

CITIZEN SERVICE CENTERS

Pathways Toward Improved Public Service Delivery

Municipal Citizen Service Centers in Southeastern Europe

Survey Results on Success Factors, Challenges, and the Human Rights Approach of Municipal One-stop Shops in the Western Balkans

Abstract

This report presents the results of an online survey administered in six southeastern European countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The survey was aimed at gathering insights related to the operations and human rights approach of municipal one-stop shops delivering services to citizens. Findings show that the region's municipal citizen service centers are generally aware of the impact that their activities have on human rights. In addition to complying with legal requirements to guarantee the rights of citizens and avoid discriminatory practices in service delivery, many citizen service centers actively promote universal access to public services. This is mostly accomplished by taking measures that foster the inclusion of vulnerable groups and by offering mechanisms that encourage participation and accountability, such as citizen feedback and complaint-handling mechanisms.

1. Rationale, Background, and Methodology

The Nordic Trust Fund project—Effective Citizen Service Centers and Human Rights: Mutually Reinforcing Dynamics—set out to explore the connection between citizen service centers (CSCs) and human rights. CSCs are one-stop shops

where citizens can access a range of public service providers under one roof. CSCs are linked to benefits for citizens and the public administration, including easier access to services, faster and more streamlined service delivery, reduced corruption, and improved interagency coordination. They are instrumental in guaranteeing the human rights of citizens, for example by facilitating the enforcement of the right to social security, to health, or to birth registration. In turn, human rights principles such as equality, nondiscrimination, participation, inclusion, accountability, and the rule of law contribute to strengthening CSCs when they are included in their design and day-to-day operations.

As part of this project, several in-depth case studies were produced examining the functioning and human rights impact of CSCs at the national and regional level across various countries.¹ A human-rights-based assessment tool was created so that CSC managers could evaluate the degree to which human rights are integrated in CSC policies and service delivery processes.² Moreover, a note was

1. For further detail, please refer to the following case studies in this series:

- "One-Stop Shops in Vietnam: Changing the Face of Public Administration for Citizens and Businesses through a Single Door to Multiple Services"; and
- "Citizen Service Centers in Kenya: The Role of Huduma Centers in Advancing Citizen-Centered Service Delivery in a Context of Devolution and Digitization."

2. See "Human Rights-Based Assessment Tool for Citizen Service Centers: Moving Toward a Rights-Based Approach in Design, Strategy, and Implementation," which is part of this series.

prepared to summarize key trends in the development of CSCs worldwide, including an overview of design options for them.³ To complement these various outputs, a client survey was administered to explore the current situation of CSCs in a given region, including challenges and successes as well as the level to which human rights shape the operations of one-stop service delivery models. To add a new dimension to the perspective adopted in the other deliverables, the survey focused on a group of municipal-level CSCs because that level of government had not yet been addressed.

The survey, consisting of 30 questions, was designed in collaboration with the Nordic Trust Fund Secretariat and divided into six sections that primarily collected data related to: (1) basic information about the CSC; (2) service provision and institutional set-up; (3) citizen-centered service delivery; (4) human resources; (5) challenges and success/enabling factors; and (6) future outlook and possibilities for cooperation.

To allow for a meaningful comparison of responses, the team launched the survey in southeastern Europe, where the World Bank is particularly active through the Urban Partnership Program, which relies on close cooperation with a network of municipalities across the Balkans. The link to the online survey was sent to the heads of local government associations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. They then emailed the link to the survey to the local government units (except in the case of Montenegro, where emails were sent directly to the municipalities). The questionnaire was presented in English, but the emails introducing the survey and its purpose were formulated in the respective local languages. The survey was accessible online for a period of two weeks, and 31 responses were logged between February 9– 21, 2017.

Methodological limitations include the fact that because the questionnaire is in English, language skills may have been a barrier for some respondents, discouraging them from taking the survey. A potential social desirability bias exists: respondents may have tried to answer the questions in a manner they thought would be viewed favorably by the World Bank team. A self-selection bias also seems likely: it is possible that only the municipalities that thought their CSCs functioned well chose to participate in the survey. Finally, because survey results are analyzed as a whole, they could conceal country differences, especially in terms of the impact of the legal framework and degree of decentralization.

Overall, the great majority of respondents responded to all of the questions, and no respondents dropped out of the survey halfway through the process, suggesting that the questions were clearly formulated, the length was appropriate, and the form was user-friendly. The survey results and cooperation with the Urban Partnership Program helped identify a municipal CSC that had put a considerable emphasis on improving access to services for people with disabilities, leading to the production of an additional case study.⁴

2. Main Findings and Recommendations

The key findings from the survey and suggestions for practitioners seeking to improve citizen service centers are summarized in table 1. They can be organized into six categories: (1) access channels, (2) citizen engagement, (3) performance indicators, (4) use of human rights language, (5) service delivery for vulnerable groups, and (6) key success factors/challenges. Section 3 provides a more detailed analysis of the survey results. The questionnaire itself is presented in annex 1.

3. See “Recent Developments in Design and Implementation of One-Stop Shops for Citizens: A Design Guide for Citizen Service Centers,” which is part of this series.

4. See the case study “The City of Pancevo’s Citizen Service Center, Serbia: Streamlining Service Delivery and Fostering Inclusion at the Municipal Level,” a note in this series.

Table 1. Recommendations for Improving Citizen Service Centers

Finding	Suggestions for Improvement ^a
<p>Access channels. While over two-thirds of citizen service centers (CSCs) provide an online portal with access to information and/or services to citizens, only about one-fifth also provide short message service (SMS)-based services. None of the CSCs indicated the use of smartphone or tablet applications to communicate with or provide services to citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create or improve online portals with information for citizens about services and how to access them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Include clear contact details, opening hours, and contact persons; – Include information about timeframes, procedures, and documents required; and – Wherever possible, foster digital uptake of documents. ▪ Develop SMS-based communication with citizens (e.g., to inform them about the status of their requests). ▪ Develop smartphone or tablet applications for citizens (these could be linked to more generic applications that provide information about the municipality as a whole).
<p>Citizen engagement. An overwhelming majority—84 percent—of the CSCs interviewed provide options for citizens to voice their complaints, but only 65 percent also have citizen feedback mechanisms (e.g., satisfaction surveys or electronic satisfaction monitors) in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure complaint-handling mechanisms are functioning well along the entire value chain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advertise the complaint-handling mechanism to ensure citizens are aware of it; – Create a clear workflow, transparent responsibilities, and set timeframes to guide the process from the moment a complaint is submitted until the moment it is resolved; – Collect and publish information about complaint resolution rates and timeliness of complaint handling; and ▪ Use complaints actively to improve service delivery processes. ▪ Institutionalize citizen feedback mechanisms across the board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communicate about the CSC on social media, and use this channel to respond to citizens' queries. – Regularly collect data on citizen satisfaction with various elements of service delivery. – Communicate results (e.g., in the form of an online dashboard, in newsletters or online communications, or on municipal notice boards).
<p>Performance indicators. At 65 percent, the number of complaints received is the most frequently collected performance indicator by citizen service centers. Other frequently measured indicators include the number of completed transactions and the time it took to process the request (58 percent each); waiting time for visitors (45 percent), and performance/behavior of attendants (39 percent). Sixteen percent of respondents do not track any of these.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When collecting data about grievances, add “number of complaints resolved” to the performance indicator” number of complaints received.” ▪ Expand the use of performance indicators related to citizens' experience (e.g., waiting time and satisfaction with service received and quality of communication). ▪ Make use of mystery shopping techniques to identify possible bottlenecks or pain points in citizens' access to municipal services.
<p>Use of human rights language. Ninety percent of respondents said that human rights are mentioned in their “official documents,” 71 percent said that they are mentioned in their communication materials, and 68 percent said that human rights are included in training materials. However, less than half of respondents (42 percent) said that human rights played a role in the definition of performance standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainstream references to human rights principles in communication and training materials as well as in performance standards.^b

