

Government is held accountable when everyone is holding Government accountable

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1. Introduction

The accountability of administrative agencies to the general public is a “hallmark of modern democratic governance. Democracy remains a procedure on paper if those in power cannot be held accountable in public for their acts and omissions, for their decisions, their policies and their expenditures.”¹ The public accountability relates to ‘openness’ as the account giving is done in public and often by the public. The core of this concept is that “persons with public responsibilities should explain and justify / be answerable to ‘the people’ for the performance of their duties.”² This relationship between the actor and the accountability forum to whom the actor is accountable has three elements: (i) the actor must feel accountable (formally or informally); (ii) the information can prompt the forum to interrogate the actor and to question the adequacy of the action and legitimacy of conduct; (iii) the forum usually passes judgement on the conduct of the actor approving account, denouncing policy or publicly condemning behaviour.³

Public accountability has many functions. First of all its function is to provide democratic control, than to enhance integrity of public governance. Finally, public accountability aims to improve performance. Altogether public accountability assists maintenance or enhancement of legitimacy of public governance. In most democracies the public accountability has been horizontal, exercised through ministerial or agency accountability to Parliament. In other words, horizontal accountability is the capacity of state institutions to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government, or the requirement for agencies to report sideways. However, in the past decades hierarchical accountability gives way to more diversified and pluralistic set of accountability relationships⁴. We can observe the rise of the administrative accountability with the establishment of ombudsman, independent inspectorates, auditors, supervisory bodies and etc. These do not fit the top-down relationship of the horizontal accountability set up, but form diagonal accountability as all of these bodies report to Parliament and foster parliamentary control. Alternatively, vertical accountability is the means through which citizens, mass media and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on officials. Finally, in a reaction to lack of trust in government many democracies push more direct and explicit accountability relations between institutions, public services and citizens⁵.

¹ Mark Bovens, *Public Accountability*, in The Oxford Handbook of Public Management 182, 182 (Ewan Ferlie, Laurence E. Lynn & Christopher Pollitt eds., 2007);

² Ibid p.185

³ Ibid, p.186

⁴ Day, P. and Klein, R, 1987 *Accountabilities: Five public services*, London: Tavistock

⁵ McCandless, H.E., 2001 *A citizens guide to public accountability: Changing the relationship between citizens and Authorities*, Vistoria BC, Trafford

Nowadays there is a marriage between transparency, technology, and public accountability. The advent of the Internet era further buttresses this logic, creating unprecedented opportunities for accessing, sharing, and processing public information⁶.

This paper review the institutional set up of the public accountability system in Macedonia, reviews the current challenges and needs for improvements, assesses the level of awareness of citizens of different mechanisms for holding government accountable and analysis how the open government action plans: the first one 2012-2014 and the second 2014-2016 are addressing the needs and responding to the current level of capacity and interest about public accountability by both the actors and the accountability forum.

⁶ World Bank, 2012, Public office private interests: Accountability through Income and Asset Disclosure, Washington DC, Report available on internet

2. The public accountability system in Macedonia

2.1. Horizontal accountability

According to O'Donnell, horizontal accountability is the existence of state agencies that are legally enabled and empowered, and factually willing and able, to take actions that span from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state that may be qualified as unlawful. (1999b: 38)

Three aspects of horizontal accountability are hereby specified: who exercises horizontal accountability (state agencies), what the exercise of horizontal accountability consists of (oversight, sanctions, impeachment), and with respect to what actions or omissions horizontal accountability may be exercised (those qualified as unlawful).

In horizontal accountability there are two sub-types of accountability: political and legal accountability. Political accountability is an extremely important type of public accountability within democracies. Here, accountability is exercised along the chain of principal-agent relationships (Strom, 2000). Voters delegate their sovereignty to popular representatives, who in turn, at least in parliamentary democracies, delegate the majority of their authorities to a cabinet of ministers. The ministers subsequently delegate many of their authorities to their civil servants or to various, more or less independent, administrative bodies. The mechanism of political accountability operates precisely in the opposite direction to that of delegation. Public servants and their organisations are accountable to their minister, who must render political account to parliament (Flinders, 2001; Strom, Müller & Bergman 2003). Finally, the people's representatives render account to the voters at election time.

Therefore in political accountability the Parliament is a key actor. In terms of holding government officials to account, Parliament is the principal and the official the agent. Parliament, as principal, requires the government and its officials, as agents, to implement the laws, policies and programs it has approved – and holds the government and officials to account for their performance in this regard.

Parliament is also an agent, in that the electorate (the principal) elects legislators to enact laws and oversee government actions on their behalf. The electorate then hold legislators to account at election time and, in a few jurisdictions, through recall, where dissatisfied voters can recall their elected representative and vote for an alternative.

