OPEN GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF AJARA 2022-2024

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COUNCIL OF AJARA
2022-2024

აჭარის ავტონომიური რესპუბლიკის უმაღლესი საბჭო
Supreme Council of Automous Republic of Ajara

Open governance is becoming increasingly important in the modern world of technological progress. Global crises have further demonstrated their significance. The Supreme Council of Ajara Autonomous Republic started implementing reforms in this direction in 2020, and two years later, we have already adopted the second Action Plan.

It should be noted that the Supreme Council has increased the level of public participation in the strategic planning process. We have gone further than engaging over 10 civil society organizations in the process of action plan development and have announced an open competition for ideas on the commitments to be considered in the Plan. Young people from different educational institutions took part in the competition, and the three top ideas, selected by the public through voting on our website, belong to Batumi public school students. It is especially gratifying for us that young people are so interested in the activities of the regional legislature, especially considering that the ideas are very interesting and serve the progress of real engagement. The Open Governance Council agreed with all three ideas and reflected them in the 2022-2024 Action Plan.

The 2022-2024 Open Governance Action Plan of the Supreme Council includes three main priority areas:

1) Increasing public participation in the law-making process,

2) Engaging citizens in the oversight of the executive authority by the Supreme Council, and

3) Raising awareness about the Council and its activities through more transparency and various activities.

The foregoing Action Plan reflects 25 proposals from the Members of the Supreme Council, representatives of its Staff, civil society organizations united in the Consultative Group, and the winners of the open competition. These proposals, through deliberation, are presented in the form of 8 major commitments in the new Plan. Not surprisingly, open governance is an issue on which all political groups represented in the Supreme Council cooperate and make decisions based on consensus, therefore they were fully involved in the development and adoption of the action plan.

Two-thirds of the Supreme Council›s first open government action plan has been fully or substantially implemented, despite several internal and external obstacles, the complicated epidemiological situation, and various political and global crises. This success did not go unnoticed by our international or local partners. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) has considered these achievements of the Supreme Council exemplary and is currently working on a wider experience-sharing at the level of regional parliaments. For us, this recognition is an additional motivation to continue the initiated reforms, strengthen the introduced practices, and achieve more real and tangible results, to further increase public interest and participation in our activities. We realize that the outcomes reached within two years are only the beginning and tireless work is still needed to involve the public in the legislative and supervisory activities at the regional body they have elected. We are proud that each of these reforms is carried out in the interest of all our citizens, inclusively, for all groups and all segments, so that no one is left behind in the process.

We hope that with the support of local and international partners, the work of the Supreme Council Staff and public participation, by 2024, Ajara will have a legislative body that is much more open and closer to society.

DAVIT GABAIDZE

Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Ajara

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INITIATOR

- Keteval Malazonia, 10th grade, Batumi N16 Public School
- Lana Mukutidze, Batumi N4 Public School
- Media and Public Relations Department of the Supreme Council of Ajara

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

VLADIMER MGALOBLISHVILI

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Institute of Democracy

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

Currently, there are no leverages in the Supreme Council, which could improve the low engagement of society in the law-making process. At this point, there are no convenient and accessible-for-all online mechanisms to increase the interest and engagement of citizens.

The Rules of Procedure envisage public discussions on the initiated legal acts with society - in particular, comments can be made on the webpage chaerte.sca.ge. The Bureau, Committee, and Plenary sittings are also public. However, public participation in discussions is very low.

The Rules of Procedure furthermore envisage submission of a legislative proposal to the Supreme Council, a hard copy or online (via e-mail), however, there are no special modules for electronic legislative proposals on Council's web platforms (such as electronic petition).

PROBLEM SOLUTION

The Council could create more opportunities through online mechanisms to ensure society's engagement in the law-making process.

