

Improving the Analytical Capacity of Citizen Information

Centers in Macedonia

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Introduction

Alan Edmond (the consultant) traveled to Macedonia during February 2003, and analyzed current conditions in a sampling of CICs as to their levels of activities, their current programs and functions, and their potential for increased capacity in the provision of analytical services to local stakeholders. The following is a report on his findings and recommendations.

It is important to note that Mr. Edmond found conditions in the CICs much the same as a year ago, when he participated in an assessment of the LGRP. That is, the CICs are underutilized in terms of citizen inquiries, and the CICs have “peaked” in terms of developing new ways of providing stakeholder inputs to decision makers.

For those reasons the emphasis of this report is on describing how the CICs might fully realize their role as citizen complaint processing centers, and then move on to more of an implementation role. In that role CICs could aid decision makers in a number of ways which facilitate service delivery and the provision of information for policy making that go beyond the problem solving orientation of a “complaints intake and processing center”, which best characterizes the status of CICs at this time.

That is, for several reasons to be discussed below, CICs have fulfilled their role of information collection agencies of the Mayors, and they have provided the level of analysis that the Mayors want, given current decentralization conditions. Also, primarily because the devolution of a great number of powers to the local level has remained stalled, local governments still have very limited direct service delivery roles. Therefore the sheer number of complaints local governments have the jurisdiction (competency) to resolve has not increased over the past year and a half.

The public remains confused or indifferent about the very slowly shifting role of local government, and perhaps has settled into a routine of limited expectations about local government in general and the ability of the CICs to solve their problems in a dramatic new fashion. It may be that an equilibrium has come about where the demand for information matches the supply of information that local government can provide about services, many of which it does not yet control.

The description above of the *status quo* is not meant to criticize negatively the efforts of LGRP and local officials in instituting CICs as complaints processing and referral centers. It is, rather, an indication that CICs have reached their initial goals of being effective in a problem solving and referral capacity, and are now in a position to move on to become research resources for local decision makers. While the complaints processing and referral role has not produced a municipal database in any CIC sampled, there are pilot programs and initiatives the LGRP is now considering or has committed to participating in that can create certain sets of data that will greatly enhance the ability of municipalities to take on major new competencies. Those initiatives and programs are discussed at the conclusion of this report.

The Current Capacity of CICs: General Description

Based on a sampling of CICs in Skopje's municipalities and in municipalities outside Skopje, the consultant considered various indicators of how well CICs have become institutionalized, and how well they are performing the analytical tasks assigned to them by Mayors and facilitated by LGRP staff. The list of indicators below is meant to provide an accurate assessment of the degree to which CICs have been incorporated into local government, and the degree to which they meet stakeholder expectations as to the successful processing of complaints and inquiries specifically, and generally bringing local government and the citizens closer together.

CIC Outputs

The written outputs of the CICs consist mainly of standardized activity reports, brochures and other materials gathered from ministry offices, donor agencies, and other organizations. In one CIC the staff are beginning to collect electronic versions of building permit applications and related instructions, with the aim of helping citizens collect all necessary documentation for permits and to economize on the number of trips they must make to various offices with those documents.

At least one of the CICs is mounting a media campaign, with written materials and possibly a survey to be placed in the local newspaper. One CIC employee in the sample group reports that she was asked to speak about CIC activities on both radio and television.

An apparent trend in CIC operations is the use of CIC employees in reaching out to the citizens both individually and as members of neighborhood units. At present this kind of activity is being defined, with CIC employees (in Centar) beginning to gather information about service delivery at the neighborhood level rather than from CIC walk ins.

Several small service delivery studies have been done by the CIC and sent to the Mayor in Gostivar and Veles. Veles has also instituted a system for carrying out the taxi driver permit system in Veles. CICs in the sample group have suggestion boxes at the centers for anonymous citizen comments, and Centar has put a suggestion box in the post office.

Kumanovo's CIC appears to be the most active of those sampled. The staff there have a very close working relationship with the Mayor, performing like a full time staff for him in terms of regular briefings, preparation of informational materials, and being involved in meetings he convenes. The CIC there also has an ongoing relationship with the heads of the 44 neighborhood units, using them as intermediaries and getting them involved in some degree in solving citizen problems. The Kumanovo CIC also has a small database on the composition of each neighborhood, and a listing of contact information for a large number of NGOs.

