



B R I E F

POLICY BRIEFS ON GOOD E-GOVERNANCE

Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

Kyiv
May 2018



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Confederation



THE STATE AGENCY
FOR ELECTRONIC
GOVERNANCE IN UKRAINE



INNOVABRIDGE



EAST
EUROPE
FOUNDATION



Center for
Innovations
Development



REANIMATION PACKAGE
OF REFORMS



Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

The use of new technologies for strengthening good governance and democracy in Ukraine is increasingly gaining importance. The Policy Brief Series on Good E-Governance launched by the Ukrainian-Swiss E-Governance for Accountability and Participation (EGAP) Program, the State Agency for E-Governance in Ukraine and the Center for Innovations Development (CID) aim to serve as pragmatic, evidence-based briefs that seek to inform policy makers and practitioners about key policy issues related to the mainstreaming of good electronic governance in Ukraine. The Policy Briefs Series are distributed quarterly and electronically; they are also available on EGAP Program's website www.egap.in.ua/natsionalna-polityka.

Since 2014, Ukraine has been experiencing rapid development of e-governance and e-participation tools. While some initiatives are still in their early stages of development, others are successful and are beginning to be replicated throughout Ukraine. To better understand and learn from these pioneering initiatives, this third issue of *Policy Briefs on Good E-Governance*¹ focuses on e-democracy experimentation at the local level in Ukraine. It evaluates what are the key drivers, challenges but also opportunities when implementing e-democracy locally. Relevant observations and lessons learned can be useful for e-democracy projects as well as for the undergoing decentralization reforms in Ukraine.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF E-DEMOCRACY

Electronic or digital democracy implies applying information communication technologies (ICT) to enhance citizens' participation in public policy making, to increase government's transparency and accountability as well as to enrich civic skills, public awareness and co-creation of solutions for strengthening democracy. E-democracy instruments can be applied in: i) govern-

ment to citizens or business (G2CB) interactions, ii) citizens to government (C2G) initiatives, iii) horizontally among citizens to citizens (C2C), or in iv) business-to-business (B2B) relations. In policy making, democracy enhancing use of ICT can be used during agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation, and monitoring processes².

IMPLEMENTING E-DEMOCRACY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN UKRAINE

Norms for implementing e-democracy in Ukraine are partly stated in the Constitution of Ukraine, in the laws of Ukraine, in the decrees by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and in other policies³. Among the most recent strategic documents, the first national *Concept Paper for the Development of Electronic Democracy in Ukraine* and its *Action Plan (2017-2018)*⁴ were developed as part of Ukraine's commitment to the Open Government Partnership initiative, strategically outlining key priorities, in-

cluding at the local level, for the implementation of e-democracy in Ukraine during the two-year period. In addition to national norms and regulations, however, Ukraine's 30,539 local self-government bodies can also develop *their own* regulations related to e-democracy initiatives. Since 2015 this trend has increased where local self-governing bodies (LSGBs) either elaborate new regulations or they adopt existing regulatory e-democracy models successfully applied by other LSGBs in Ukraine or in other countries. When it comes to the implementation and use of e-democracy instruments in Ukraine⁵, we will discuss it in this *Brief*.

1 See previous Policy Briefs on Good E-governance on EGAP Program's website (<http://egap.in.ua/natsionalna-polityka>) with Issue #1 focusing on the legislative and policy aspects of e-democracy in Ukraine (September 2016); Issue #2 on use of e-democracy instruments in Ukraine (February 2017).

2 See Issue #2 in the Policy Brief on Good E-Governance series, Tomkova, J., Dmytro K.. 2017. "Implementing E-democracy: A Spectrum of Instruments and Choices." Policy Briefs on Good E-Governance: Issue #2. Retrieved February 10, 2017 (<http://egap.in.ua/natsionalna-polityka>).