(continued)

Table 1. Continued

Finding	Suggestions for Improvement ^a
<p>Service delivery for vulnerable groups. Regarding measures in place to guarantee effective service delivery to vulnerable population segments, people with disabilities is the group most widely identified and taken into account—63 percent of respondents claimed they cater to their special needs, followed by elderly people (50 percent), and people with low levels of literacy (47 percent). Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that their CSC had mechanisms in place to guarantee access to service delivery to citizens living in remote areas, women, and young people. Between 20–40 percent of interviewed CSCs strive to ensure equal service for the poor, foreign citizens, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, internally displaced persons, and indigenous peoples. Thirteen percent of respondents indicated that they had special measures in place for the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex) community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake an intentional horizon-scanning of the CSC’s range of rights-holders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Who is the CSC serving? – What are the specific needs and requirements of different population groups? – What problems are they facing and how can the CSC provide relevant answers? ▪ Design tailored solutions for vulnerable population segments. ▪ Develop barrier-free infrastructure for various groups of people with disabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make the building accessible for people using wheelchairs (e.g., access ramps, elevators, lower counters...); and – Make the facilities accessible for people with hearing or seeing impairments (e.g., hearing loops and braille tables). ▪ Set-up mobile teams to ensure access to services to remote or hard-to-reach populations. ▪ Train and sensitize staff on providing services to vulnerable or marginalized groups.
<p>Key success factors and challenges. The top three enabling factors singled out by respondents for the success of the CSCs are significant capital investment; territorial, decentralization and/or administrative reform; and process reengineering or improvement. Respondents also mentioned political leadership, information technology infrastructure and software, as well as digitization and qualified staff as important elements to explain the success of CSCs.</p> <p>Asked to rank a series of possible challenges on a scale of 1—not at all a challenge to 5—very significant challenge, 58 percent of respondents noted that <i>staff motivation</i> is a key challenge (with a ranking of 4 or 5), followed by <i>capacity to meet demand</i> (51 percent gave a ranking of 4 or 5) and <i>legal framework</i> (49 percent gave a ranking of 4 or 5). The challenge of institutional coordination across agencies and departments was highly ranked (4 or 5) by 45 percent of respondents. Technology was ranked as a burning issue (4 or 5) by 42 percent of respondents, and funding was highly ranked (4 or 5) by 42 percent of respondents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invest in hard infrastructure and technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Modernize existing facilities to provide a welcoming space for citizens and a motivating work environment; – Modernize technical equipment; and – Develop technology-driven solutions to streamline internal communications and information/data management. ▪ Invest in people development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the allocation of financial and human resources, and invest in staff training; and – Educate citizens on how to use e-services. ▪ Rethink processes and cooperation at the municipal level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve internal communication and cooperation across departments (e.g., institutionalize cross-departmental meetings and organize cross-sectoral team-building activities). ▪ Cooperate with higher levels of government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Undertake business process reengineering to reduce the number of required steps for administrative procedures; – Improve coordination with national-level institutions, notably by guaranteeing the interoperability of online systems and access to central-level databases; and – Broaden the mandate and responsibilities of government units at the local level.

a. The suggestions are based on the team’s collective research and experience.

b. For comprehensive guidelines on how to mainstream human rights in the design and operations of CSCs, please see: “Human Rights-Based Assessment Tool for Citizen Service Centers: Moving Toward a Rights-Based Approach in Design, Strategy, and Implementation” which is part of this series.

3. Detailed Analysis of Survey Results

Section 1: Basic information

Geographic Distribution of Respondents

The largest group of respondents (about one-third) represented municipalities in Macedonia (10). The second largest group was from Albania (8), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (6), Kosovo (3), Montenegro (3), and Serbia (1). The names of the specific municipalities are listed in table 2, and figure 1 illustrates the geographic response distribution.

Names of Citizen Service Centers

A proliferation of competing terms has emerged to describe the idea of bringing a range of public services under one roof, including *citizen service center*, *one-stop shop*, *one-door service center*, and *public service hall*. Therefore, the first survey question asked respondents what the integrated service delivery model in their municipality was called. Seven respondents did not indicate a specific term for the CSC, instead referring back to the name of their municipality. Another seven reported the use of the term *citizen service center of [name of the municipality]*. Six claimed to use *one-stop shop*, *integrated one-stop shop*, or *one-stop office*. The rest said they used variations of the same idea, referring to their organizations as *citizens bureaus*, *municipal service centers*, *citizens information centers*, *counter halls of the municipal administration*, or *citizens' offices*.

When asked if their CSC had a website, 20 out of 31 respondents referred to the general website of their municipality, some of which feature a special section dedicated to the CSC (e.g., for the municipality of Cetinje, Montenegro: <http://cetinje.me/index.php/me/gradanski-biro/o-birou>).

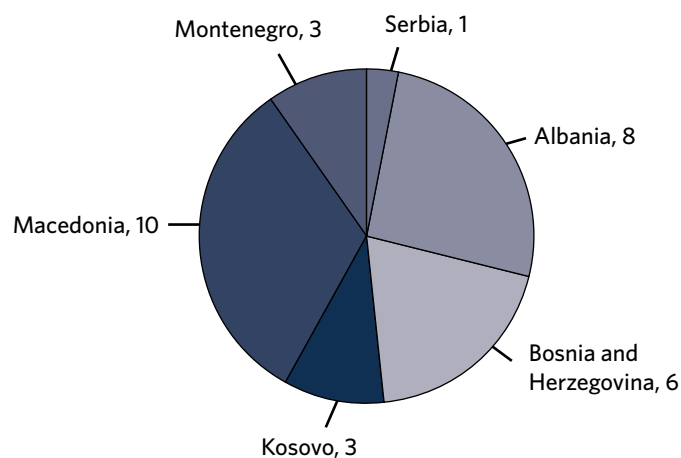
Start Dates

A question regarding the start date of CSC operations revealed that, while the concept of municipal CSCs is not new (the earliest in the ones considered dates back to 1996), the institutionalization of one-stop shops for citizens appears to have picked up since 2006 and remains relevant: year after year, increasingly more municipalities are progressively adopting this model (figure 2).