To implement the online voting system concerning draft laws; to develop an electronic draft law proposal module.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To enhance public engagement in the law-making process and develop electronic mechanisms.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
			✓	✓

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — To add a special field to the webpage of the Supreme Council of Ajara: www.chaerte.sca.ge, in which any citizen will have an opportunity to vote and support interesting draft law.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
09/2022	05/2023	The field is added to the webpage. Starting from June 1, 2023, every draft law can be voted for.	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 2 — To organize/plan public online discussions of draft laws.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
05/2023	09/2024	Public online discussions of at least two draft laws were held per year.	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 3 — To create a webpage of the Supreme Council of Ajara optimized for mobile devices.

| START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
01/2024	09/2024	The mobile application is created, or the webpage is optimized for mobile devices.	Media and Public Relations Department

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK 1: The creation of modules requires large financial resources.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners). Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the 2024 budget.

RISK 2: Low interest of citizens.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To hold campaigns and disseminate information materials.

2 | ENHANCE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL
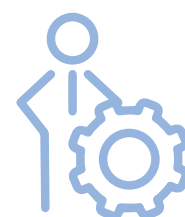
INITIATOR

- Ana Mogeladze, 10th grade student, Batumi N16 Public School
- Salome Mikadze, an intern of the Department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the Supreme Council of Ajara
- Department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the Supreme Council of Ajara
- Media and Public Relations Department of Ajara Supreme Council
- Green Sector

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

DAVID BATSIKADZE

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Green Sector
- Youth organization "Changes for Equal Rights"
- Institute of Democracy

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

The youth is less interested in the activities of the Supreme Council.

The competitions are rarely held, which would enhance their engagement, raise awareness, and attract external knowledge.

The Supreme Council seldom offers separate activities to school pupils, however as excursions demonstrate, the interest is quite high, and such activities are required.

The 2021-2024 Strategy of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara envisages the establishment of external communication systems – the development and implementation of interactive mechanisms for public participation, and the provision of relevant feedback.

Research activities of the Supreme Council remain a challenge and research cannot be held via internal or external resources.

"Civic Education" is taught in schools in Georgia. The subject aims to develop the civil consciousness of students and to develop proper competencies in students in order for them to participate in democratic processes. Higher education institutions of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara are more or less successful in trying to use various methods for the practical implementation of knowledge in addition to theoretical teaching, however, all the resources in the region have not yet been fully utilized in this direction. It is important for the students of proper specialties to actively engage in the activities of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, especially, in law-making and international relations.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

To enhance the youth's interest in the Council activities and increase their engagement in its decision-making processes, in particular: to conduct youth ideas and other intellectual competitions; to hold thematic meetings with students and pupils on open governance and other issues; to establish a youth committee.

Civic Education teachers and Supreme Council staff shall attend relevant training courses to improve communication with students and raise their awareness of these issues.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To enhance the interest of youth and motivate them to engage in the activities of the Council.

Institutional enhancement and awareness raising using modern approaches.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
	✓		✓	

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1
To organize youth intellectual competition on Constitution and other issues.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
04/2023	04/2024	At least one competition was organized.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Education, Science, Culture and Sport Issues Committee

STAGE 2
To organize youth idea competitions on priority issues of the Council to conduct sectoral research.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
04/2023	09/2024	At least two competitions were organized.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Education, Science, Culture and Sport Issues Committee

STAGE 3
To hold meetings in schools and universities (vocational education institutions).

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
01/2023	04/2024	Information meetings were held in 5 schools and 2 universities (including vocational education institutions).	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Education, Science, Culture and Sport Issues Committee

STAGE 4	To establish a youth consultation committee. To define selection rules of its members and to elect them.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	10/2023	The concept of the youth consultation committee is developed. Criteria are defined to select members. The youth consultative committee is elected. At least two meetings of the committee were held.	Department of Legal and Human Resources. Department of International Relations and Strategic Development.

STAGE 5	To create an academic module on the Supreme Council in the scopes of civic education; to train teachers on this subject and the staff members of the Supreme Council for them to organize school debates and law-making activities.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	10/2023	The module is prepared. The debate mentors are trained. At least 5 meetings were held with the civil education students.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Education, Science, Culture and Sport Issues Committee

STAGE 6	To hold a school debate tournament and manage activities.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2023	09/2024	At least two debate tournaments were held.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Education, Science, Culture and Sport Issues Committee Media and Public Relations Department

## RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK 1: Organizing competitions and debates requires financial resources.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners). Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the next year's budget.