3 Tomkova, J., Konashevych O. 2016. "Legislative Aspects on E-Democracy in Ukraine." Policy Briefs on Good E-Governance: Issue #1." Retrieved August 1, 2016 (<http://egap.in.ua/natsionalna-polityka>).

4 The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. 2017. "The Concept Paper and the Action Plan for the Development of Electronic Democracy in Ukraine." Retrieved November 9, 2017 (<http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/797-2017-%D1%80>).

5 Loboiko, S., Iemelianova A., Ivanchenko K., Litvinova, K., Mahula S., Kuts A., Yaryhina A.. 2017. "The Results of Research 1 LSG." Retrieved September 2, 2017 (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0hZVPxixY7VTZTSENEtZsUlu>).



Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

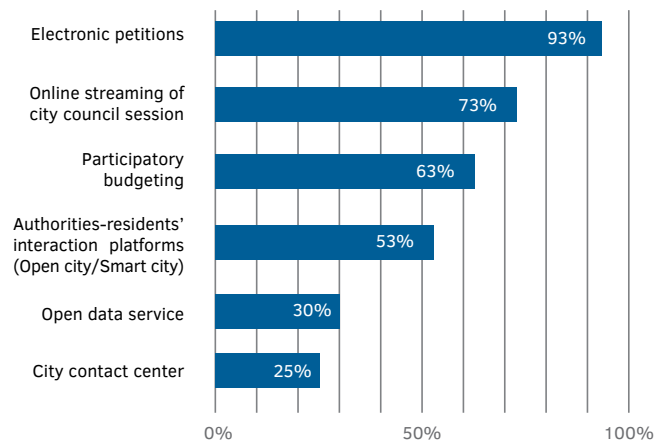
Detailed analysis of the current local use of e-democracy instruments and their best practices is featured in the *Instruments of E-Democracy in the Cities of Ukraine Handbook*⁶ and it lists the following trends: i) increasing use of e-democracy instruments by LSGBs; ii) national public policies and legislation are to a great extent formed based on urban experience; iii) cities introduce new e-democracy tools based on their own initiative and financing or they adopt already existing tools developed in civil society projects; and iv) due to their weak links to offline or other online initiatives, the e-instruments tend to be poorly embedded systemically⁷. At the same time, it is observed that as the implementation of experimental practices at the local level increases, dissemination of e-democracy tools also occurs through standardized platforms such as the *Unified System for Local Petitions (USLP)* developed by the Swiss-Ukrainian EGAP Program and moderated by the Association of Open Cities⁸.

To better understand these developments in local digital democracy, in July–August 2017 an expert survey was conducted by the Center for Innovations Development and the Association of Open Cities with support from the EGAP Program. The survey targeted implementers of e-participation tools, LSGBs and civil society organizations as respondents. Out of 145 Ukrainian towns using e-participation instruments (see Figure 1), 40 participated in the survey and 50 responses from experts were received. Many observations in this *Brief* are derived from this survey.

AVAILABILITY AND DISSEMINATION OF E-DEMOCRACY TOOLS

Survey results show that the most commonly used e-democracy tools at the local level are electronic petitions, used by 93% of towns as well as by a growing number of local communities. By August 2017, 145 local communities subscribed and actively used the nation-wide USLP e-petitions platform. An extrapolation of this pace hence suggests a 28% annual growth rate, which marks a considerable increase from previous years.

Figure 1. The most widespread e-democracy instruments in towns, registered on USLP platform



After the use of e-petitions, transparent online streaming of city council sessions is reportedly used by 73% towns in Ukraine, online enhanced participatory budgeting by 63%, and integrated platforms by 53% (see Figure 1). Interestingly, despite the advancement in open data legislation in 2015 and the launch of the national portal on open data (data.gov.ua in 2016) – availability of open data tools is still comparatively low and used by only 30% of towns. Online city contact centers (25%) also scored low. However, beside the mentioned instruments, towns also report to use several e-democracy instruments simultaneously. Among the most common include online ‘consultation hours’ by mayors, municipal websites with electronic cabinets for citizens, electronic appeals, online streaming of executive and budget committee meetings, and in some cases, even electronic voting. Nonetheless, availability of online policy making and urban planning tools is observed to be very low.