The Parliament in Macedonia is responsible for organization of two types of hearings: (i) legislative or public discussions regulated under article 145 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia and (ii) oversight hearings. Both are directed to improvement of the quality of laws. The legislative hearings were governed by both the Law on Parliament and the Rules of Procedure, whereas the oversight hearings are a novelty in effect since January 2010. The legislative hearings are also practiced since recently, i.e. 2009 and piloted with the work of the National Council for European Integration.⁷ An oversight hearing is held in order to obtain information and experts' opinions in relation to the establishment and the implementation of the policies, the implementation of the laws and the other activities of the Government and the state bodies⁸. At the oversight hearing other persons can be invited that can give information regarding the subject of the oversight hearing as well as an authorized representative(s) of the Government for the subject of the oversight hearing⁹. An oversight hearing is organized on the initiative of at least one member of the working body/Parliamentary commissions or 15 members of Parliament that filed a written request for holding an oversight hearing to the President of the Assembly¹⁰. In the oversight hearing all members of Parliament may participate and invited persons that have information that “is necessary to harmonize or clarify concrete issues and facts”¹¹. The Parliament adopts a program for oversight hearing based on a proposal consulted between all caucus leaders. However since 2010 the Parliament has not organized more than 7 oversight hearings annually.

Legal accountability is exercised by courts and is a result of the growing formalisation of social relations (Friedman 1985; Behn 2001: 56-58), or because of the greater trust which is placed in courts than in parliaments (Harlow 2002:18).

⁷ A.Page/ M.Risteska / N.Spasovska (2010) “Monitoring of the Implementation and Ex-post Evaluation of the Legislation – Comparative Experiences, Options and Capacities”, OSCE

⁸ Article 20, p.1 Law on Parliament

⁹ Article 20, p.3 and 5 Ibid

¹⁰ Article 21, p.1 Law on Parliament

¹¹ Article 22, p.2 Ibid.

2.2. Diagonal accountability

In the past decades independent and external administrative bodies have been established to exercise administrative and financial supervision and control. These bodies vary from ombudsmen and audit offices, to independent supervisory authorities, inspector generals, and anti-fraud offices. These do not fit the top-down relationship of the horizontal accountability set up, but form diagonal accountability as all of these bodies report to Parliament and foster parliamentary control.

In Macedonia the State Administrative Inspectorate is established on the basis of the Law on administrative inspection¹², a responsible body for the oversight of the implementation of the law on general administrative procedure and other laws that regulate this procedure. The oversight is conducted on all state administrative bodies, organizations and offices with public authority, the municipalities and the City of Skopje. The inspectorate checks if the provisions of the law are implemented timely, if all stakeholders participate and realize their rights, what are the costs of the procedure and if the provisions are not put in effect, what are the reasons for this. The inspectorate informs the Ministry of Justice and the Government on the implementation of the laws.

It provides recommendations on how to improve the quality of laws and provide effective enforcement of the law on administrative procedure.

In general, in the Republic of Macedonia, the inspection oversight is conducted by a network of inspectorates that are coordinated by the Council of Inspectorates. The Council reports twice to the Government and upon a request (Article 16) on implementation of laws, for which the inspectorates are obliged to keep records and statistics (Article 17).

The State Audit Office (SAO) was established by the State Audit Law of 1997. The SAO contributes mainly to the improvement in the management of public finances in Macedonia, but also performs activities that are directed to identify and overcome systemic weaknesses and collision of laws. According to article 3 of the State Audit Law¹³, the SAO performs audits on the regularity in order to determine whether the financial statements represent the financial state in a truthful and objective manner and the result of the financial activities and the examination of the financial transactions which represent public expenditures and public revenues in the sense of legal and purposeful use of finances.

The SAO generally covers the revision of the revenues and expenditures of the state budget (Budget of the Republic of Macedonia), local budgets, extra-budgetary funds, budget funds, as well as the work of all the users of the budgetary finances, the public enterprises, the legal

¹² Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia no.69/04

¹³ Official Gazzette of RM, no.66/2010

entities in which the state is a major shareholder, the agencies and the other institutions established by the law, the other institutions financed by public means, the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, the political parties financed by budget funds, and electoral campaigns. In accordance with the law, the SAO can also audit the beneficiaries of EU funds (except the system of implementation, the management and the control of the instrument for pre-accession aid in the Republic of Macedonia), as well as projects funded by foreign and international institutions.

The SAO also performs a so-called performance audit (according to the SAO law terminology “achievement audit”). In accordance to the definition foreseen in article 2 (p.13) of the State Audit Law¹⁴, the performance audit is “an assessment of the economy, effectiveness, efficiency in the work and utilization of resources in the implementation of programs or activities”. The book of rules regulating the state audit standards¹⁵ define the performance audit as an audit that has bigger scope and can be more selective in terms of periods that are subject to audit, activities and the bodies to which is applied. The performance audit reports may be critical or provide an independent information, advice or endorsement if the principles of efficiency and effectiveness have been realized or not. In principle the performance audits are not critical, but rather provide constructive recommendations for improvement of the framework (legislative and institutional) and processes (operational set up for implementation of policies).