RISK 2: Low interest in schools and higher educational institutions.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To inform the target audience in advance.
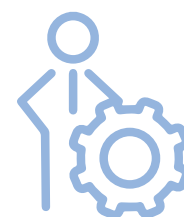
3 | DEFINE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

INITIATOR	● Batumi Democratic Engagement Centre
RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL	DAVID GABAIDZE
POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION	● Batumi Democratic Engagement Centre
CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES	It is important to develop a long-term strategy on public participation mechanisms and their effectiveness; research should be conducted to enhance existing mechanisms of the Supreme Council, as well as to facilitate communication with citizens. Lack of communication between Majoritarian MPs and voters of the relevant district remains a challenge in Ajara municipalities. Therefore, the study should review the experience of the majoritarian system, and based on the findings, it should provide the convocation of 2024 elected through a fully proportional system with effective ways of communication with citizens.
PROBLEM SOLUTION	To conduct thorough research and to develop a long-term strategy and action plan on public participation issues.
MAIN OBJECTIVE	To enhance public participation and the cooperation of the Supreme Council thereof.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
		✓	✓	

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — To study public relations and citizen engagement.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	12/2023	The research is prepared, which also reviews the experience of the Majoritarian Bureaus.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development. Media and Public Relations Department.

STAGE 2 — To develop Public Relations Strategy and Action Plan.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
01/2024	09/2024	One strategy and action plan are prepared with the engagement of the civil sector.	Media and Public Relations Department Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK: Lack of financial resources to conduct the research.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners). Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the next year's budget.

ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

4 | IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THEMATIC INQUIRY PRACTICE

INITIATOR

- Vladimer Mgaloblishvili, Chairman of the Constitutional, Legal, and Procedural Issues Committee of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

VLADIMER MGALOBLISHVILI

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

Several sectoral committees of the Supreme Council already use in practice an important oversight tool such as thematic inquiry. Any such instrument, which is used by the Supreme Council should be regulated at the legislative level.

Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the basic means to solve modern global challenges. Despite an ambitious agenda at the national level, the works on the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development are relevant in the Ajara region. Research on the current state of affairs in the region is rarely conducted. There are no statistical data and no unified policy/strategy regarding what the regional authorities do to execute the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Regional executive bodies do not work in the direction of Open Government Principles. There is a lack of openness and accountability at the institutional level. At this point, the Supreme Council as the representative and oversight body cannot control the observance of Open Government Principles by the executive branch, which is caused by infrequent or weak oversight mechanisms.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

A thematic inquiry which is one of the significant oversight instruments is to be reflected in the Rules of Procedure of the Supreme Council.

The Council to conduct a thematic inquiry regarding the issues of the Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and Open Government Principles to find way more effective and inclusive ways to solve the problems existing within the oversight or law-making activities.

The Open Governance Council is to use an oversight mechanism and conduct a thematic inquiry to evaluate the situation in this regard within executive bodies. Based on the inquiry the recommendations are to be prepared to improve open government in these bodies.

The civil sector is to be engaged in thematic inquiry.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To provide legislative regulation of thematic inquiry and implementation of relevant practice.

To increase the role of the region in achieving the Goals and develop a unified policy on public engagement.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
		✓	✓	

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — To amend the Rules of Procedure of the Supreme Council and to reflect instruments of the thematic inquiry.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
09/2022	12/2022	Amendments are made to the Rules of Procedure of the Supreme Council.	Constitutional, Legal, and Procedural Issues Committee

STAGE 2 — To pilot a thematic inquiry in the Supreme Council on issues of open government.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
01/2023	12/2023	The Terms of Reference (TOR) is prepared. Thematic inquiry is held. No less than 10 civil organizations are invited. Report and recommendations are prepared.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

STAGE 3 — To train members of the Supreme Council and the staff members regarding the Sustainable Development Agenda, and national and international approaches thereof.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	01/2023	At least: ● 10 members ● 50% of the staff members of the Committee offices	Head of the Office Department of Legal and Human Resources

		STAGE 4	To conduct a thematic inquiry by the Open Governance Council regarding the Sustainable Development Agenda or the part thereof (except open governance), and to issue relevant recommendations.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
01/2023	10/2023	The Terms of Reference (TOR) is prepared. Thematic inquiry is conducted, and at least 10 international and/or civil organizations were invited. Thematic inquiry report and recommendations are prepared.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK 1: Training MPs and members of the staff requires financial resources, which may not be considered by the Supreme Council.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners).
Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the next year's budget.