In general, written outputs from CICs are limited (the Centar Mayor considers that a weakness in her CIC). However, the internal service complaints reports are read and studied by all sampled mayors, and they say that this system adds to their general knowledge of municipal service problems, and that knowledge is useful at budget preparation and deliberation times.

Utilization of the Centers

Citizen usage of the CICs is low. With a typical staff of two or three local employees, the centers are handling on average perhaps 25 - 50 walk - in clients per week, or five to ten per day. Not all CICs register phone calls, but the consultant is of the opinion that those typically number 10 per day. Reporting of usage statistics by the CICs to the LGRP is often incomplete, and it is not possible to plot trends in usage at any given time. LGRP does not have aggregate figures for usage of CICs.

In some cases CICs are reporting that referrals to national government offices and agencies outnumber the complaints or questions that can be resolved within the jurisdiction of the municipality.

It is unclear whether the CICs have increased the number of inquiries to the municipality. Mayors report that inquiries made directly to them have decreased, easing their time burdens for seeing individual citizens. Mayors also report that CICs are screening devices which intentionally “capture” those citizens who do not insist on seeing the Mayor. This is seen as a positive development in terms of time management.

In summary, CICs are useful in reducing the burden on Mayors for seeing individual citizens, they solve problems brought to them (directly or by referral), but the CICs do not solve great numbers of complaints.

The CAB as a central method for coordinating service needs and delivering programs to enhance services

The consultant had limited contact with Citizen Advisory Boards. His opinion is that the CABs are capable of helping individual enterprises or municipal departments to set priority programs for improving certain types of service delivery or public facilities. For example, CABs can do much to research best practices, to reach out to individual citizens and NGOs for valuable input, and to mobilize citizen opinion and municipal support for certain projects or service delivery improvements.

The CABs are not broadly enough based, and are not created for great enough durations, to take on the entire master planning, facilities planning, or service upgrade projects of the municipality. Only the City Council fits that role. The CABs, however, are indeed tied in with the councils, are responsive to them, and can be of great assistance to the councils in sorting out service requirements, creating small projects to enhance public awareness of environmental problems (illegal dumps, for example). CICs, in turn, can be of great assistance to CABs in designing and carrying out public awareness campaigns, basic surveys, and the assembling of technical data from various departments and NGOs.

Mayors' views of the usefulness of CICs

Those mayors who were interviewed described the CICs as “essential”. They see CICs as ways to lighten their individual burdens, to collect and organize information on services (some mayors recited figures from CIC reports), and ways to bring government and citizens closer together on a regular basis.

While mayors expressed great enthusiasm about using CICs to carry out and analyze surveys on service delivery satisfaction and particular issues, none could point to any opinion surveys that have been done or are imminent. The consultant concludes from this that the mayors have enough information about services, or they do not truly see a need for more surveys, or possibly it is others in the municipal government or local civil society who would benefit from CIC – implemented surveys.

One mayor (Centar) sees the possibility for greatly increasing the outreach capability of CICs, and therefore a role for Skopje’s municipalities in referring social welfare, unemployment, homelessness, and other cases to appropriate authorities.

The Gostivar City Council Chairman sees a possible role for his CIC in becoming a clearinghouse for census information, in that the national census is being completed, and the information in it is valuable to donors and others who need to know demographic details for various municipalities. The CIC could become a repository for such information, and provide it on a timely basis to anyone interested in receiving it. Ethnic data is of particular importance to mixed communities like Gostivar, and the Council Chairman believes that ethnic interests would be protected in making certain that the CIC develops the capability of supplying the most accurate demographic breakdown information officially available.

Specific Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations Based on Current Conditions in the CICs and Program Expectations

Those presented below are based on document reviews, meetings with LGRP staff, and interviews with Mayors, councilors, CIC directors and staff, and citizen advisory board members in CIC municipalities.

Generally the CIC does not affect outcomes of problems having to do with ministries and other agencies dealing with the most common problems of service delivery – social services, pensions, employment etc.

1. While CICs and Mayors reported that relationships with other levels of government are good, there is no indication that those other agencies feel compelled to cooperate fully with the CICs’ needs to collect information and transmit it back to citizens or other stakeholders.

CICs that were sampled could not demonstrate that they are successful in referring problems or inquiries to ministry offices and *also* having those offices respond effectively and on a timely basis to those making the initial inquiries or having service problems to solve. While informal tracking of complaints and inquiries may take place, the consultant saw no evidence of a written tracking system that could identify the outcome of such referrals.