Table 2. Geographic Distribution of Respondents

Macedonia (10)	Albania (8)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (6)
Berovo	Bilisht	Foča
Bosilovo	Elbasan	Gradiška
Gostivar	Kamez	Laktaši
Kavadarci	Mat	Modrica
Kocani	Patos	Šamac
Krivogastani	Proger	Trebinje
Makedonska Kamenica	Shkoder	
Radovis	Vlora	
Shtip		
Veles		
Kosovo (3)	Montenegro (3)	Serbia (1)
Istog	Cetinje	Pančevo
Pejë	Podgorica	
Vushtrri	Ulcinj	

Figure 1. Geographic Response Distribution



Physical Locations and Accessibility

A question regarding the CSC's physical location revealed that all CSCs are located on premises at their respective municipal offices (i.e., town halls); they are also sometimes at other administrative unit offices as well.

A significant number of CSCs pay attention to issues of accessibility for people with special needs: 17 respondents claimed that their center was accessible to people with disabilities. Respondents mainly pointed to the existence of

access ramps and the absence of doorsteps and stairs, but some also referred to a “special counter lower in height” for people using wheelchairs. A few mentioned a planned redesign of their facility, which might provide better access to people with disabilities. Others drew attention to the existing limitations of which they are aware, such as a lack of elevators for accessing higher floors.

In terms of access by various means of transport, results indicate that CSCs are easily accessible due to their central location within a municipality. Most respondents noted that there was easy access to their centers by road or public transport; some said they offered free parking to visitors. However, some respondents noted that access to their facility by pedestrians was not ideal due to adjacent motorways, was only possible with a private vehicle due to the poor quality of roads, and that there were an insufficient number of parking spaces.

Operating hours vary but mostly range from 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. or 8:00 or 08:30 a.m. to 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. Monday–Friday. Some CSCs have longer operating hours on specific days to provide easier access for working people.

Section 2: Service Provision and Institutional Set-up

Service Delivery

Regarding types of services delivered, the survey revealed that the partial or full transactions provided by municipal CSCs most frequently relate to land (61 percent), taxes (55 percent),

businesses (49 percent), or administrative issues (48 percent). Many of the centers that do not provide partial or full transactions will at a minimum provide relevant information.

According to the survey results, health- and police-related services are not usually among the services that can be accessed at municipal CSCs (65 percent of respondents claimed that their CSC does not provide health-related services; and 58 percent claimed their CSC does not provide police-related services).

Regarding education, social services and utilities, the picture is mixed, with some CSCs providing partial or full service transactions on these issues, while others provide information only, and between one-fifth and one-third also do not provide them at all.

Some CSCs offer additional services, including for sports organizations and nongovernmental organizations or related to agricultural awards, rural development, the environment (e.g., provision of ecological permits), tourism, or the provision of assistance to minority groups (e.g., the Roma).

Institutional Coordination

Five respondents said that all of the municipal departments were offering services through the CSC. For others, the number of departments active in the CSC ranges from 3 to 35.

Nine respondents said that their municipality’s department of general administration, general affairs service,

Figure 2. Start Dates of Municipal Citizen Service Centers

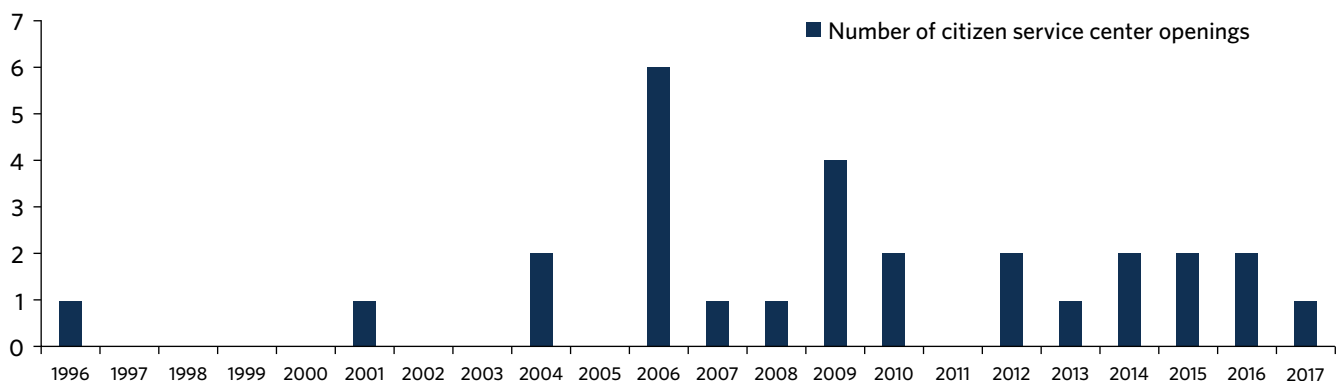
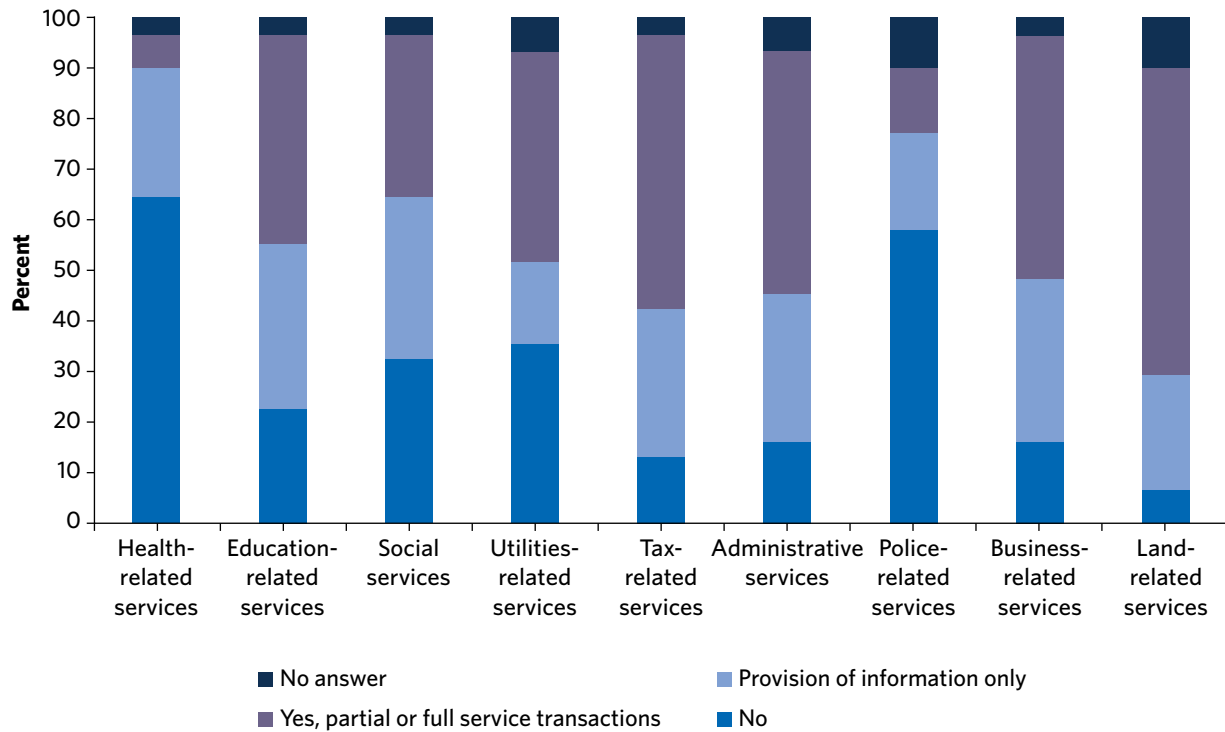


Figure 3. Types of services provided by CSCs

secretariat for common affairs, or department of organizational services oversees the functioning of the CSC; three claimed that the mayor's office does. Ten respondents indicated that the overall responsibility for the CSC lies with the municipality without providing any details. Other reported departments in charge of CSCs include the directorate of information and public relations, the department of human resources and public relations, the directorate for administration and legal services or the department of human resources and support services. Two respondents indicated that the CSC seemed to be an independent body with its own oversight mechanism called the office of integrated one-stop shop or the one-stop-shop office.