Increasing trend in the use of multiple instruments is encouraging and needs to be continually supported as effective integration of different online and offline instruments is known to have positive reinforcing effects on democratic processes. With nearly two thirds of towns, including those of small and medium size starting to use three or more different e-democracy instruments also suggests promising opportunities for scalability of this trend into other parts of Ukraine. Growth needs to particularly happen in united territorial communities, accompanied by well-designed information and public awareness campaigns that can reach wide segments of population and trainings for specialists in communities.

6 Loboyko, S., Nakhod M., Khutkyy D. (Eds.). 2017. “Instruments of E-Democracy in the Cities of Ukraine. Information and Analytical Handbook.” Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<https://github.com/DevRainSolutions/books>).

7 Nakhod, M. 2017. “Instruments of Electronic Democracy and the Development Plan of the Association of Open Cities.” Retrieved September 2, 2017 (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-z4IVwLV-SsiSzRCMUVDcInhZFk>).

8 The Unified System of Local Petitions. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<http://e-dem.in.ua>).



Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

Another growing trend is LSGBs joining platforms that integrate different e-democracy instruments. Examples of four such e-platforms include: the *Unified System for Local Petitions*⁹ used by 145 LSGBs, the “*Smart City*” Platform used by 104 communities¹⁰, the “*Open City*” Platform¹¹ (51 LSGBs), and the “*Community Budget*” Platform¹² used by 22 municipalities¹³. According to an expert online poll¹⁴, 87% of heads of local self-government bodies, 90% of online moderators and 98% of civic users expressed an interest in the introduction of unified platforms. According to the poll’s respondents, the latter should contain e-surveys, e-local initiatives, e-appeals, e-voting, e-discussions of draft resolutions, public expertise and e-discussion fora.

Since 2014, the number of hackathons (creative weekends and ‘ideas contests’) as also grown, generating interesting ideas, solutions, services, and projects in the areas of electronic democracy, open data, and social innovation. *EGAP Challenge* hackathons¹⁵, for example, conducted in Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Lutsk, and Odesa, *City Data /Apps4Cities*¹⁶ hackathons conducted by the Civic Network OPORA and TechSoup in Kyiv as well as *Open Data Incubator’s Challenges* organized by Social Boost produced number of new social innovations, IT projects, mobile applications targeting different socio-economic and democracy-enhancing topics.

Supporting ecosystems. Adding to these various initiatives, centers for civic activity – IT or social innovation hubs – are also emerging at local level. These centers try to support and cultivate various civic technology projects and ideas designed by urban innovators such as IT-specialists, public opinion, civil society or cultural activists, or active citizens by providing working and social spaces, technical assistance and sometimes financing. Among such hubs include *Civic Hub*, *Idea Hub* and *Open Data Incubator 1991* (Kyiv), *Social Impact Hub* (Odesa), the *Hub for Social Activities «Studio 42»* (Kharkiv),

Space Hub and *FeelGood Labs* (Dnipro), *iHUB-Lviv* (Lviv), *Innovation Center iHUB* (Vinnytsia), *Urban Space 100* (Ivano-Frankivsk) and *IT House* (Ternopil) etc. Beyond the mentioned projects informal offline-online networks of like-minded stakeholders such as the *Association of Open Cities*, the *Association of Ukrainian Cities*, and the *Coalition for E-Democracy* additionally keep the digital democracy agenda alive in Ukraine. Jointly, they work to enhance legislation, stimulate policy dialogue on e-democracy issues and to increase public’s participation in government’s decision making¹⁷.

