

# Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Local Governance



## Partners

- Imeretian NGO “ASA”, Kutaisi, Georgia
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, South Caucasus Regional Office, Tbilisi, Georgia

## Stakeholders

- Non-Governmental Organizations and Universities in the Imereti Region, Westgeorgia
- Regional Media and Journalists
- Municipality of Kutaisi
- Private Companies in the water and energy sector

## Timeline

Ongoing cooperation since 2004 with various projects on energy supply, water supply, waste disposal as well as civil society participation in local decision-making processes

## Background

Possibilities for civil society to influence local decision-making in Georgian municipalities are limited. Decision-making processes

and public procurement procedures are often non-transparent and corrupt.

Most of the infrastructure of local energy and water supply systems e.g. dates back to Sowjet times. Municipalities and private companies in the water and energy sector are neither transparent nor accountable in their decision-making processes and price-building mechanisms. Consumers have no lobby for pressuring them to improve supply chains and increase their transparency and accountability.

The local NGO “ASA” was formed to change this situation. “ASA” focuses its work on Kutaisi the second largest city in Georgia and its surroundings (Imereti Region). In 2004 ASA and FES entered into a partnership and launched a project to strengthen civil society participation in local governance.

## Objectives of the Project

- Strengthening the rights of consumers and citizens and increasing the transparency of local decision-making procedure in municipality of Kutaisia
- Increasing the transparency of public procurement procedures in the municipality of Kutaisi and of price-building mechanisms for water and energy fees of private companies
- Enabling local civil society to monitor and assess the efficiency of local programmes, particularly in the area of energy and water supply
- Strengthening the dialog between local civil society, the municipality and private companies (water, energy, waste disposal)
- Developing options and strategies for im-

proving local governance, particularly in the areas of energy and water supply Inputs by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

- Contributing to the development of the project design, strategy and implementation mechanisms
- Facilitating the exchange of experiences between local NGOs
- Exchange of information on local politics and participation in local governance in Germany;
- Logistic and financial support

## Achievements of the Project

- Permanent Monitoring Groups for local programmes on energy and water supply have been established (consisting of local experts, scientist, journalists and civil society representatives)
- New concepts for improving energy supply, water supply and waste disposal have been developed.
- Dialog between NGO, municipality, local media and private business has been established



## CAUCASUS: Georgia

### Example of Kutaisi, Imereti Region, Westgeorgia



- Policy of local energy supply companied had to be revised due to court verdicts
- Public awareness about local policy issues related to water and energy supply have been increased (particularly due to wide newspaper and TV coverage of the project)
- Programme for improving the water supply in Kutaisi has been started by the Municipality
- A new coalition of local NGOs has been established
- A new type of electricity meters have been introduced

## ENoP MEMBER FOUNDATION:

### Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