Section 3: Citizen-centered Service Delivery

Access Channels

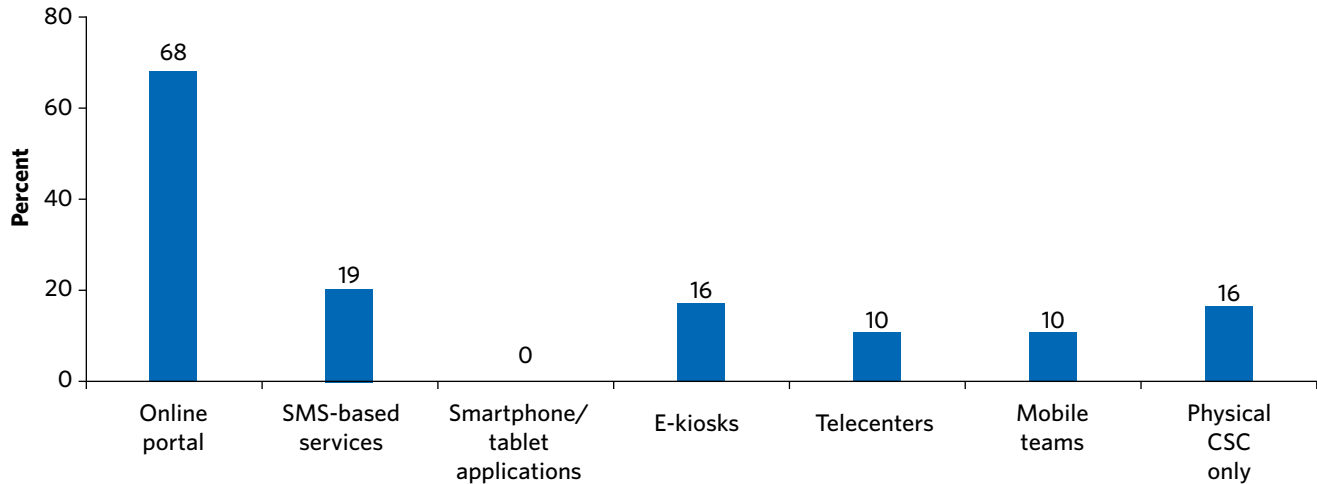
Sixty-eight percent of the brick-and-mortar CSCs are complemented by an online portal that provides access to information and/or services to citizens. Nineteen percent provide SMS-based services; and 16 percent use e-kiosks.

Ten percent of CSCs utilize telecenters, and 10 percent provide mobile team visits to citizens in remote areas or who are unable to get to a physical service center. Sixteen percent of respondents indicated that they do not provide access channels other than the physical center. None of the respondents reported using smartphones or tablet applications.

Communication Strategies

CSCs communicate with citizens through various means, such as via their websites, which many respondents indicate as the typical channel; notice boards; social networks (e.g., Facebook); local media (e.g., print newspapers, information gazettes, radio, and television); and direct contact with citizens to raise awareness about available services. More than one-fourth of respondents said that they had developed and distributed informational leaflets, brochures, flyers, and/or posters to citizens, sometimes with accompanying presentations in local communities or even a workshop series presenting the one-stop-shop model as a best practice for local governments. Some indicated that the speed and quality of

Figure 4. Access Channels



service delivery at the CSC is in itself the most effective promotion mechanism for the center.

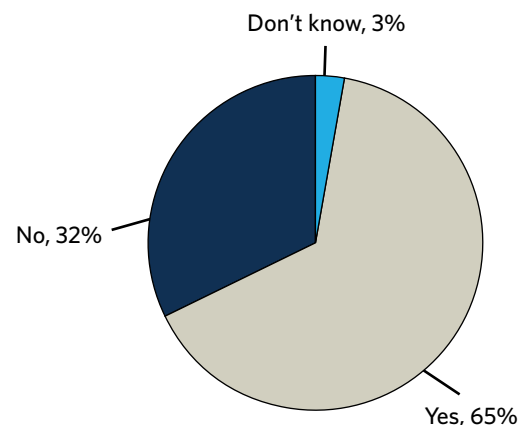
Citizen Engagement

Citizen engagement is the two-way interaction between a citizen and the government, which gives citizens a stake in decision-making with the aim of improving intermediate and ultimate outcomes. Sixty-five percent of CSCs provide avenues to engage citizens and elicit their input, which leaves about one-third without citizen feedback mechanisms—an interesting observation because the citizen service center model is built around citizen interaction. However, an overwhelming majority (84 percent) of citizen service centers do provide complaint handling mechanisms.

Regarding citizen feedback mechanisms, some CSCs follow ISO 9001:2008 standards,⁵ including an annual survey conducted online or in print. Some offer citizens a way to leave anonymous feedback with forms and a survey box at the entrance of the center. Some centers have a book in which customers can make remarks, contributions, and suggestions; others have electronic monitors that allow

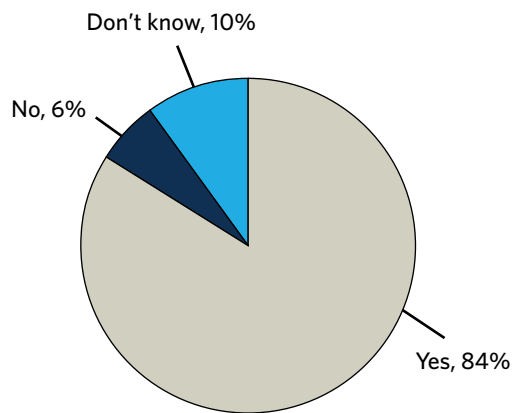
citizens to rate their satisfaction with received services. In some instances, heads of departments interview citizens on a monthly basis to receive feedback. Depending on the CSC and the type of feedback channel used, data are collected and analyzed monthly, quarterly, or annually. The information is then used to improve services, often leading to, as one respondent put it: “a positive growth for the perception of quality services in certain sectors.”

Figure 5. Presence of Citizen Feedback Mechanisms



5. ISO 9001:2008 specifies requirements for a quality management system where an organization: (1) needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide a product that meets customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and (2) aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for continual improvement and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

Figure 6. Presence of Citizen Complaints Mechanisms



Complaints are accepted in many ways: online via email, social media, and municipal websites; through a paper-based system, such as complaint boxes, books, and in letter form; or in person and on the telephone. A few respondents mentioned that citizens are able to directly contact the mayor if they are dissatisfied and can even request a meeting with the mayor or another high representative. In these cases, a 48-hour internal assessment timeframe applies, “although there is a legal deadline of thirty days for more complex situations.”