Use of E-democracy Instruments. Current research also demonstrates that e-participation tools in Ukraine have been so far mostly supply (government) rather than demand (citizen or private sector) driven. In other words, in 83% of the towns surveyed, e-democracy instruments were launched by local authorities, usually by mayors or deputies. Civil society organizations, often with the support of international funds, initiated the development of e-democracy instruments in 53% towns while new opportunities for e-participation driven by active citizens are reported in only 25% localities. The private sector could also be more involved in supporting these initiatives.

Citizens’ use of e-democracy tools varies greatly. While more research needs to be done on this topic in order to draw more robust and statistically relevant conclusions, current surveys indicate that e-participation in bigger cities is more common than in smaller cities and rural areas. For example, according to the *Index of Local e-democracy*, Kyiv’s e-petitions platform¹⁸ has been actively used by over 470,000 citizens (22% of adult population residing in Kyiv), in Khmelnytskyi the *Unified System for Local Petitions*¹⁹ has been used by 17,000 citizens (8.3% of Khmelnytskyi’s adult population), while in Cherkasy at a municipal web-site²⁰ – only 223 active users (0.1% of adult population) are registered²¹. This shows that citizens’ use of e-democracy instruments beyond Kyiv still leaves room for improvement.

9 The Unified System of Local Petitions. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<http://e-dem.in.ua>).

10 “Smart City” Platform. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<https://rozumnemisto.org/project>).

11 “Open City” Platform. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<http://opencity.in.ua>).

12 “Community Budget” Platform. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<http://initiativ.e-dem.in.ua/>).

13 Nakhod, M. 2017. “Instruments of Electronic Democracy and the Development Plan of the Association of Open Cities.” Retrieved September 2, 2017 (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-z4lVwLV-SsiSzRCMUVDClnH2Fk>).

14 Loboyko et al. Retrieved February 9, 2017 (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0hZVPxixsY7VTZTSENEeTZsUIU>).

15 EGAP Challenge. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (<http://egap-challenge.in.ua/>).

16 City Data/Apps4Cities. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (<https://danimist.org.ua/>).

17 The Memorandum for Interaction and Collaboration for the Introduction of Electronic Democracy. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4zwzD8RAmno0DZ5QjhaRkd40FE>).

18 Kyiv City Council. Electronic petitions. Retrieved March 20, 2018 (<https://petition.kievcity.gov.ua/>).

19 The Integrated System for Local Petitions. Retrieved September 1, 2017 (<http://e-dem.in.ua>).

20 Electronic petitions. Cherkasy. Retrieved March 20, 2018 (<http://rada.ck.ua/petitions/web/>).

21 Loboyko, S., D. Khutkyy, A. Iemelyanova. (Eds.). Prykhodko, C., Iemelyanova A., Loboyko, S., Khutkyy, D., Kushnirenko, T. 2018. “Index Mistsevoi Elektronnoi Demokratii v Ukraini: Pilotne Doslidzhennia” (The Index of Local Electronic Democracy in Ukraine: A Pilot Study). Retrieved March 6, 2018 (<http://cid.center/index.php/987520954/>).



Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

To stimulate civic demand, well-designed information, media and public awareness raising campaigns explaining the benefits and providing user-friendly instructions on how to effectively use the tools are needed. Better linkages between tools where active users of some tools (e.g. social networking sites) are linked or encouraged to use others could also be useful.

Perceived effectiveness of the existing e-democracy tools. Apart from dissemination and usage, effectiveness of existing e-democracy instruments was assessed as follows: online tools enabling direct interaction with city council deputies followed by *Open City* and *Smart City* platforms were considered as the most effective, followed by electronic petitions, participatory budgeting initiatives, and online streaming of city council sessions. E-consultations and appeals on community issues on the other hand were considered to be less effective, likely due to their low availability. Online polls, open data applications, contact centers and online consultations with the mayor also belong to the perceived lower effectiveness category while electronic cabinets are considered to be the least effective. Overall, it can be thus concluded that instruments ensuring transparency and those enabling citizens' direct contact with authorities (direct access to city council deputies, e-petitions) and online enhanced participation in decision-making (participatory budgeting) are perceived to be most effective so far. Symbolic communication with the mayor, online contact centers, the emerging use of open data applications, e-consultations and the upgrading of residents' electronic cabinets, on the other hand, need to improve the most.