The capacity for performance audit is weaker than for the financial audits. In accordance with the information obtained through the contacts with the State Audit Office, currently 23 auditors are trained in performance auditing¹⁶. The annual programmes of the State audit office reveal that the number of performance audits are still lower than financial audits and this puts the further strengthening and expanding on the capacities for performance audits of different programs, projects as an immediate priority.

The activities for regularity audit and performance audits are directed towards identifying and informing the responsible institutions of all systemic weaknesses related to ‘horizontal issues’ as part of a number of areas in the public sector. This includes a process of continuous monitoring of the corrective measures and recommendations provided by the authorized auditors in view of the systemic shortcomings, the collision of legal acts and on other horizontal issues about the performance of the subjects in the public sector, the informing of the competent bodies on these issues with the aim of undertaking of appropriate measures aimed to improve the management and the use of public means.

In a country that is undergoing a process of profound transformation, building up close working relations between the SAO and Parliament is of particular importance. The effectiveness of audit

¹⁴ Law on Inspection Supervision, Official Gazzette of RM, no.50/2010, that would enter into force on January 1, 2011.

¹⁵ Official Gazette of RM no. 08-11410/2, from November 6th, 1998

¹⁶ Interview

conclusions and recommendations moreover strongly depends on whether they are supported by Parliament. The SAO's reporting duties vis-à-vis Parliament have been laid down in Articles 33 of the State Audit Law. According to these provisions the SAO submits an annual report and timely submits the final audit reports¹⁷. The new law envisages the submission of the annual report to parliament at the latest on 30 of June, which seems a good balance; although it still gives little time to perform all of the audit work that is necessary after the accounts are produced.¹⁸ However, a consistent, standard procedure for dealing with the audit reports in Parliament - actively involving the SAO and supported by institutionalised contacts between the SAO and Parliament – has not yet emerged. A committee in charge of government audit issues such as a Public Accounts Committee which has proven useful in many countries has not yet been established¹⁹. Parliament usually deals with the audit reports without any direct SAO involvement and, in most cases, only if these reports permit conclusions about politically relevant misconduct, especially misbehaviour of individuals in the audited bodies. Only in few cases has Parliament drawn wider conclusions for its legislative work²⁰.

Further strengthening the diagonal accountability systems in 2004 the specific Law on Internal Audit was adopted. The internal audit applies to the budget users, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Health Insurance Fund, Road Fund, Employment Bureau, municipalities and the City of Skopje, agencies and other institutions established by law, public enterprises, such as legal entities where the state is dominant shareholder. All this entities are required to have their internal auditors appointed. As it is unrealistic to have each budget-user set up an operational internal audit unit, considering the size and number of these bodies, the amendments to the Law on Internal Audit adopted in February 2007 provide for the possibility of joint or contracted internal audit activity in order to ensure better coverage.

An additional Central Internal Audit Unit in the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for development, harmonization and methodological functions, but also for providing internal audit services to organizations deprived of their own units.

Furthermore, the law on Public Internal Financial Control²¹ gives a legal status to the basic principles of financial management and control and creates the necessary institutional arrangements that make the new system operational, such as the functions of the Public Internal Financial Control Department in the Ministry of Finance as Central Harmonization Unit for PIFC matters.

¹⁷ Article 33 of the Law on State Audit, Official Gazzatte no. 66/2010

¹⁸ Based on SIGMA, 2007 - External Audit Assessment

¹⁹ Peer review of the State Audit Office p.19

²⁰ Ibid p.20

²¹ Official Gazette 22/207 of 20 February 2007

2.3. Vertical accountability

Vertical accountability is exercised by societal actors with respect to state actors. In the concept of vertical accountability non-state actors: “media organizations, party secretariats, trade union confederations, business peak associations, lawyers’ guilds, mass social movements, even large capitalist firms”, “hold rulers accountable for the political and not just legal consequences of their behaviour in office” (Philip Schmitter, 1999).

The vertical accountability is also referred as social accountability, an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability²².

Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up. Social accountability initiatives are as varied and different as petitions and redress mechanisms, participatory budgeting, administrative procedures acts, social audits, and citizen report cards which all involve citizens in the oversight and control of government. This can be contrasted with government initiatives or entities, such as citizen advisory boards, school councils in which parents and students participate and etc.

The role of civil society in holding government accountable is however pertinent to the knowledge, awareness and trust civil society have in the accountability system. Most of the organizations do not know how to use the redress mechanisms, are not aware of the various institutional mechanisms available to hold government accountable or do not trust the system. Another factor that influences use of the accountability mechanisms is the limited engagement of government in capacity building and promotion of the accountability system as well as providing feedback on the results of the use of the redress mechanisms.