RISK 2: Low engagement of external parties in thematic inquiry and preparation of the legislative proposal.

WAY TO MITIGATE: Active communication of the Supreme Council with external parties and emphasize the significance of public participation.

5 ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES THROUGH ONLINE MECHANISMS
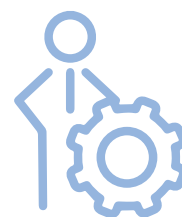
INITIATOR

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
- Institute of Democracy

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

GIORGI KIRTADZE

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
- Institute of Democracy
- Green Sector
- Batumi Democratic Engagement Centre

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

One of the most important mandates of the Supreme Council of Ajara is the oversight of the executive branch. In 2020-2022 within the scope of the first Open Governance Action Plan, numerous significant steps were made to make this process transparent, however, currently, there is no consolidated information per accountable bodies. Reports of separate bodies are provided in one section on the webpage, however, not all of them are given. There are no protocols and/or minutes of the sittings held within the scope of the oversight activity (reports presented during the Ministerial Hour, the information provided at the Committee hearings, etc.).

There are significantly few mechanisms to engage society in oversight activities of the Supreme Council. After the platform chaerte.sca.ge was launched, several days prior to the Ministerial Hour the Supreme Council started inquiring citizens regarding the questions to be asked to Ministers. And through this method the Chair of the Supreme Council asked one of the Ministers four questions received from citizens, however, this approach is not systematic; furthermore, the Minister was also not provided these questions in advance nor were they published.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

The problem can be solved through an electronic platform, chaerte.sca.ge on where several modules should be updated, in particular:

- To receive questions for the Ministerial Hour.
- To receive questions from citizens to be asked to the executive bodies, which will be periodically sent to MPs to be used in the format of an Inquiry of the Member of the Supreme Council.
- To publish documents submitted to the Supreme Council (reports, oral or written reports of the Government, Ministers, or other persons) and receive feedback from citizens about them (in the form of comments or written evaluation).

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To offer digital mechanisms to participate in the oversight activities to the public and the Council to actively react on them.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
	✓	✓	✓	✓

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — To publish reports or other information submitted to the Council by accountable bodies clearly and in aggregated format at sca.ge webpage.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	10/2023	Documents submitted by the accountable bodies are provided on a desiganted page.	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 2 — To add modules to the chaerte.sca.ge platform for asking questions or sharing ideas: "Inquiry of the Member of the Supreme Council" and "Engage in the Oversight activity".

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	09/2023	Updated module: https://chaerte.sca.ge/ge/chaerte-sazedamkhedvelo-saqmianobashi Information materials were prepared and disseminated through social media. By 2024 MPs have made inquiries based on at least 50% of questions submitted by citize	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 3 — A special field is to be added to the module "Engage in the oversight activities" on chaerte.sca.ge platform for citizens to ask questions for the Ministerial Hour.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	10/2023	A relevant field was added to Chaerte.sca.ge Information materials are prepared and disseminated through social media. By 2024 Minister was asked at least 50% of questions submitted by citizens.	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 4 — The Supreme Council to prepare a conclusive report on public participation in oversight activities.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2023	12/2023	One report is prepared per year based on statistical data.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development Organizational and Case Management Department.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

**RISK 1:** The preparation of modules requires large financial resources.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners). Communication with the political groups to consider expenses in the 2024 budget.

RISK 2: Resistance of accountable persons in terms of submission of documentation in written form.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To define relevant obligations through legislative amendments

RISK 3: MPs may not ask questions initiated by citizens, notwithstanding the thematic relevance.