The CIC grant application says that the CIC informs citizens “about their local government and regional ministries”. The CIC should do more than refer citizens to ministry offices, and should track or record the disposition of each case, and offer summary information to the ministries, such as types and frequency of inquiries. As devolution progresses, the CICs will have provided in part a data base that should be highly useful to ministries as they analyze the caseloads that municipalities will be accepting, by type and frequency. Conversely, if a tracking and recording system is set up and used, then there will be a data base for municipalities to use in anticipating the types and numbers of cases they will be handling for various devolved functions.

That data base may not be something that each municipality could reliably construct, due to low numbers of cases going through CICs, but aggregate figures could certainly be developed by LGRP staff from CIC reports that are generated and sent on to LGRP routinely by a growing number of CICs.

2. Planning documents refer to the creation of a CIC association or even a CIC NGO, for sustainability purposes. The consultant finds that such an arrangement, especially in the NGO model, might be seen by Mayors as political competition, and possibly interference, if they perceive the CIC staff, who are their employees, as lobbying for increased funds or staff or competencies. The consultant recommends that any association of CICs remain informal, or semi-formal (as in a network), but only as an adjunct group to ZELS. In this second possibility, the CIC staff would attend ZELS conferences, hold workshops and share information in other ways, but would not incorporate or form a lobbying group in any way.

The sustainability of the CIC as a municipal institution will come from its successful incorporation into the mayors’ *modus operandi*. Sustainability will come from the donor community (already evidenced by pending grants from Canada and the EU), from ZELS, and from local stakeholder interests.

3. There are indications that the CIC can be used as a service delivery organization rather than just a collector of information. For example, CICs can be used as an issuer of taxi licenses (Gostivar), as a central clearinghouse for census information, especially to donors (perhaps in Gostivar), an issuer of building permits (two pilot efforts planned, in addition to three for EU/PHARE). And as Geographic Information System (GIS) software becomes widely available, the CIC could develop an analytical capacity to collect and manage information leading to improvements in a wide array of services.

In Skopje’s Centar Municipality the Mayor has plans to give the staff of the CIC greatly increased responsibilities in reaching out to citizens individually and as part of neighborhood units. This is an example of how CICs can re-deploy staff from complaints intake duties to moving about in the community and generating new information from those who may not ever venture into a CIC office.

4. Should CICs be implementers, especially since they apparently are not exhausting the possibilities for information collecting and analysis? Yes, the CICs should complete the capacity building necessary to give the Mayors and other stakeholders the information they need for informed decision making, but then they

should assume a much greater role in solving some of the more vexing problems of local government on a pilot basis as laws are changed to devolve certain programs, most notably the issuance of construction permits. Moreover, they could play a central role in developing a great amount of baseline data on the demographic makeup of the municipalities (see discussion of GIS).

5. The CIC is not a proactive survey agency. Although there is much discussion of how the CICs can gather information about service satisfaction, program needs and shortcomings, few surveys are actually conducted. There are several possible explanations why the CICs are not called upon to carry out such surveys.

One reason is that mayors and councilors feel they have enough information about service problems and deficiencies from the CIC summary reports they read, and from personal contacts with citizens that all Mayors and councilors rely on for service satisfaction data. Municipality leaders use surveys selectively, and will tend not to use them extensively because such surveys often produce little information beyond what is already available (although in less “scientific” form). Or Mayors may believe that carrying out a survey may raise citizen expectations about fixing service delivery problems, many of which the municipalities do not control or greatly influence.

LGRP and its CICs, however, should not abandon the use of citizen surveys for just the reasons stated above. The need for a municipal services database is as important as ever to the cause of decentralization, and aggregate data from a number of municipalities is needed to make up a database with enough information about service delivery shortcomings nationwide to justify greater national subventions and disbursement to the local level. Such a database would be ‘ammunition’ for major arguments as to redistributing or increasing such funds.

Moreover, the consultant observed that many of the CIC staff are not trained to design, administer, and analyze citizen surveys. It may not be feasible to train those staff in the details of survey research, but it may be effective for LGRP staff to produce standardized template surveys and teach sampling methods and analytical techniques to selected local staff.