Impediments and challenges in e-democracy development. Yet when asked what hinders the development of local e-democracy initiatives, 23% experts claim that there are 'no impediments' to advancing e-democracy locally. Among the most significant barriers reported, in 48% of towns, however, is the lack of interest among target groups (civil society organizations, activists, business). Surprisingly, lack of interest and political will among municipal leaders was observed only in 28% of towns which suggests that most local authorities are interested in introducing e-democracy in their towns and communities.

The high price of developing and supporting e-democracy instruments, reported by 35% local representatives, was the second greatest challenge listed. Yet according to experts, developing an e-petitions platform typically costs up to 500,000 UAH with biannual software updates and technical support of 250,000 UAH and 200,000 UAH respectively²², which are not unrea-

sonable amounts for local budgets and can be considered as investments for improving relations between LSGBs, citizens and local civic activists. Nonetheless, as e-democracy initiatives are new for all involved, relevant capacity to implement e-democracy instruments is essential. This in turn requires longer-term strategic planning, dedicated allocation of resources and effectively targeted training to ensure that e-democracy tools are meaningfully used by local authorities, NGOs and citizens. 40% of LSGB representatives, however, still report to lack strategic vision and local policies for civic engagement. 40% of them rely on mass media to enhance e-participation, 8% use public events and 12% use other means. Moreover, 84% heads of local self-government bodies and 70% moderators admitted that they need different forms of offline expert support (analytical, legal, communication) when implementing local e-democracy initiatives²³.

Provision of targeted state grants for further development as well as technical and organizational support of e-democracy initiatives at the local level thus need to be still developed in order to build conducive environments for sustainable and impactful use of e-democracy.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF E-DEMOCRACY IN UKRAINE

Despite the many advancements and the promotion of e-democracy in Ukraine, continued commitment, support and innovation from government, civil society and citizens will be continually needed. Compared to other countries, development of e-democracy at the local level in Ukraine is still moderate. E-participation tools, even when available do not have sufficient impact on local decision-making processes.

Availability of e-democracy tools in policy making, urban planning and within smaller communities is also still low while local authorities and civil society organizations could benefit from further training and enhanced public awareness building to ensure that e-democracy instruments are effectively designed, implemented and disseminated in their towns and communities.

²² Loboyko, s. et al. 2017. "The Results of Research 1 LSG." Retrieved February 9, 2017. (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0h_ZVPxixsY7VTZTSENEeTZsUIU).

²³ Loboyko, s. et al. 2017. "The Results of Research 1 LSG." Retrieved February 9, 2017. (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0h_ZVPxixsY7VTZTSENEeTZsUIU).



Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments

As the way forward, strategic vision and continued commitment to the promotion and pro-active monitoring of e-democracy developments is needed. In this context, we propose 10 recommendations for local governments and e-democracy enthusiasts.

- Local self-government bodies need to be more pro-active in developing longer-term strategies, regulations and budget lines for e-democracy through an inclusive and participatory process as noted in the national *Concept Paper and Action Plan for the Development of E-democracy* (2017-2018);
- Wider 'menu' of e-instruments should be provided by local authorities to its citizens including: online streaming of council sessions, e-petitions, online participatory budgeting, e-consultations interactive authority-citizens platforms, promotion and implementation of open data, well-functioning municipal contact centers, citizens' e-cabinets, e-appeals, and e-voting mechanism;
- Local self-government associations, media and civil society need to adopt more systematic sharing and scaling up mechanisms for best practices in e-democracy;
- The quality and impact of e-participation instruments, particularly e-appeals, e-petitions, e-consultations, e-voting, and online participatory budgeting need to increase through targeted budget allocation, training of officials, and appointing persons responsible for the implementation of e-democracy instruments;
- Civil society organizations' facilitative role needs to be enhanced in the promotion and implementation of e-democracy through training and competitive grants;
- Civil society jointly with local self-government bodies to develop an integrated platform for e-democracy instruments with user-friendly citizens' e-cabinet;
- Media needs to be educated and empowered on e-democracy topics in an effort to strengthen public awareness on the benefits of civic e-participation;
- Series of specialized training on e-democracy targeting local activists and local NGOs to be conducted in order to develop a 'pool of certified trainers' for enhancing citizens' e-literacy, e-participation, and opposing reactionary bureaucracy;
- Develop and widely disseminate user-friendly online courses and offline civic trainings on e-democracy;
- Strengthen collaboration through public-private partnerships to create a sustained participatory public policy on e-democracy and its implementation in Ukraine.