WAY TO MITIGATE: Communication with MPs that asking such questions does not imply sharing their content and that they are merely submitting citizens' initiatives.
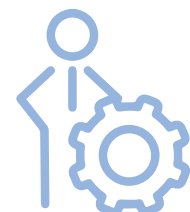
ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN THE LAW-MAKING PROCESS

ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

AWARENESS RAISING
AND TRANSPARENCY

6 | INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODIES ON OPEN GOVERNANCE

INITIATOR

Chairperson of the Supreme Council, Davit Gabaidze

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

DAVID GABAIDZE

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
- Green Sector

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

Open government, presently, is one of the basic priorities for democratic states, bearing in mind the need for technological development and modern approaches to crisis management. However, at the subnational level (regions, autonomous republics, districts, or other units) open government has not yet become the main issue on the agenda.

The Supreme Council of Ajara is one of the distinguished regional legislative bodies in the world, which started to implement the openness initiative. In a short period, the Council managed to both establish unprecedented intersectoral cooperation and to develop and successfully implement an ambitious institutional openness plan.

Ajara has numerous sister regions, with interesting experiences. Their legislative bodies have been conducting various initiatives for years, however, the practice of exchanging information in this regard between regions has not yet been institutionalized.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

The Supreme Council of Ajara has quite good experience in terms of open government reforms and can expand, enhance, and make this knowledge exemplary together with international partners. Furthermore, getting to know the practice of sister regions would allow Ajara to expand the openness scale. To this end, an international conference can be carried out in Ajara, the main topics of which can be both the institutional openness of the legislative bodies and public participation in their activities, and experience sharing of regions in terms of open governance. One of the main outcomes of the Conference should be the establishment of an international network of legislative bodies and regular cooperation.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To hold an international conference on open governance issues together with allied regions of Ajara and with the engagement of Open Governance Partnership, to share the experience. To develop a network of regional parliaments.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
	✓			

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1

The Supreme Council to develop a concept and a plan for the first conference of regional parliaments and civil society organizations.
To create a project of the founding declaration of the network.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	05/2023	Prepared as follows: 1. Concept of the conference 2. Conference agenda 3. Conference organization plan 4. Network declaration project	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

STAGE 2

To agree with the allied regions on the conference format and the participants; to ensure engagement of the civil society sector.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
05/2023	12/2023	The agreement is reached on: 1. At least three regions to participate in the conference (including, allies). 2. Representatives of the civil sector participating in the conference – both from Georgia as well others, including allied regions. 3. Engagement of the Open Government Partnership local network.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

STAGE 3

To prepare for the first conference of regional parliaments and civil society organizations.
To engage students in the process as volunteers.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
09/2023	04/2024	One International conference is conducted. Memorandum is signed/declaration is adopted.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

STAGE 4	As a result of the Conference the regions to share their knowledge and the open governance practice of the Supreme Council of Ajara to be renewed according to the good practices of regions.		

| START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
04/2024	09/2024	Ajara Supreme Council selected at least one international experience.	Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK 1: Organizing the conference requires financial resources that may not be considered by the budget of the Supreme Council.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners). Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the following year's budget, postponing the conference to 2024.

RISK 2: Low engagement of regions and/or the civil society organizations operating there.

WAY TO MITIGATE: Active communication of the Supreme Council with legislative bodies of friendly regions. Enhance communication with other regions with the help of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Active communication of the civil sector of Georgia with the civil sector of allied regions.
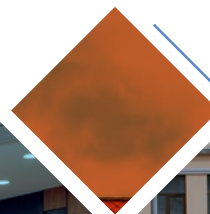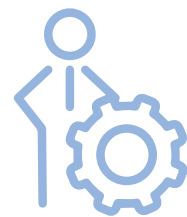
7 | ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

INITIATOR

- Institute of Democracy
- Batumi Democratic Engagement Centre
- Department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the Supreme Council of Ajara

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

TITE AROSHIDZE

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- Institute of Democracy
- Batumi Democratic Engagement Centre

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

Little information is published regarding the partnership of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara with international or local partners. This information is general and does not reflect the specific goals, partnership forms, positive outcomes for the region, etc.

It is noteworthy, that the Supreme Council Committees do not publish protocols of sittings or submitted opinions.

Currently, the Council does not have any information subscription mechanisms, for instance, in the form of an RSS (really simple syndication) feed.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

Quite a big amount of information on draft laws is published, however, there are no opinions/conclusions. Therefore, gathering and publishing them in one space could significantly improve information accessibility.