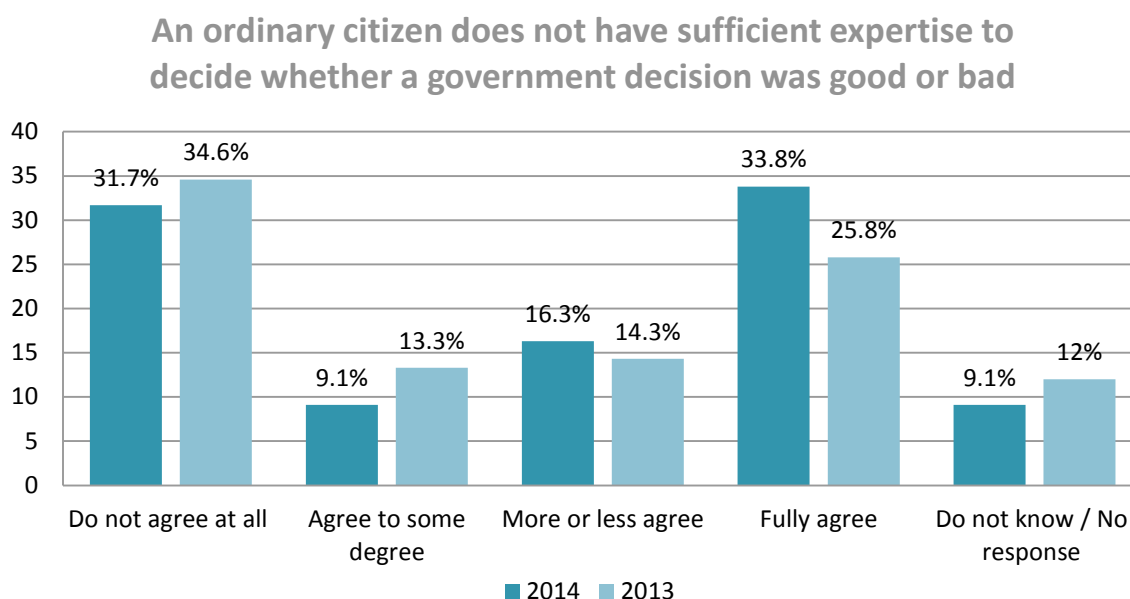
The CRPM surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014 allow us to analyze the public opinion regarding the accountability relationship between the government bodies and the citizens, in a broader sense. Charts 1 to 5 depict the public opinion on five questions which capture such government - citizen relationship.

Namely, as Chart 1 describes the citizens' have the perception that they have little capacity to evaluate policies. In particular, in 2013 25.8% of the respondents indicated that they fully agree with the statement that ordinary citizens do not have sufficient expertise to decide whether a

²² Mark Bovens (2010), “*PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: A framework for the analysis and assessment of accountability arrangements in the public domain*”, CONNEX, Research Group 2: Democracy and Accountability in the EU

government decision was good or bad, while in 2014 this percentage increased, and reached 33.8%. So it is worth noting that an important part of the population does not have enough confidence in its' fellow citizens to evaluate government decisions. Taking from there we can assume that if citizens do not trust themselves as capable to evaluate policies they would not trust themselves to hold government accountable for making and executing those policies. This suggests that the awareness of citizens to be the main accounter in the accounting relationship with government is rather low. In this regard the capacity for enforcement of the vertical accountability mechanisms in Macedonia we can assess as limited.

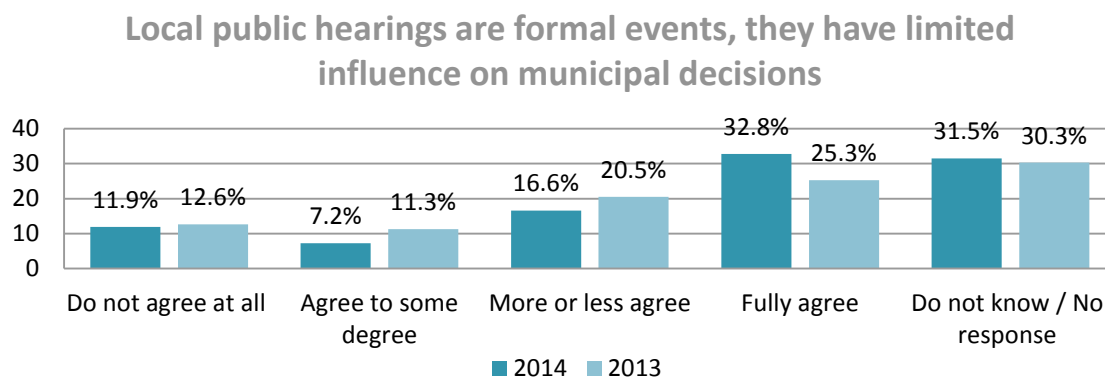
Chart 1. Ability of ordinary citizens to evaluate government decisions.



Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

In addition citizens doubt that with their active participation in decision making through participation in public hearings they can make government more accountable and improve its performance. As Chart 2 shows citizens are predominantly pessimistic regarding the influence of local public hearings on municipal decisions and they have become even more pessimistic in 2014, as compared to 2013.

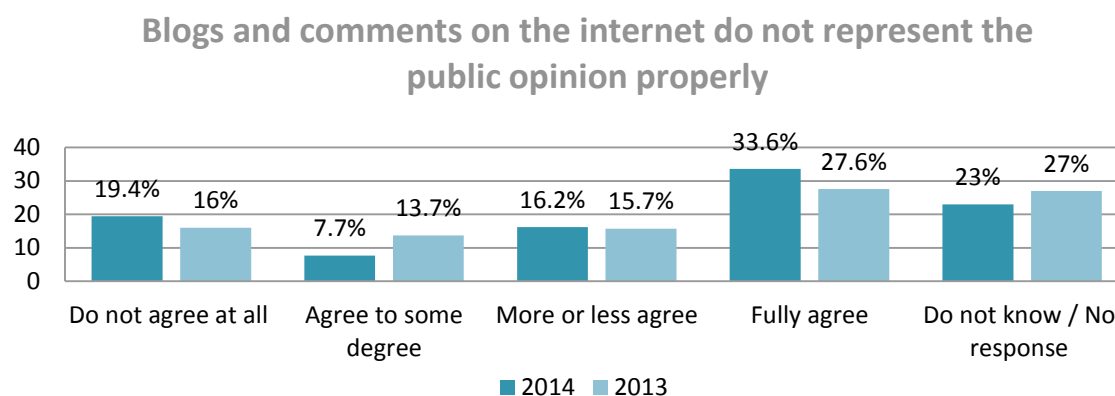
Chart 2. The influence of local public hearings on municipal decisions.



Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

The rise of the internet has given a new dimension to the diagonal and especially the vertical form of public accountability. Increasingly, the results of inspections, assessments and benchmarks are put on the internet. But also governments invested a lot in applications that assess quality of public services using ICT. Citizens on daily basis through internet comments and blogs can shape public opinion and hold government accountable for its actions. But CRPM research shows that citizens' views of blogs and comments on the internet do not represent public opinion properly, which indicates that regardless of the increased availability of the internet to all citizens of the country, the bloggers and commentators on the internet do not represent all the opinions present in the public, or at least not with the same intensity as they are present in the public.

Chart 3. Blogs and comments on the internet as representatives of the public opinion.



Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

Furthermore, protests, demonstrations and rallies also cannot be interpreted as effective mechanism for holding government accountable, as the participation in demonstrations and rallies is generally low, since only 26.9% of the respondents in 2013 reported that they have ever participated in such event, while in 2014, this percentage is even lower, and it is only 20.4%.

Table 1. Have you ever attended a demonstration or rally?

Year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	224	20.4	297	26.9
No	876	79.6	807	73.1
Total	1100	100.0	1104	100.0

Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

Finally, in 2014 we also asked our survey participants whether they have used their right to complain to their municipality about the quality of some service. As Table 2 indicates, only 12.8% of the respondents have used this right. This is again an indicator of low interest in municipality activities, but also low awareness of the citizens of the availability of the compliant mechanisms or the lack of confidence that the system of complaints actually works.

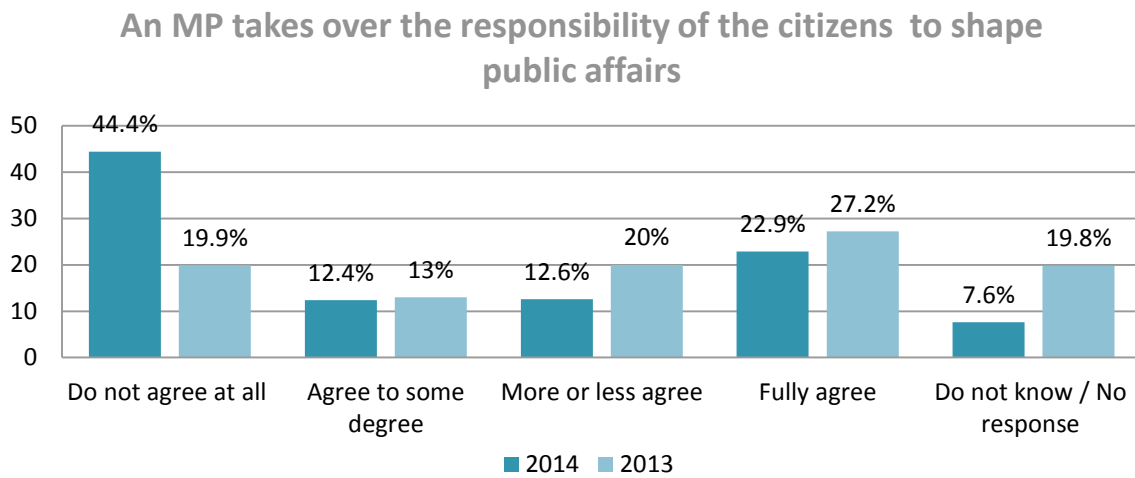
Table 2. Have you ever used your right to complain to your municipality about the quality of some service?