6. Does LGRP have a central database? There is no unified body of information that summarizes the reports of the CICs to show an aggregate number of complaints and inquiries, classified by municipal service or ministry referral destination, and how the complaints or inquiries were resolved. Similarly, there does not appear to be a data base at the local level which summarizes CIC complaints information other than a one page summary sheet showing raw numbers of complaints and their referral destinations. Kumanovo does send narrative reports to the Mayor, but lacks an updated tabulation of complaints and inquiries.

7. The quality and frequency of routine CIC reports to LGRP are spotty. That is, the CICs do not report on a regular basis to LGRP on the frequency of citizen contacts and the disposition of cases. Reports that are submitted are often in arrears or report activities quarterly or years rather than monthly. There is a great need for uniformity and timeliness of reporting if the LGRP is to assemble a useful

municipal services database.

What do mayors do with citizen activity reports? The reports are organized to show the type of inquiry by the department or outside agency to which the inquiry was referred. The inquiries are not broken down into service delivery categories, so if a department has more than one activity, as evidenced by its budget line items, it is not always possible to tell precisely from the narrative description just what the inquiry or complaint is about.

What do councilors do with the reports? It is not clear that councilors in all CIC municipalities are interested in or routinely receive the inquiry reports that mayors receive. The consultant's impression is that the information councilors receive is used to supplement information they routinely receive through citizen contacts.

8. Do LGRP data, and analytical reports derived from it, affect budgetary outcomes and reallocation of funds to the most urgent local needs (such as traffic control)? The consultant found no evidence that they do, because Macedonia's centralized allocation system is too rigid for shifting allocations, and not enough resources are available to meet all local needs as currently defined.

Data collection and analysis for citizen complaints and inquiries should continue, however, in part because, as local officials stated to the consultant, such activities aid local officials in becoming better analysts and advocates, and they provide a database for the time when decisions are to be made locally. A good database and its prudent use also will demonstrate to the higher levels that the local officials are building management capacity to back up their arguments for devolution of funds and competencies.

9. Citizen use of CICs seems episodic. That is, the level of use depends on what issues or programs are being discussed locally, or even whether part time jobs are being offered by government agencies (census workers, for example). During many visits to CICs, the consultant never saw more than one or two people being served, and obviously never saw a queue. Is this lack of constant use by the public a function of a lack of CIC outreach, is it due to a lack of confidence in local government generally, have some citizens given up on using the CICs because they want to talk only to the "head man" or "head woman", or is it for some other reason? Has the interest level of citizens "peaked" through a combination of these possible reasons? These answers are not knowable, except that the combination of reasons theory usually applies.

Would an increased outreach campaign greatly increase the usage of the centers? The consultant's opinion is that a campaign to increase interest in local government is always useful, but just to seek an increase in citizen complaints and inquiries being filtered through the CICs would be shortsighted.

10. The degree of socialization of CICs is important. Have they "caught on"? The consultant's opinion is that the CICs have become institutionalized, or have become customary local offices, part of the "City Hall". There are some unintended consequences, however, in that the CICs are seen by many citizens as places to go and have any sort of question answered. Citizens either do not know what the allowed functions of municipal government are, or they think that the

mayors will take time to meet with them if they first approach the CIC staff. In Centar, for example, the Mayor said that the inquiries which end up being referred to other agencies or levels of government run about 10 times higher than inquiries that can be solved at the municipal level. So CICs may be perceived as referral centers rather than “one stop shopping” centers for immediate problem solving.

A related issue is that some CICs offer free internet use and copier use, and that they can sometimes be overburdened by providing those services without limits.

11. Can there ever be “one stop shopping” until Local Self Governments get some new competencies? It is unlikely that there can be, within the time limits of the LGRP, a capacity for CICs to solve all problems for walk-in customers on the spot. Competencies simply will not have been evolved in total by then, and few if any countries in the world have arrangements where all municipal competencies are assigned solely to one level.

There are, however, possibilities for carrying out pilot projects that reduce drastically the number of steps in processing a particular kind of document or securing a particular kind of approval. The construction and use permits are two of those types of permits which lend themselves to a simplified approach. In the case of Macedonia, those permits are the primary problem of local governments in terms of frustration to citizens needing to go to many local and regional agencies for permits which are often non-complex but difficult to obtain both in length of time needed and in the details that need to be provided for each step of approval.