Summarized information about partners to be added to the menu on the website of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (sca.ge), which shall be updated annually.

RSS Feed to be added to the Council's official webpage, with the titles of materials published on the webpage, announcements, or full materials published on the website. The RSS format on the Council webpage has a bright orange image, which can easily be noticed by users to subscribe to the channel.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

Audio recordings of the committee sittings and received opinions regarding draft laws to be made public.

To raise society's awareness of partnerships with international and local partners.

The transparency of the Council is to be enhanced by subscribing to information on Council.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
	✓			✓

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — The web platform to include relevant fields, where the opinions regarding draft laws, protocols of sittings, and other materials will be published.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	05/2024	The corresponding module is updated and includes fields for protocols of sittings, received opinions, and if available, audio recordings.	Media and Public Relations Department Supreme Council Committees

STAGE 2 — Information on the cooperation of the Supreme Council of Ajara with international and local partners is to be regularly updated on the webpage.

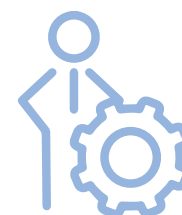| START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
12/2022	09/2024	The webpage of the Supreme Council of Ajara (sca.ge) provides information on outcomes achieved with international partners, which is to be updated at least annually. The webpage of the Supreme Council of Ajara provides information on partnerships with donor organizations.	Media and Public Relations Department Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

STAGE 3 — Module in the form of RSS Feeds to be added to the Council's official webpage.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	09/2024	There is an RSS Feed on the official webpage of the Council, through which communication with the interested audience is increased.	Information Technologies Division of the Financial, Procurement, and Maintenance Department.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK 1: Module renewal requires financial resources.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners);

Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the 2024 budget.

8 | INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

INITIATOR

- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
- Department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the Supreme Council of Ajara

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

MARINE GVIANIDZE

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

In 2022 the platform chaerte.sca.ge was launched and various electronic services were implemented, which should raise the recognition of the Council as well as increase public participation in its activities. However, the existing mechanisms are barely used, due to low awareness.

No field meetings are held in municipalities regarding the open governance issues, in which representatives of municipal bodies could engage.

PROBLEM SOLUTION

The information campaign to be planned could raise awareness regarding mechanisms that are in place in the Supreme Council. The campaign shall cover all Ajara municipalities and the members of the civil society shall also be engaged in it.

Together with representatives of the municipalities the Council shall hold periodic meetings with the population and receive relevant feedback.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To raise public awareness and increase engagement.

OPEN GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	TRANSPARENCY	ACCOUNTABILITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION
	✓			

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 1 — To plan an information campaign on public participation mechanisms – to develop an Action Plan.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
10/2022	01/2023	The Action Plan is prepared.	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 2 — To prepare information materials (flyers, brochures, video clips, etc.)

| START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
02/2023	09/2023	At least one video clip and two types of flyers or brochures are prepared	Media and Public Relations Department

STAGE 3 — To hold information meetings in Ajara municipalities regarding the open governance issues, in which the employees of the Supreme Council, members of society, and representatives of municipal bodies will be engaged.

START DATE	END DATE:	INDICATOR	ACCOUNTABLE UNIT
04/2023	04/2024	At least one meeting per municipality in Ajara (in total – 6) was held, where the staff of the Supreme Council, members of society, and representatives of municipal bodies participated.	Media and Public Relations Department Department of International Relations and Strategic Development

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

RISK: Preparation of video clips and information materials requires financial resources.

WAY TO MITIGATE: To attract external resources (donors and other partners); Communication with political groups to consider expenses in the 2024 budget.
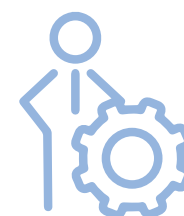
აჭარის ავტონომიური რესპუბლიკის უმაღლესი საბჭო
Supreme Council of Automous Republic of Ajara

OPEN GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN
OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF AJARA
2022-2024

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION

CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

OPEN GOVERNANCE ...BLES

TRANSPARENCY

ACCOUNTABILITY

PUBLIC PARTICIPAT...