

The participatory budget at local level is also essential for creating greater trust between the government and the citizens. When you are asked for your thoughts and opinions, when you are listened to seriously, and when you see the results of your conversations in the content of a Citizens Budget, your trust in the municipality will grow. This, in turn, will encourage you to be more open about what you want and need, which will lead to a more honest dialogue between you and your local government and a more social responsibility by each individual.

Certainly, this will help you to have a better understanding that when you require more services from the municipality, it require more budge, **so you as normal citizens as well as the local business have an obligation to PAY THE TAXES.**

Why paying taxes? The budget of your municipality is made also from the money that you pay, thus as much as you are e very good tax payer, the city will have more money to offer additional qualitative services to you.



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING CAN HAVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS FOR THE CITIZENS:

- improve accountability and transparency in local governance by making the budgeting process public, and reduce corruption,
- empower citizens to take a more active role in their communities and have more direct contribution on the local decision-making process,
- increase citizens' knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of local government officials,
- improve individuals' and organisation's self – confidence in tackling neighbourhood issues and negotiating with public sector organisations.
- help citizens understand the limitations of local government, the cost of public projects, and the nature of trade-offs in priorities,
- increase social justice by providing a platform for traditionally excluded members of society to have a voice in decision-making processes, potentially leading to more just and equitable governance,
- improve the living conditions of the poor,
- influence to better prioritise the expenditures of the municipality budget, answering to the needs of the citizens,
- empower gender equality,



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LOCAL DEMOCRACY

In case you need more information on the participatory budget issue and process, please visit the website of your municipality, or visit:

<http://www.konsultimipublik.gov.al>

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PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING: GET INVOLVED IN YOUR TOWN

Local Governments are accountable to their citizens for what they do and how they do it. Accountability means, in part, that the policies and plans that a local government develops should reflect the priorities and needs of the citizen. It also means that Local Government Units should provide an account of what it has done to implement those policies and plans together with the results of its efforts. Citizens on the other side have a responsibility to hold their government to account. They should participate in public debate, vote for people they believe in, monitor the local government's actions, comment on its policies and plans, and challenge them when things go awry.

You as citizen should know that the process of public discussions could promote improvements in good governance at local level and also enhance the ownership of programmes.

By law, every Albanian municipality should undertake public consultations with its citizens in order to discuss municipality next annual budget and mid-term strategy planning. The public consultations happen in each municipality during September – November of each year. Please visit frequently the official website of your municipality in this period as well as its social media, in order to be informed about the next public consultations in your town.



WHY SHOULD A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRODUCE A CITIZENS BUDGET?

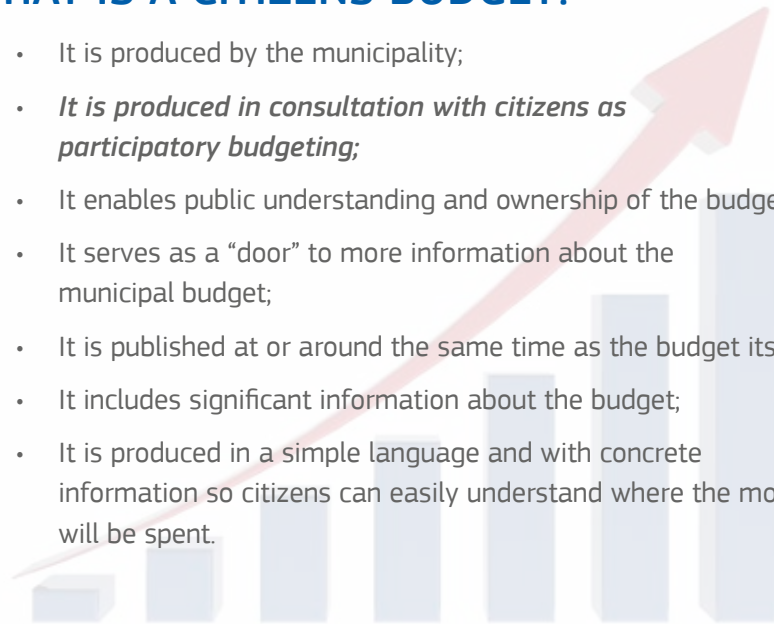
You have the right to know that the government's money is the money of its citizens, so it is your money. The government's revenue comes from you through the taxes (income, sales, or property) and fees that you pay, as well as from exploiting natural resources that belong to you.

WHO BENEFITS FROM A CITIZENS BUDGET?

You are, of course, the primary beneficiary of a Citizens Budget. The very purpose of a Citizens Budget is to increase your information of what the local government is doing and enhance your capacity to participate in your local governmental affairs.

WHAT IS A CITIZENS BUDGET?

- It is produced by the municipality;
- *It is produced in consultation with citizens as participatory budgeting;*
- It enables public understanding and ownership of the budget;
- It serves as a “door” to more information about the municipal budget;
- It is published at or around the same time as the budget itself;
- It includes significant information about the budget;
- It is produced in a simple language and with concrete information so citizens can easily understand where the money will be spent.



THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A CITIZENS BUDGET

The importance of consultation

How you can use a Citizens Budget document? The best thing to do is to take this document when it is published on line or off line by your municipality, read it and think about it, and use the information to ask questions about how your municipality is raising and spending its funds. In case you don't have enough time for this, please participate in the public discussions organised by your municipality and ask all your questions about your concerns in your city, as a citizen or as a local entrepreneur.

But first, you have to know that the first step in developing a Citizens Budget at municipal level should be a consultation with you. Discussing the budget with their own communities is an **OBLIGATION** for every single municipality and not a **WISH**, so **please participate in this process and ask your municipality for your budget.**