Year	2014	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	140	12.8
No	951	87.2
Total	1091	100.0

Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

On the other hand as in every other representative democracy the legitimacy of holding government accountable is transferred to Parliament. Therefore, we have asked in both 2013 and 2014 the citizens whether in their opinion members of Parliament (MPs) take over the responsibility of the citizens in shaping public affairs in addition to holding government accountable. In this respect in 2013, only 20% of the respondents did not agree with this statement, while in 2014, this percentage increased to 44.4%. This indicates that there is an increasing public awareness of the little role Parliament has in shaping public affairs and holding government accountable. The fact that Macedonia has in the past several years had a majority government active in both proposing and execution of policies had turned the Macedonian Parliament into rubber stamping institution. The absence of the opposition in the work of the Parliament in the past year, as well as the ever decreasing oversight hearing, as well as discussions upon the reports of the Ombudsman and the State Audit Office on policy execution has shaped public opinion about the little role horizontal accountability system centered around the Parliamentary control has in Macedonia nowadays.

Chart 4. Responsibility of MPs and citizens in shaping public affairs.



Source: CRPM OGP Survey 2013, 2014

3. ICT as preferred mode of holding government accountable

As shown above the confidence of citizens in the horizontal accountability mechanisms are decreasing, and their awareness, interest and capacity to use the vertical mechanisms for accountability is lacking. In this regard the data collected by the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) indicates something which can be considered as common knowledge, namely, that the process of holding the government accountable is imperfect. In particular, as Tables 1 to 3 discussed above indicate citizens are not particularly interested in following the work of the government or very vocal when it comes to expressing their complaints and suggestions, even when mechanisms for such action are readily available. The small number of users of local governments' web pages mostly looks up the local events and programs, and rarely checks the council decisions, local budgets, communicate with their councilor, or sends their complaints and suggestions (survey data presented in the policy brief on participation). Even the offline modes of communication and participation in local government decision-making are not very popular.

Communicating with government

In 2014, 11.3% of the respondents would participate in the consultative meetings of their municipality.

37.2% would like to use telephone or SMS as modes for holding government accountable

22.7% would prefer electronic modes of vertical accountability

However, citizens' lack of interest and initiative is not the only problem. The desk research conducted by the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) in 2013 on the transparency and accountability of local government shows that many local governments have troubles presenting their work to their citizens and responding to citizens' demands. Therefore the lack of citizens' interest and trust in the existing mechanisms for communication can be somewhat justified.

Nevertheless, even though most citizens do not take full advantage of the possibilities for holding the government accountable, especially the web-based mechanisms, their existence and promotion are crucial for creating a transparent and accountable government. Hopefully, citizens will catch up with the development of new technologies and modes of communications soon. Two initiatives which are noteworthy in this department are the webpage "How much does Macedonia cost us?"²³ which offers detailed information about the national budget, and the webpage "Follow the money"²⁴ which offers information about municipal budgets.

²³ <http://www.mkbudget.org/index>

²⁴ <http://sledigiparite.mk/>

4. Open Government Partnership and accountability

The Action Plans for Open Government Partnership 2012-2014 and 2014- 2016 envisage the implementation of a number of activities, which have the purpose of increasing government accountability. In this section, we will provide gap analysis of the challenges of the public accountability system in Macedonia we have identified in the previous chapter and whether the national action plans for open government address such challenges or not.

The 2012-2014 action plan specifies nine broad goals. The first one is **participative policymaking**. Several measures were planned as means of achieving this goal.

Table 3. Participative policymaking measures.

Measure	Description
M3: Introducing the possibility of on-line petitions.	Possibility for on-line petitions through digital certificates, and without them.

Out of these five measures, only measure 3 – on line petitions - responds directly to the goal of vertical accountability through active engagement of citizens in holding government accountable and responding to the citizen's preference of use of ICT to do that. The remaining measures 1, 2, 4 and 5 have only indirect effect on improving participative policymaking, though improving the transparency of the government's work, and their collaboration with the civil-sector.