EXAMPLES OF E-PARTICIPATION INSTRUMENTS WITH POSITIVE IMPACT AT A LOCAL / CITY LEVEL



Kyiv (2,868,000 inhabitants)

Among the first registered petitions in Kyiv was an electronic petition requesting the introduction of night public transport routes. It gathered 10,000 votes and was supported by local authorities.

Result: Kyiv city gained first night public transport routes.



Lutsk, Western Ukraine (211,000 inhabitants)

Since 2016, e-voting for the Community Initiatives Competition projects (similar to participatory budgeting) was introduced by the Lutsk local government.

Result: The CIC gave impetus to further develop and improve the Communal Budget service on the e-dem.in.ua platform.



Marhanets, Central Ukraine (48,000 inhabitants)

The city participated in the Open City project that aimed to introduce improved use of information technologies in local governance.

Result: Communication among communal agencies, authorities, and the local community has improved and authorities' response to emergency situations has shortened.



Slavutych, Northern Ukraine (24,000 inhabitants)

Through participatory budgeting, several projects, selected by local residents were realized in the town.

Result: The introduction of participatory budgeting also facilitated increased civic activism among local public for improved urban development.



B R I E F

Issue #3: Local E-democracy: Current Developments



Cherkasy, Central Ukraine (285,000 inhabitants)

Cherkasy was experiencing low levels of trust toward local authorities. In 2013-14, despite several planned public meetings, only 1 public hearing was held hence marking high civic apathy.

Result: In 2015, the city introduced participatory budgeting initiative engaging over 10,000 residents (4% of the total population) in order to select ideas for public projects.



Chernivtsi, Western Ukraine (262,000 inhabitants)

An electronic petition to buy new trolleybuses gained sufficient number of votes for review by the city council.

Result: 20 new low-pitch trolleybuses with air conditioning, heating, and digital screens were purchased for municipal public transport purposes.



Chernihiv, Northern Ukraine (295,000 inhabitants)

A number of e-participation instruments were developed and launched.

Result: Electronic tickets for urban transport were introduced, transport system was optimized and town streets were repaired.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Jordanka Tomkova is a Swiss funded E-governance Advisor and National Policy Dialogue Lead in the EGAP Program (tomkova@innovabridge.org).

Dmytro Khutkyy is the Head of e-Dem Lab at the Center for Innovations Development (khutkyy@gmail.com).

Mykhaylo Nakhod is the Executive Director of the Association of Open Cities (mnakhod@gmail.com).



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Confederation

Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation funds the EGAP program.
www.eda.admin.ch/ukraine



EGAP

EGAP is a Swiss funded 4-year Program (2015-19) on E-governance for Accountability and Participation in Ukraine.
www.egap.in.ua

**Center for
Innovations
Development**

Center for Innovations Development (CID) is a think tank promoting electronic democracy.
www.facebook.com/cidnaukma/
www.cid.center



INNOVABRIDGE

INNOVABRIDGE Foundation is a Swiss Foundation active in good e-governance issues and a co-implementing partner of the EGAP program in Ukraine.
www.innovabridge.org

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Policy Briefs on Good e-Governance will be circulated in September 2018.