Respondents seem quite clear on the workflow and processes involved from the moment a complaint is received to when its resolution is communicated to the citizen. Complaints received are generally addressed to the relevant departments and assigned to department specialists for handling. Some respondents provided a fair amount of detail regarding the process, such as the following:

“At the point of service One Stop Shop every citizen can write by hand his complaint. After that the expert of information has the duty to scan the document and to send it as per protocol in electronic way by using the system of electronic circulation of documents. After this procedure, the complaint goes directly to the relevant directorate for resolution and response back within legal limits.”

Some respondents indicated that the process is digitized and accompanied by a case management tool that determines the timeframe, status, and manager assigned, and that allows citizens to track the status of their complaints on the municipality’s website.

Timeframes for complaint resolution vary depending on the problem, but respondents generally seem quite aware of the service standards in place for responding to a complaint and working toward its resolution. Examples of responses include:

- “The legal deadline to respond to every complaint is ten days”;
- “The legal deadline for awarding the charge is one month”;
- “The deadline for resolving is sixty days”; and
- “The citizen has the right to sue the municipal office if this timeframe is not respected.”

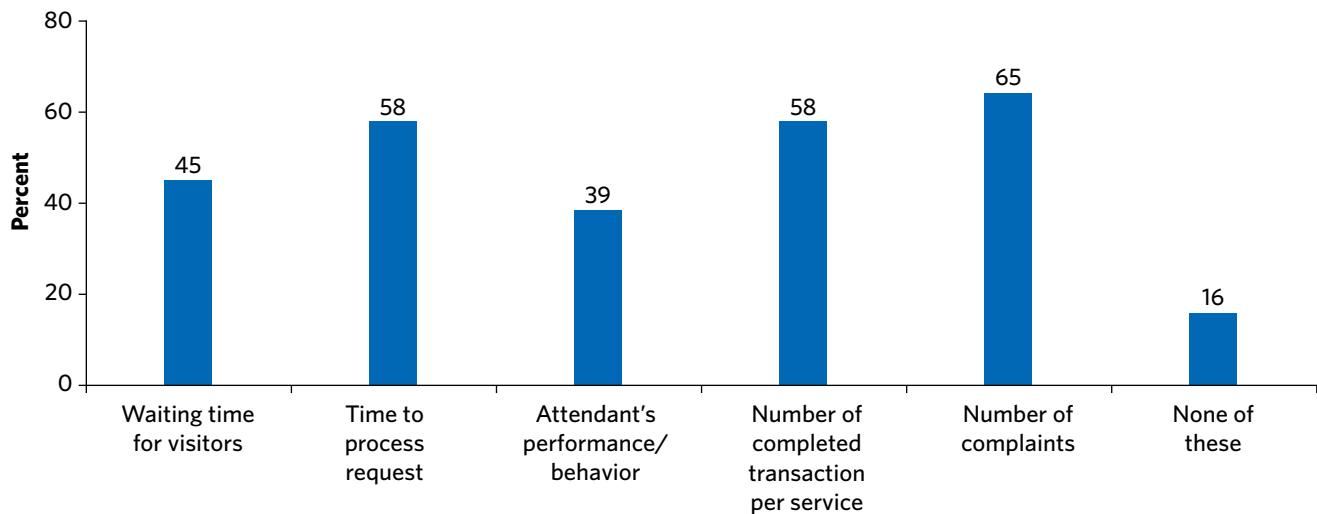
Performance Indicators

The performance indicator most frequently collected by CSCs is the number of complaints received (65 percent). The number of completed transactions and the time taken to process the requests are also among the frequently measured indicators (58 percent for each). Forty-five percent of respondents track the waiting time for visitors, 39 percent track the attendants’ performance/behavior, and 16 percent do not track any of these measures.

Human Rights and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

Regarding human rights, 90 percent of respondents said they were mentioned in their official documents, 71 percent that they were mentioned in their communication materials, and 68 percent that they were included in training materials. However, less than half of respondents (42 percent) said that human rights played a role in the definition of performance standards.

Regarding measures guaranteeing effective service delivery for vulnerable groups, people with disabilities were the most widely identified group being taken into account—63

Figure 7. Measured Performance Indicators (percent of CSCs)

percent of respondents said their CSCs cater to citizens with special needs, primarily by guaranteeing a barrier-free infrastructure, ranging from ramps and elevators to Braille tables and hearing induction loops.

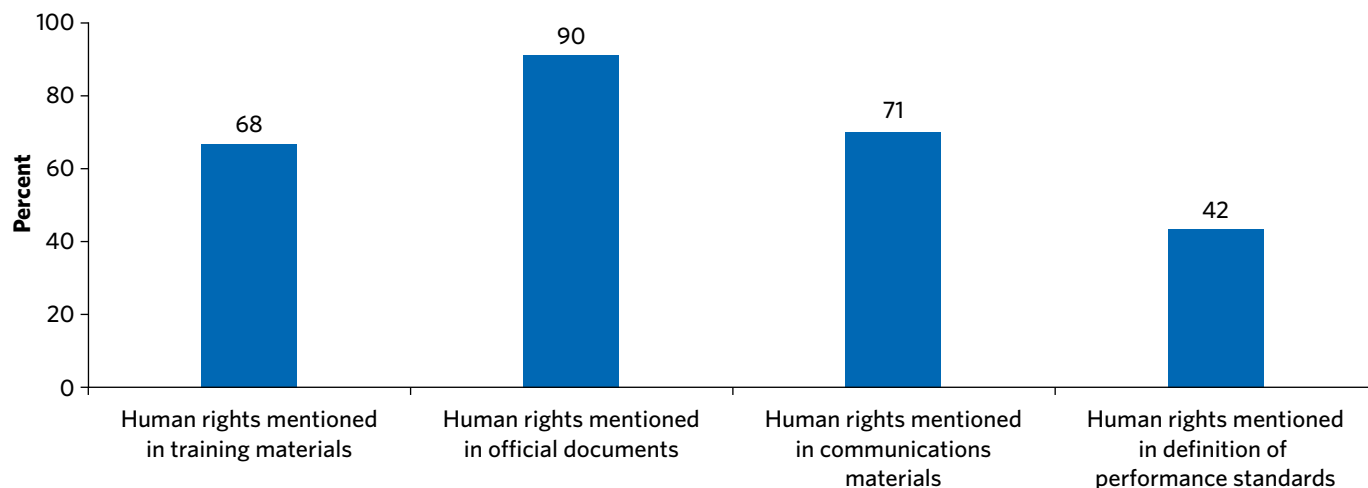
Elderly people (50 percent) and people with low levels of literacy (47 percent) also frequently benefit from specially tailored arrangements, such as being provided personal assistance in filling out forms. Three respondents highlighted that training was carried out to sensitize staff and improve communication skills with these groups.

Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that their CSC had mechanisms in place to guarantee access to service delivery for citizens living in remote areas, for women, and for young people. Several municipalities have mobile teams, some of which include a translator, that reach out to rural populations, the elderly, and others by bringing services directly to them. Some CSCs have satellite or branch offices serving a similar purpose. Regarding women, one respondent said that their municipality had an office for citizens dedicated to providing a coordinated response in cases of domestic violence under the framework of a project supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Between 20 and 40 percent of the surveyed CSCs strive to ensure equal service for the poor, foreign nationals, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, internally displaced persons, and indigenous peoples.⁶ One respondent noted that their municipality works closely with an interpreter to help overcome language barriers; and the staff of one CSC includes a coordinator for issues affecting the Roma people. Thirteen percent of respondents indicated that they had special measures in place for the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex) community.

In response to a question about whether the CSC takes a human rights approach—defined as one where the CSC's policies and operations are underpinned by human rights principles, including participation, transparency, equality, universality, and accountability and where ensuring service provision to marginalized individuals and groups is specifically emphasized—61 percent of respondents agreed that their center takes this approach—that they operate through a lens that considers citizens to be the rights holders and government entities the duty-bearers.

6. The term *indigenous peoples* is rarely used in southeastern Europe, but the term is used here to cover the full spectrum of potentially vulnerable population groups, reflecting an all-encompassing human rights approach. Some respondents chose this option in the survey.

Figure 8. Percentage of CSC Documents that Mention Human Rights

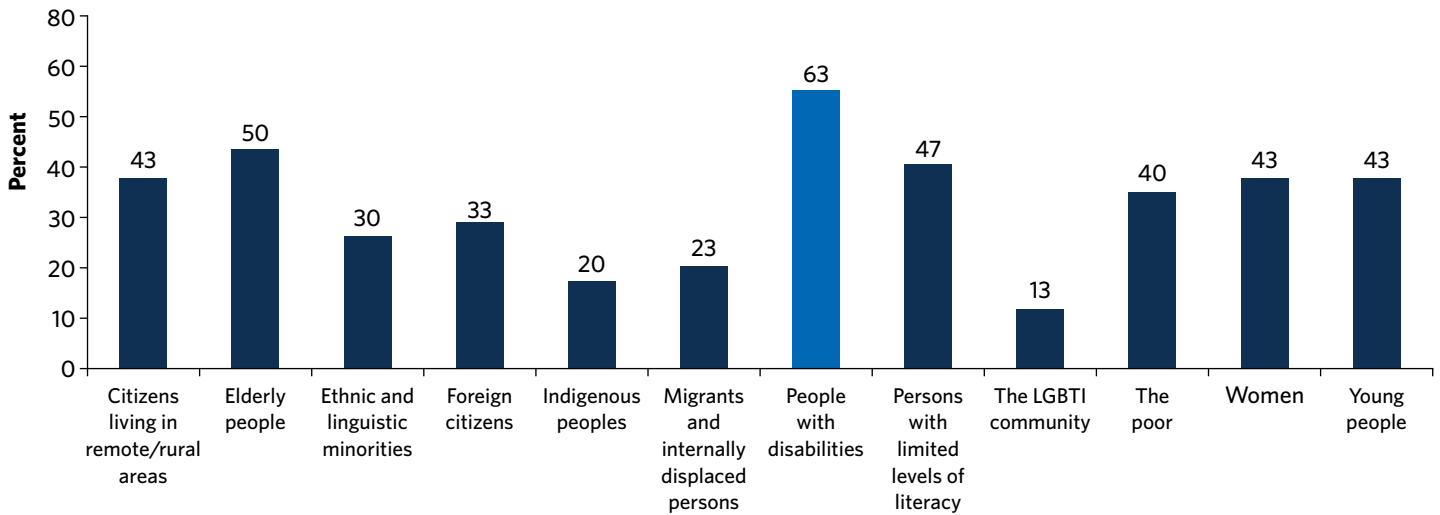
The majority of respondents realize that the CSCs are particularly well-placed to play an active role in ensuring that the citizens in their communities enjoy equal rights, and many CSCs root their human rights approach in the principles of equality, nondiscrimination, and universality. Examples of responses include:

- “The municipality offers its service to all citizens groups with no exception”;
- “Every citizen of Peja enjoys equal rights in obtaining services”;
- “The CSC provides services for all citizens living in the territory covered by the municipality of Veles no matter their age, sex, orientation, situation, religion etc.”;
- “We aim to provide equal approach to everyone”;
- “The administrative staff is trained to be professional and provide services to every person that requests something”;
- “Every citizen, poor, rich, healthy, any religion has equal rights and access to information”; and
- “We provide service to all citizens.”

Some respondents mentioned that the respect for human rights embodied by their CSC is linked to legal and regulatory compliance. Responses include:

- “Human rights are applied as predicted by applicable legislation”;
- “ISO standard 2009”;
- “Human rights, according to the law in our country”;
- “On the basis of the Republic of Kosovo, we have an obligation to universal meeting of human rights in all fields”;
- “Law on human rights and the right to information”;
- “Relying on legal principles and the rights of citizens”; and
- “We are here to help as the law indicates us.”

These responses can be considered positive in the sense that these administrators seem to think of themselves as duty-bearers serving rights-holders. For example, one respondent noted that “the system in our center works on the basis that the citizen has the right and that we are here to provide all the services they need”; and another claimed: “we have an obligation to help.”

Figure 9. Percentage of CSCs with Special Measures for Vulnerable Groups

The principles of transparency, participation, and accountability were mentioned in a more piecemeal fashion. Participation in particular is not adequately framed in terms of human rights. Only one respondent briefly mentioned it by noting that “the quality of services is monitored (...) through surveys.” Regarding transparency, many respondents consider themselves to be “transparent service providers.” One pointed out that their CSC has appointed a coordinator who is responsible for overseeing the right to information. Regarding accountability, some respondents claimed that they provide citizens with the right to appeal if they are dissatisfied with the suggested resolution to a problem. One respondent noted that their philosophy is “based on the principle of transparency and accountability toward citizens.”

These elements—transparency, participation, and accountability—however, are being taken up separately; there is no overall human rights approach or strategy considering these principles together. As one respondent expressed: “there is no special human rights approach. The approach is guaranteed through the transparent procedures of citizens’ participation in decision-making.”

Section 4: Human Resources

Training

Eighty-seven percent of CSCs have carried out some form of staff training. According to the survey, the three most significant areas of training were information technology for the use of dedicated software, e-services, and electronic document circulation (mentioned by 14 out of 31 respondents); communication skills (mentioned by 12); and customer service (mentioned by 8). Other trainings, sometimes carried out at the national level, focused on auditing, financial management, right to information, social networks, legal procedures, document management systems, motivation, and negotiation skills. Two respondents said that the training had been provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). One respondent said that their CSC had engaged with other municipalities in an exchange of experiences.

Staff Numbers and Recruitment Procedures

The average number of staff among the surveyed CSCs is 11.5; and the median is 9. Overall staff numbers range from 2 to 50.

Employees are recruited according to the respective national recruitment frameworks. Candidates must pass a competitive civil service admissions exam, or they are recruited through an open application process. In either case, CSC employees become a part of the municipality's regular staff, and they usually receive permanent contracts. They are typically a member of a specific municipal department, such as finance, urban affairs, legal, or infrastructure, but they do not tend to come from ministries, except perhaps if they are in charge of administrative services, such as birth, death, and marriage certificates; passports; identification cards, and registrations.