The second goal specified by the action plan is **open data**. The measures for implementing this goal have not responded to any of the challenges for increasing use of vertical nor horizontal accountability mechanisms, neither allowed for capacity building or awareness rising.

The third goal specified in the action plan is **Improvement of electronic services and procedures**. Within this goal several measures both respond to the preference of using electronic mechanisms for holding government accountable and strengthening vertical accountability. Table 4 summarizes the measures that are most relevant to accountability. However one must note that these mechanisms are missing the punishment or the corrective character of the accountability mechanisms and do not contribute to building citizen's confidence in the public accountability system.

Table 4. Improvement of electronic services and procedures measures.

Measure	Description
M1: Improvements of the services provided on www.uslugi.gov.mk through consolidation of data and improvement of their level of security.	Establishment of a mechanism for citizens' evaluation of the services.
M2: Development of integrated citizen diary with clearly defined responsibilities and institutions.	Integration of citizens' diaries, their updating and publishing.
M3: Publishing of the results of the projects for evaluation of the public administration.	Several project which evaluate citizens' satisfaction with the public administration.

Goal four of the action plan is **Improvement of the implementation of the Law for free access of information of public character**. The planned measures for attaining this goal have no direct relation to the accountability systems, as are not the planned measures for the fifth goal of the action plan - **stimulating the scientific research through providing easily available data**.

This is not the case with the sixth goal specified in the action plan - **prevention and suppression of corruption, and promotion of the principles of good governance**. The two measures that have been planned for attaining this goal are directly strengthening public accountability system. Namely the M1 measure is working towards enhancement of diagonal accountability mechanisms through use of ICT, whereas the M2 measure defines the accountability mechanisms for public administration including use of e-tools.

Table 5. Prevention and suppression of corruption, and promotion of the principles of good governance measures.

Measure	Description
M1: Increasing the number of information that the inspectorates publish on the internet, and establishing the type of information which would be of use to the companies and citizens.	/
M2: Introducing systems of integrity in the public administration, including appropriate e-tools.	Defining procedures for implementing policies of integrity/anti-corruption policies in the institutions, and adopting a methodology for implementation of integrity systems in the public administration.

Under goal number seven, the action plan specifies **efficient managing of public resources** with measures that do not offer direct response to the challenges explained in the previous chapter, whereas one measure under goal eight - **open data at the local level** does that. Measure number 3: Introducing systems of integrity at the local level, and usage of the open data in the systems of integrity corresponds to the need of development of local level mechanisms for holding government accountable.

Table 6. Open data at the local level measures.

Measure	Description
M3: Introducing systems of integrity at the local level, and usage of the open data in the systems of integrity.	/

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Empower citizens to use the public accountability mechanisms.

Only 13% of the citizens have used complaints as redress mechanisms for holding government and public services accountable. The majority of Macedonian citizens, 87%, have never filed a complaint. Such mentality is a relic from the previous system. However it demonstrates that the hallmarks of democracy – the accountability mechanisms- are not put in practice although they exist in law. Therefore it is highly needed for the government to empower citizens to use the public accountability mechanisms.

Show case the effectiveness of the public accountability mechanisms.

The little use of the redress mechanisms shows great distrust of the horizontal accountability system. Usually, this is result of uncertainty what the outcome of the procedure would be and if it will have negative impact on the service delivery or exercising of rights by citizens. Therefore, to increase trust in the system and the benefits of the accountability mechanisms the government needs to showcase their effectiveness. In this way a projected perception on the usefulness of the accountability mechanisms in exercising rights and service delivery will encourage citizens to use them more often.

Publicize and invigorate debates on the results of the work of accountability bodies, i.e. State audit office, the inspectorates, supervisory bodies and oversight hearings of the Parliament

Many important conclusions, recommendations and development guidelines are encompassed in the reports of the State audit office, the inspectorates and the oversight hearings organized in the Parliament. They do not receive enough attention nor initiate follow up debates for correcting the anomalies detected by this accountability bodies. The annual report of the Chief Auditor is every year politicized by blaming and shaming from the politicians without actually serving to its objective enhance integrity of public governance and eventually improve performance of the public sector. Therefore, it is of essence to not only publish but put efforts and resources into actions for invigoration of debates on the results of the work of the accountability bodies. In this manner their work will be also promoted and trust in such institutions as well as in the principle of accountable government will increase.