12. What is the true value of CICs to mayors? mayors interviewed said that the CIC reduces the lines of people with minor problems, it may have “propaganda” value, and it generally frees up time for local officials to do many important things. Based on this feedback and other information, the consultant finds that the CICs as presently constituted and assigned duties, are not suited to perform complex research projects for mayors and councilors, nor do mayors and councilors fully accept or recognize the need to be proactive in securing information in the systematic and comprehensive way that well designed and analyzed customer satisfaction surveys will.

13. Are there ways for CICs to gain more credibility? There will be diminishing returns if CICs concentrate solely on complaints processing and mass information distribution. One way to increase activities, and thereby increase credibility, is for CICs to take on duties which will help local governments adjust to the assumption of entire new competencies. While waiting for the full set of competencies to be devolved, LGRP has gone a head with pilot efforts which will allow to CICs to take on a much broader analytical and even implementation role.

14. Paperwork management is not a large task for CICs, and there should be no trouble in increasing the use and complexity of encounter (intake) forms and surveys wherever possible. A goal is to increase usage of the centers by providing follow up actions. Policy makers should ask about what statistics are available, and compare year to year or by the same month each year. CIC Staff could manage additional report preparation and overall documentation, and still do other things for the CIC program in the slow times, with just one person manning the center.

15. The Law on Local Self Government requires local governments to provide methods for citizens individually and collectively to petition government, issue complaints and appeals, and call for referenda. Is the CIC an appropriate way to get that process going and channel the citizen inputs in some ways? While elements of that were apparent in sampled municipalities, the consultant did not see a commitment anywhere to making the CIC the prime instrument for instituting this provision of the LLSG.

16. Veles and Kumanovo CIC staff have invented their own report formats but have not shared them. The summary report used there and elsewhere does not break down complaints by type within departments, but just lists where the complaints were sent. It would be easy to have a form that drills down one more level and describes the complaint specifically, for example within the street department jurisdiction - potholes, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, etc. Staff also have devised a citizen satisfaction form to put in a suggestion box, citing positives and negatives about CIC service delivery.

17. There is much evidence that CICs and municipal officials are not proactive about taking surveys. The consultant strongly recommends that LGRP staff put together standardized but adaptable surveys for all basic services, and put them out on the net. LGRP staff would do the survey design work, train CIC staff in distributing and collecting the survey materials, and then LGRP staff would aggregate the data and analyze the results. In some cases local issues would require the use of “customized” surveys, which the LGRP staff could provide through consultations.

18. What is the CIC Network about, and shouldn't the LGRP have been networking all along? The consultant was not asked to look at the Network *per se*, but it appears that networking has been taking place through staff visits, monthly meetings, and other traditional methods. Having a truly effective network that is online will be an accomplishment, but will be problematic until the types, volume, and timeliness of reporting local CIC information become more disciplined.

19. LGRP should use other donor money to leverage new CICs, as has been done with Canadian and possibly the EU/PHARE. LGRP should consider funding no new CICs, perhaps concentrating its funding on pilot implementation programs with the centers in which it has already invested.

20. The LGRP Year 4 proposal calls for “increasing analytical capacity through interaction among CIC staff, the Mayor, and City Council members.” Also it calls for “fostering more active outreach through the local media, increasing the understanding of the centers among regional units and municipal services, exchanging experiences with CICs from other countries, and cooperating with NGOs.” and “proactive data collection in response to a Mayor's needs.”

Kumanovo seems to have accomplished the goal of having the CIC, mayor, and council work closely together to distribute and collect useful information and to solve problems on a timely basis. Perhaps LGRP could use that model for upgrading the level of internal cooperation in other CIC municipalities.

Stakeholder Analysis

A preliminary assessment of who the CIC stakeholders are, and how they are impacted by CICs, in various municipalities revealed the following:

- The CICs are perceived as and certainly are organs of the office of the Mayor, with a general linkage to individual City Councilors, the degree and types of CIC/Councilor contact depending on the wishes of the individual councilors.
- Citizens are infrequently calling or visiting the centers, and those who do are receiving either instant problem solving by CIC staff or are being referred to the appropriate agency of the central government. Citizens at large and as interest groups are receiving CIC information at a satisfactory level, but expectations are not rising, due to a decentralization effort which is not yet yielding great changes that are apparent at the “street” level.
- Where there are outreach activities of the CIC, citizens are gaining a better overall knowledge of the competencies of the local governments.
- Government agencies are receiving inquiries that were channeled by the CICs, but there is no evidence that such channeling or referral is producing better results for citizens.
- Secondary stakeholders, such as enterprise officials, neighborhood units, and CABs, are present in some municipalities, depending on the initiatives taken by CICs to include them. The utility of CIC inputs to those stakeholders is not clear at this time, although the outreach to the neighborhood units is in itself a positive approach to identifying problems which might not have motivated a citizen to come to what can be an intimidating atmosphere at “City Hall”.
- LGRP staff, and the project itself, are primary stakeholders. It appears that individual CICs could be more attentive about submitting timely and standardized reports of activities, the primary purpose of which is to support LGRP’s decentralization efforts by providing accurate and reliable information to the Government about local government needs.