The majority of CSCs do not outsource any functions (77 percent); 10 percent outsource specific services, such as system maintenance, web design, and marketing services; and 13 percent of respondents are unaware of any outsourcing arrangements.

Section 5: Challenges and Enabling Factors for Success

Main Challenges

Asked to rank a series of possible challenges on a scale of 1—*not at all a challenge* to 5—*very significant challenge*, 58 percent of respondents noted that *staff motivation* was a key challenge (with a ranking of 4 or 5), followed by *capacity to meet demand* (51 percent of respondents gave a ranking of 4 or 5), and *legal framework* (49 percent of respondents gave a ranking of 4 or 5). The issue of staff motivation could be due to the comparatively low salaries in the public sector across the region, as well as the difficulty in providing staff incentives and motivational mechanisms in addition to any training. One survey participant noted: “we are working through trainings and plan continued coaching to improve staff motivation.” Struggles to meet demand may be linked to imbalances between citizens' requests and the budgetary capacity of the municipalities. As one respondent noted, “both technical and human resources are limited, which affects improvement of existing services and implementing of new ones.”

The most commonly expressed concern among respondents regarding the legal framework involved the existing rules and regulations surrounding, for example, paper-based procedures. One respondent emphasized that “it is important to have qualified staff who know the relevant laws.”

The challenge of institutional coordination across agencies and departments received a high ranking (4 or 5) by 45 percent of respondents. One respondent pointed out that a key issue is the “interoperability of information with that of the central government institutions” and the “interaction with state databases.” Another noted: “collaboration with other institutions always has to go through legitimate paper requests, which take too long to follow-up on and even longer to receive a response.” Another respondent highlighted that core competencies are retained at the national level and that “CSCs do not have a recognition as part of the institutional infrastructure.”

Forty-two percent of respondents ranked technology and funding as serious issues (with a score of 4 or 5 for each). As one respondent put it: “tech and financial funds are one of the main (prerequisites to provide) solutions (that are) modern and effective.”

The high rankings given by respondents to the various topic areas indicate that the listed potential answers are quite relevant to the actual challenges faced by CSCs in the region. As one respondent noted: “these challenges significantly affect the quality and speed of service delivery to citizens.”

One respondent mentioned the challenge of working toward the full application of the ISO 9001:2015 Quality of Management System standards.

Solutions

Respondents suggested potential solutions to address these challenges, outlined below.

Invest in “hard” infrastructure and technology.

- **Modernize existing facilities** “to improve working conditions at the CSC” or to “increase space and accessibility for people with disabilities.”
- **Modernize technical equipment** in terms of hardware and software.
- **Develop technology-driven solutions**, such as online complaint-handling mechanisms through “user friendly software applications that could simplify the processing of the requests but also inform the citizens about the status of the request” and/or SMS-based applications.

Invest in people.

- **Increase financial and human resources.** Respondents expressed a need for additional staff and improved benefits for employees, but pointed to a lack of resources to address the issue.
- **Train staff** to work with the marginalized; to use state-of-the-art e-systems and software; in language and other skills needed to deliver services to citizens, and implementing the ISO 9001:2015
- **Educate citizens on the use of e-services.** As one respondent pointed out: “citizens in general prefer to obtain some kind of information or service directly tête-à-tête (with) the competent authority (...) people want to talk directly to the clerks about their problems.”

Rethink processes and cooperation

- **Improve internal communications and cooperation** among municipal departments to allow for more rapid information dissemination.
- **Reengineer processes**, by, for example, “streamlining certain procedures in the work of the management board.”
- **Improve cooperation with national-level institutions and guarantee the interoperability of online systems.** Some respondents emphasized the need for a network

connection to ministries and other relevant institutions as well as improved information exchange to enhance service quality. Technical interoperability between municipal and state databases, particularly regarding civil, business, or license registries, and other databases related to properties and land seems essential to improve communication and outcomes for citizens.

- **Broaden the mandate and responsibilities of government units at the local level.** As one respondent noted:

“better service provision and efficient measures could be undertaken if these centers could play more functions. Even though in the beginning of the decentralization, some of the competencies have taken place in local level, a lot of permits, certificate, and identification documents are still the responsibility of national ministries.”

Key Success Factors

Participants were asked to identify the three main factors that facilitate the CSC’s provision of high-quality services. Their responses are summarized below.

First-tier success factors

- Thirteen respondents highlighted that *significant capital investment* played a central role in the success of CSC implementation, and that it had improved working conditions, physical spaces, and equipment. USAID for instance has provided some assistance in certain cities, but generally the municipalities covered the bulk of the expenses.
- Ten respondents singled out *territorial/decentralization/administrative reform* as an important enabling factor because it expanded the functions of the municipalities by transferring services from the state to the local level, which is seen as a considerable opportunity.
- Nine respondents emphasized the importance of *process reengineering* or *process improvement*, including through the implementation of ISO 9001:2008.

Second-tier success factors

- Seven respondents said that *political leadership*, notably by mayors, was a critical factor for success, highlighting how important it is that the reforms and service improvements are supported from the management of the municipality and/or the centers.
- Six respondents consider *information technology infrastructure and software* to be a crucial success factor for the CSCs, since it enables the development of e-services based on ISO 9001:2008, the digitization of official requests and complaints, which shortens turnaround times, and the building of an effective document management system.
- Six respondents underlined the essential role of *highly motivated and qualified staff* with a strong work ethic.

Third-tier success factors

- Three respondents indicated that *advanced training and workshops* were critical success factors for their CSC.
- Three respondents said that the *speed of service delivery* was the most crucial.
- Three respondents mentioned *support through partnerships* as being the most significant success factor.
- Three respondents claimed that the *greater accessibility of services* was key.
- Two respondents singled out cooperation and the *horizontal and vertical networking* with state agencies and ministries as crucial.

Partnerships

Twenty-nine percent of respondents said that their CSC had some kind of partnership with civil society organizations. Thirty-nine percent indicated that their CSC had or envisaged

partnerships with bilateral or multilateral donors, such as USAID (mentioned four times), UNDP, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), or the European Union. Only 16 percent of the CSCs reported having partnerships with the private sector (e.g., business associations or information technology providers).

Section 6: The Way Forward

When asked if they would be willing to make available technical documents related to their CSC toward the creation of an online repository, 81 percent of respondents agreed to share guidelines and legal documents regarding the establishment of the center; 77 percent agreed to share their human resource procedures, terms of reference, and recruitment tools; 71 percent agreed to share their communication strategies, performance reports and/or statistics, plans for the physical layout of the centers, and specifications for the introduction of information technology systems; 58 percent agreed to share their inter-institutional memoranda of understanding and their relevant training and operational manuals; and 39 percent agreed to share public-private partnership agreements.

Sixty-five percent of respondents said that they would be interested in joining a community of practice (i.e., a peer-to-peer learning network) related to citizen service centers; and 32 percent said they needed more information before making a decision. Only three percent expressed no interest. Ninety-seven percent of respondents agreed to be contacted with follow-up questions as needed. Seventy-one percent believe that their CSC has lessons to share with other municipalities, and would potentially be interested in participating in partnership with the World Bank team in an effort to document their experiences in a case study.

