issues, the feedback of the citizen after the deal was closed, etc.

➤ Conceptualizing the “publicizing”

Publicizing the collected and analyzed information is one of the most important stages which includes:

- The list of indicators to be published should be defined in advance. In addition to absolute levels of indicators the dynamics of the complaints should be tracked, analyzed and published. A special importance should be given to advance targeting of the desired performance indicators and publicizing the comparison of actual situation versus targeted indicators.
- Definition of the platform for the dashboard. The dashboard should have a dedicated web presence. The central government website www.gov.am should be the initial host of the dashboard with possible "mirrored" presence in other state websites as well. The population should be well aware of the availability of the dashboard.
- Definition of the periodicity of publicizing. The dashboard should start with publicizing monthly statistics on complaints and target to reach "live" dashboard with the improvement of the system.
- A component of citizen engagement should be designed. The dashboard should enable and encourage citizen participation. The development of the system should include features of enabling citizens to choose and approve the status of their complaint or leaving feedback for the presented statistics.

Issue #2: Measurement

The information on citizens' opinion about public service delivery is currently not available in Armenia, whereas the level of citizen satisfaction is a very important indicator and should become the cornerstone of public policy making in the era of citizen-centric governance. The citizen satisfaction cannot be assessed based on the domain of complaints only. The biggest pitfall is that citizens who approach the government with complaints present specific problems only and in a way of presentation they choose. However, the holistic picture of citizen feedback requires to hear the voices of people who are satisfied with public services to various extents, people who are dissatisfied with other parameters of services than those presented in the complaint reports, or people who have complaints but are not submitting them to the government.

Project: Design and periodical measurement of Citizen Satisfaction Index.

The project of designing "Citizen Satisfaction Index" (CSI) will create a more comprehensive measurement framework for citizen feedback. The project suggests that the Government of Armenia should elaborate its own methodology of a new index to measure citizen satisfaction with public services.

- Conceptualizing the "methodology"
 - Definition of the structure of CSI, which should include the list of composite sub-indices and the formula of CSI calculation.
 - Definition of data collection techniques. In order to collect all inclusive information diverse sources of information should be considered separately or in combination. The list of data collection tools can include surveys, mystery shopper, focus groups, etc.

- Definition of survey methodologies, including face-to-face, online, telephone surveys and SMS polls. For each of the survey types dedicated platforms should be defined or created if non-existent.
- Design of survey content, such as questionnaires, sample of survey population, survey periodicity, etc.
- Conceptualizing the “analysis”
 - The forms of analytical reports.
 - The level of aggregation and disaggregation at which information should be analyzed.
 - The parameters by which the information should be analyzed.
- Conceptualizing the “monitoring”
 - Design of the system of monitoring as part of internal management practices.
 - Design of the system of monitoring by citizens and CSOs as part of citizen engagement and accountability.

Issue #3: Metrics

In most of the observed cases the complaint handling units measure the success of their performance by the increasing number of complaints they receive and address. In terms of work productivity for the operators of complaint centers this can be an indicator of better performance. However, in terms of good governance the increasing number of complaints should serve as an alarm to identify and neutralize the sources for problem areas. This situation requires strategic rethinking on how to use the analysis of citizen feedback.

Project: Citizen Satisfaction Index in Civil servant performance assessment system.

The goal of the project is to define the use of information about the citizen feedback in the public policy making. In pursuit of improved public service delivery, it is recommended to include the CSI in the Civil servant performance assessment system.

- Conceptualizing the “performance assessment”
 - Design the framework of civil servant performance assessment within the scope of the Public Administration Reform.
 - Define the goal of performance assessment.
 - Define the key performance indicators on individual and institutional levels.
- Conceptualizing the “citizens’ role”
 - Define the weight at which the citizen satisfaction should be reflected in the performance assessment of civil servants and state institutions.
 - Define key performance indicators for the level of citizen satisfaction and citizen engagement.
 - Define the follow-up action plan in case the individual or the institution does not meet the KPI in citizen satisfaction.