Table 1: Preliminary CIC Stakeholder Analysis

<i>CIC Stakeholder</i>	<i>Types and Intensity of Contact</i>	<i>Products of the Contacts</i>	<i>Importance of CIC to the Stakeholder</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Mayors	High Intensity: Mayor reads summary reports and may initiate activities from them	Mayors are able to assess the nature and extent of service delivery problems and how the public perceives them	High Importance: Provides supplementary information to Mayors' formal and informal contacts with citizens and groups	The small number of citizen contacts that are recorded cannot be relied on as accurately describing service delivery issues, as the number for each type of issue may not be statistically significant. However, an aggregation of those numbers for all CICs may be capable of reliable analysis by LGRP staff.
Councilors	Moderate Intensity: Councilors may receive summary reports, and may initiate contact to inform themselves or to inquire for a citizen	The same reports and the same products are available to councilors	Importance depends on each councilor's perception and hi/her own sources of information	In some municipalities the councilors may not be proactive about using CIC information
Citizens and Citizen Groups	Low Intensity because of low number of contacts Contacts are by telephone	Problems are solved by the municipality, or referred to another office, or the citizen becomes	Despite low numbers of problems solved, there is a high importance for local	These stakeholders may in some municipalities be generally better informed about services by CIC activities that take

	and walk-in, as well as through any outreach the centers are doing, such as with CABs and neighborhood units	better informed by outreach activities and publicity campaigns	government and citizens through confidence building, transparency, and an image of local government as slowly becoming more accountable and competent.	place outside the CI Centers
CABs	Low intensity; Few CABs use CICs as resources routinely.	Informal advice and descriptions of municipal issues and operations, with the possibility of surveys and analyses to support CAB investigations to advise and inform enterprises and the municipal leaders	Value or importance of the relationship has yet to be determined. More CIC/CAB relationships need to be established and analyzed.	CABs could be the recipients of a large number of special studies and surveys, since they are motivated around special issues and need reliable statistical information to aid the advocacy role of CABs
Government Agencies and Local Offices of Ministries	Low Intensity: Numbers of referrals are low.	Agencies produce same solutions to problems as for non-referred citizens.	Low Importance: National Government agency officials are not receiving a benefit from referrals.	
LGRP Staff	Moderate intensity: LGRP staff	Summary reports of activities from CICs;	Highly important for LGRP staff to learn of how	

	need to cover a growing number of CICs.	training, advice by phone and in visits, sharing of best practices.	well CICs are growing in scope and role in individual municipalities, and to have solid data on their activities and plans.	
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In sampled municipalities the consultant found no data analysis centers, which might have supplemented or assisted the Mayor and councilors in using CIC data.

Scope of a basic MIS

The consultant recommends keeping any MIS as non-technical as possible, and tied to an observed level of computer literacy at the CIC level. Is there a way for CICs to present data to LGRP for analysis, thereby forgoing the need to train local staff in data analysis? The following reports and documents for a very basic but appropriate Management Information System can be created in Microsoft Word or Excel, and put into usage with virtually no training, nor any software or hardware enhancements.

- Summary reports of referrals supplemented by a report of the types of service problems reported to CICs, “drilled down” to at least the specificity found in local and enterprise budgets. That is, the service problems or issues should be categorized at least to relate to specific line items in the operating budgets of the municipality or enterprise budgets. An example would be specifying whether a street lighting problem is due to a broken fixture or a worn out bulb, because replacement and maintenance of lighting may fall into two different budgets.
- Timely and accurate reports to LGRP of CIC usage, including municipally solved problems and those referred to other units of government, with outcomes reported where possible.
- Encounter (intake) forms or at least journal entries showing how each citizen was dealt with, the number of visits he or she made, and the types of advice offered by CIC staff while he/she was in the office or on the phone. For personnel management purpose each encounter should be logged with the amount of time the staff person the citizen spent with the client.
- A sharing of locally-generated forms and documents by all CICs, supervised by LGRP. The consultant found a very interesting and useful set of neighborhood unit data in Kumanovo which other CICs could emulate, as well as a listing of information about a large number of NGOs and their services, some of which are national level NGOs.