Annex 1. The Survey

Background Information on the Project

The World Bank's Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice is in the process of gathering insights about citizen service centers (CSC), i.e., public administration entities that deliver a range of public services to citizens from a single physical location. The key idea behind citizen service centers is for citizens to be able to access numerous government services at one location instead of having to travel to multiple administrative offices to deal with their requests. Citizen service centers are sometimes referred to as *one-stop shops*, *one-window service offices*, or *one-door service centers*.

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of the survey is to deepen our understanding of the experiences of citizen service centers in several countries from around the globe. The information obtained will be used as a basis for collecting data regarding the challenges and opportunities surrounding the use of this method of delivery for municipal and central-level administrative and public services.

Survey Design

The survey consists of 30 questions, divided into six sections. It takes approximately 15–20 minutes to complete the survey. The content of the survey is shown in box A.1.

Box A.1. Citizen Service Center Survey

Section 1: Basic Information

1. Name of the citizen service center (CSC): _____
2. City, country: _____
3. Website, if any: _____
4. When did the CSC begin operations? _____
5. Where is the CSC physically located? (e.g., in a separate building or within the town hall)

6. How accessible is the location? (e.g., for persons with disabilities, but also more generally in terms of roads, public transportation, and hours of operation)

(continued)

Section 2: Service Provision and Institutional Set-up

	<i>Provision of information only</i>	<i>Partial or full service transactions</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
7. What types of services does the CSC provide?			
Health-related services (e.g., medical cards and insurance)			
Education-related services (e.g., study certificates, payment of school fees, and enrollment)			
Social services (e.g., application for social insurance, pensions, or benefits and receipt of payments)			
Utility-related services (e.g., water, electricity bills)			
Tax-related services (e.g., payments and records)			
Administrative services (e.g., birth, death, and marriage certificates; driver's license renewal; passports; identification cards; and registrations)			
Police-related services (e.g., payment of fines)			
Business-related services (e.g., registration, taxes, and permits)			
Land-related services (e.g., building permits)			
Other services (please describe):			

8. How many different agencies or departments provide services through the CSC? _____

9. Which agency is in charge of the CSC overall? _____

Section 3: Citizen-centered service delivery

10. In addition to the physical building that hosts the CSC, which of the following access channels are available to citizens? Select all that apply.

- An online portal
- SMS-based services
- Smartphone/tablet applications
- E-kiosks (kiosks offering information or services by means of a computer screen)
- Telecenters (dedicated public spaces where citizens can use computers and internet to access online government services)
- A mobile (vehicle) Citizen Service Center that can reach rural/remote populations
- None of the above

11. What types of communication strategies, if any, are used to create awareness and promote the use of citizen service centers by the general population and particularly by marginalized groups?

12. Is there a system in place to evaluate customer satisfaction and collect feedback (e.g., a satisfaction survey)?

- Yes No Don't know

If yes, please describe (e.g., how are satisfaction scores collected? How often? How are they being used?).

13. Is there a system in place to enable the collection of citizen complaints (e.g., a grievance-redress mechanism)?

- Yes No Don't know

If yes, please describe (e.g.—What are the channels through which citizens can submit complaints? What happens after a complaint is submitted? Are there set timeframes for resolution? Is there an appeals system?).

14. Which of the following performance indicators are measured and tracked over time by the citizen service center?

	Yes	No
Waiting time for visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time to process request (by service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendant's performance and behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of completed transactions per service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(continued)

15. Human rights include the right to access to information, to social security, and to health care, among others. These issues are sometimes included in citizen charters or service standards. Are human rights referred to in:

- Training materials for staff
- Official documents
- Communication materials
- The definition of performance standards
- Other documents?

16. Does the citizen service center in your city have any special measures in place to guarantee effective service delivery for any of the following population groups?

- Citizens living in rural/remote areas
- Elderly people
- Ethnic and linguistic minorities
- Foreign citizens
- Indigenous peoples
- Migrants and internally displaced persons
- People with disabilities
- Persons with limited levels of literacy
- The LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex) community
- The poor
- Women
- Young people

If yes to any of the above, please describe (e.g., barrier-free infrastructure, special arrangements for the visually impaired, translation of documents into local languages, and mobile teams providing services to rural populations).

Some citizen service centers adopt a systematic approach to human rights—i.e., a lens that considers citizens to be right-holders and government entities to be duty-holders. A human rights-based approach means that the center’s policies and operations are underpinned by human rights principles, including participation, transparency, equality, universality, and accountability. It means that a specific emphasis is placed

on ensuring service provision to marginalized individuals and groups.

17. Does the citizen service center in your city have a human rights approach?

- Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Section 4: Human Resources

18. Did the staff receive specific training to carry out its duties?

- Yes No Don’t know

19. If yes, please describe (e.g., customer service, handling difficult telephone calls, communication skills, and the use of information technology).

20. What is the size of the staff of your citizen service center?

21. How is citizen service center staff selected or appointed?

Please describe staff recruitment methods (e.g., are they delegated from their ministries?). If possible, indicate the breakdown of contract employees versus civil servants as well as long-term versus short-term staff.

22. Is the CSC outsourcing any of its functions (e.g., to a call center)?

- Yes No Don’t know

If yes, please describe:

Section 5: Challenges and Success/Enabling Factors

23. How much of a current challenge are the following factors to your municipality's CSC?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not at all a challenge; 5 = very significant challenge)

	1	2	3	4	5
Institutional coordination across agencies and departments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal framework (e.g., rules regarding privacy, access to information, and paper-based procedures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology (e.g., connectivity and shift toward paperless procedures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity to meet demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. If applicable, please explain how these challenges affect the citizen service center's efforts to provide services. Please include any challenge that was not mentioned above.

25. What measures have been or could be undertaken to address these challenges? Please include any type of technical assistance the CSC sought in the past or that is currently needed.

26. What three main factors have enabled or facilitated the CSC's provision of high quality services (e.g., political leadership, decentralization reforms, reengineering of processes, and significant capital investment)?

27. Does your CSC have or envisage any partnerships with civil society organizations?

Yes No

If yes, please describe:

28. Does your CSC have or envisage any partnerships with bilateral or multilateral donors?

Yes No

If yes, please describe:

29. Does your CSC have or envisage any partnerships with private sector actors?

Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Section 6: The Way Forward

We are considering developing an online repository for technical documents related to citizen service centers as well as a community of practice for people with an interest and experience in this field.

30. Would you be willing to share any of the following?	Yes	No
Communication strategies for the CSC?		
Guidelines/legal documents for the establishment of the CSC?		
Human resource procedures, terms of reference, and recruitment tools?		
Inter-institutional memoranda of understanding?		
Performance reports and/or performance statistics?		
Physical plans for CSC?		
Public-private partnership agreements?		
Specifications regarding the introduction of information technology systems?		
Training and operational manuals in support of staff delivery of services?		

(continued)

31. Would you be interested in becoming part of a community of practice (i.e., a peer-to-peer learning network) for citizen service centers?

Yes No I need more information

32. Could we contact you with follow-up questions if needed?

Yes No

33. The World Bank is interested in documenting good practice examples of citizen service centers. If you think your center has lessons to share with other municipalities, would you be interested in working in partnership with a World Bank team to document them in a case study?

Yes No

34. Please provide any other suggestions, comments, or feedback related to this survey or the topics covered.

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