Build capacity for using accountability mechanisms among various societal actors

Citizens are more encouraged to hold Government accountable in a group rather than individually. It has a psychological effect that the group is sharing the ‘cost’ of eventual

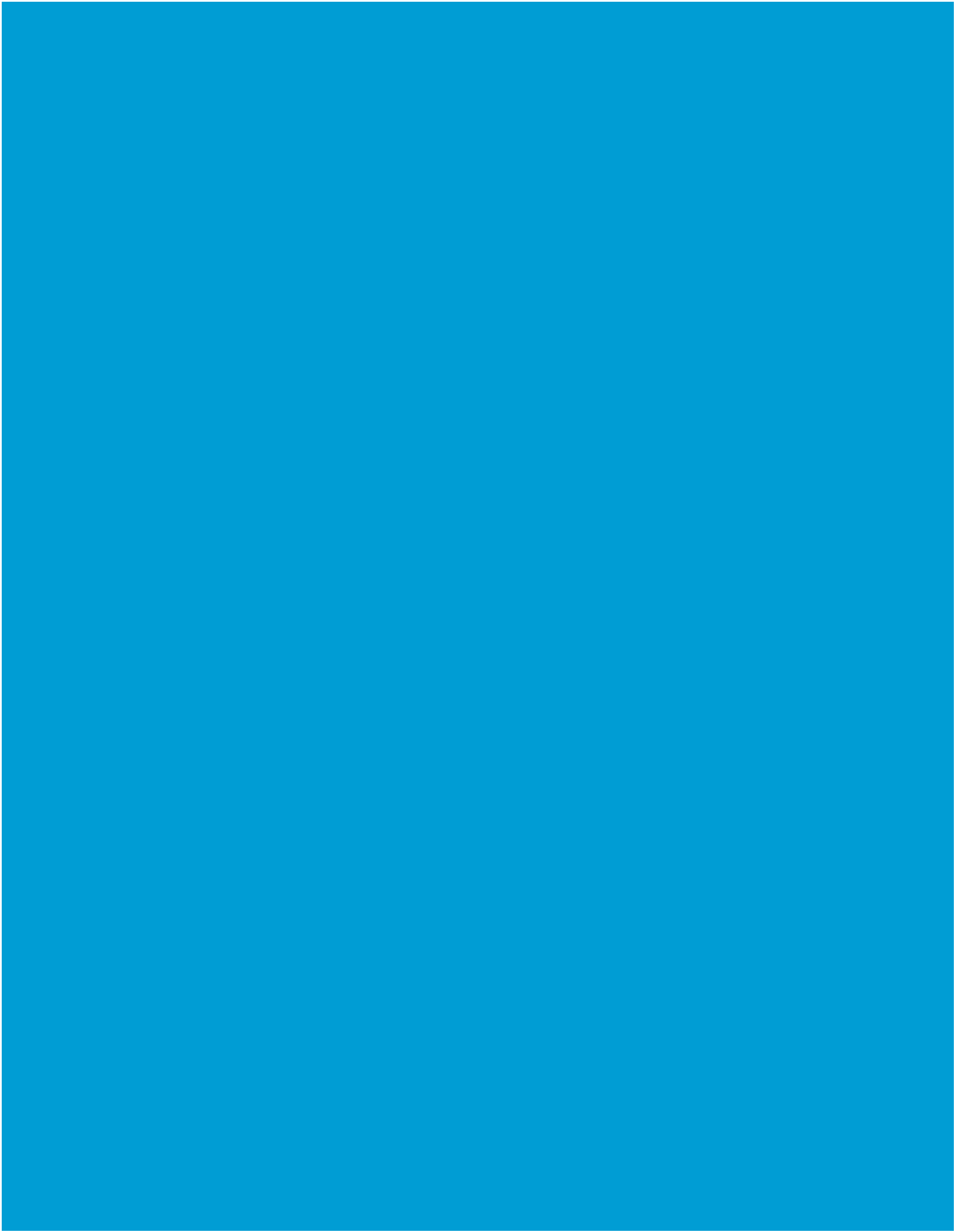
graveness of the government. Therefore, resources should be put in capacity building of societal groups on the manner and effect of applying the accountability mechanisms. Such societal groups not necessarily are CSOs but rather organization of consumers, organizations of patients, organizations of students, parent's associations and etc.

Make each public institution responsible to promote accountability mechanisms

The knowledge of the existence of the accountability mechanisms and the procedure for putting them in use is very low. People usually do not know that they can complaint for the quality of service they were (not) delivered, or if they do not know how to file a complaint. Public bodies should put efforts to promote accountability mechanisms through client/customer satisfaction surveys, annual evaluations and etc.

Make ICT applications to intensify use of accountability mechanisms (such as unanimous online complaints, satisfaction surveys and etc.)

Use of ICT in governance is intensifying. However, in Macedonia ICT is mostly used to provide greater participation of citizens in policy making or to enhance the responsiveness of the government and public services. ICT is rarely used by citizens to hold government accountable. Even the most common use of comments and blogs as expression of opinions on how government works and services are delivered are not recognized by citizens as legitimate avenues for holding government accountable. Therefore, development of anonymous online complaints and satisfaction surveys might to allow for fostering of culture for using accountability mechanisms.



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