- Standardized customer satisfaction and other service delivery surveys, to be produced and distributed by LGRP. These would be taken from the public administration literature, enhanced for usage in Macedonia, and presented to municipal users. Those users might be neighborhood units, local NGOs, advisory committees, or volunteer groups, as well as mayors and councilors.

Summary of General Recommendations To Improve the Analytical Capacity of CICs

Nearly all of the general recommendations below are discussed in the sections above. The timeline for improvements in the complaints resolution and publicity portion is immediately. That is, LGRP staff are aware that these improvements are primarily a matter of tightening up on the management of the CICs and then spending more time and effort at the LGRP level aggregating and analyzing the data from all the sites.

If LGRP decides to concentrate on pilot programs and increasing the effectiveness of CICS, rather than opening new CICs, then staff effort could be redirected from the research and preparation involved in the creation those new centers.

The timeline for the recommended pilot efforts is also immediately, in that preparatory work has begun on them, and this report serves as confirmation from an outside consultant that the two pilot projects, the MIS and the building construction permits program are feasible and needed. In fact, the consultant was on an assessment team prior to the LGRP, which found that the construction permitting problem is the most troublesome for local citizens, and the GIS has always been a highly useful tool for building and manipulating a municipal database wherever local governments can afford to install and maintain them.

For CICs' current role as a complaints resolution and municipal publicity centers:

- Work toward a slightly enhanced reporting and a very minimal MIS which helps local decision makers and contributes to the LGRP's ability to argue for decentralization. Very minimal training and software changes are necessary. No new job descriptions are necessary. No new staff are necessary.
- Arrange for more compilation of data by LGRP staff. This is primarily aggregating and analyzing citizen complaints information form all CICs, and then using that information to support devolution of funding and competencies. ZELS, individual mayors and councilors, and Members of Parliament would be the most frequent users of such data.
- LGRP staff create standardized surveys of citizen satisfaction, citizen usage of services, etc., and find clients for it. Some mayors and councils, CABs, NGOs, and interest groups as well as enterprises would use them. LGRP staff members receive basic training in sampling, analysis of results, etc., and get some sample surveys from the literature or create them in-house.

- LGRP finds localized reports and does more to distribute information about best practices, via the CIC Network and traditional training and TA to CICs.
- LGRP reconsiders and decides that CICs should not form either an NGO or association, and LGRP finds a way to incorporate them into ZELS activities.

For an Enhanced Role that Goes Beyond CICs as Citizen Complaint Centers

- LGRP takes CICs to a new level, including some implementation through pilot programs for construction permits and GIS.

Scope of a program of training and technical assistance

The consultant believes that a municipal data base consists of hard data on municipal assets of all kinds, not just a compilation of complaints and process issues. The consultant also maintains that the CICs can perform their complaints processing and publicity functions, and can also go into carefully selected pilot programs which increase greatly the analytical capacity of CICs, greatly improve the data bases municipalities now possess, and solve a longstanding and extensive service delivery problem as well. The discussion below is based on these premises.

In order to broaden the scope of CICs beyond the complaints processing stage, the consultant recommends beginning with a series of workshops with Mayors, councilors, NGOs, and others to discuss best practices in countries where municipal master plans are constructed with a great amount of citizen input, and where the land use controls and other information in a master plan have a direct bearing on economic development, land use and construction, and municipal services provision and utility extensions.

The workshop should include the citizen survey aspects of developing a master plan, including focus groups and citizen advisory boards to master planning officials. It should also include a discussion of strategic planning principles as they affect the ability of a municipality to create long range plans for capital spending, staffing levels to meet new needs, and

Enterprise managers and relevant regional officials should be included in CIC training and information sharing sessions, including services and complaints tracking, and the use

*****insert discussion of construction permits and GIS projects *****

GIS – in 1 or 2 munis of skopje

Skopje has the database but we need property cadastre info

Utilities are state secrets

Overall Skopje govt to work with Centar and Karpos