

## Is technological Approach to Municipal Bodies a Convenience or a Barrier for Citizens?

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### Abstract

Today, municipal bodies are oriented to create facilitation in the performance of municipal services, like so we constantly face new approaches and different orientations about how municipal services are provided to the citizen.

Nowdays the technological approach is present everywhere and that almost everything is almost technologically interlinked.

This approach has already been transferred to the municipal bodies that for some have created convenience and for others difficulties in processing different documents for the citizen, therefore in this paper the hypothesis I will treat is whether technological development is a convenience or a barrier to proceeding various communal documents.

The research is descriptive and explanatory of the results obtained from the survey questionnaire, where each type of data will contribute to answering different questions.

Questions will be drawn up in the form of structured questionnaires, and each question will have options to respond and the distribution of questionnaires will be made online (via the Internet).

As a model 50 citizens will be taken, where they will be selected randomly from the cities of Gjilan and Viti, after the data collection process is completed it will be analyzed through various computer methods, about the qualitative data and quantitative, while presentation will be done graphically via Microsoft Office.

The findings that result from this research will serve as an ease of the fact whether the technological approach to municipal bodies is a convenience or a barrier to the citizen and how much the changes from municipal legislation are welcomed.

**Keywords:** technological approach, Municipal Bodies, Citizens, Kosovo.

### Introduction

Based on the role that municipal bodies today have towards citizens, in this paper I have presented the functioning of the municipal bodies and their approach in the light of the facilitations for the execution of municipal works and the processing of documents by them.

And in this development I have presented the technological approach installed in the municipalities which for the result have the convenience or barrier for the citizen.

### Municipal system in Kosovo

Kosovo is a country that develops the municipal system of local government and as such since 1999 was under the international protectorate, it faced and was challenged by multiple transitions, three of which were topmost to socio-economic development and good governance in the country, such as: transformation from the authoritarian

political system to the democratic one; the transition from a planned state economy to the trade economy and the transfer of jurisdiction from UNMIK's temporary structures to independent Kosovo institutions.

Today, from an economic point of view, Kosovo is developing a trade economy with the focus of improving many economic factors in the country, where among the most important in the decline of unemployment and economic development, it is constantly being worked in this regard because unemployment continues to be still high in the country, even though the democratic governance has given enough "space" to the advantage of doing business in the country.

From the spectrum of the political class Kosovo has been committed to the process of building a governing system that carries the most advanced values and standards of Western democracy expressed through appropriate policies, institutional reform and the implementation of multilateral development agreements of the country. In this regard, many successes have been made in building a democratic political system in creating a solid basis for the development of trade economy based on competitiveness and the transfer of governance from international to local authorities, whereby on 17 February 2008 Kosovo declared its independence. Meanwhile, the building of the decentralized democratic system of local self-government was followed by various political difficulties and financial and human resources. It was a very sensitive, complex and sometimes unstable process, but it resulted to be successful. While in most of the countries of the region and beyond are made dual systems of local self-government, Kosovo chose the simple system of a degree of local self-government (LSG). This system is represented only by the elected citizens of the respective municipality, and the central government (CG) does not appoint its own representatives in the co-governance. The citizens will to be led for a term of four years delegate to two local government bodies (LG): the municipal assembly and the mayor. Decentralization of governance and building of the system of local self-government was not followed by the generation of own source revenues necessary for local economic development, but to a large extent (82%), the municipal budget is still dependent on the Kosovo budget.

In accordance with the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the "Ahtisaari Package", the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo has approved the LLSG as an organic or fundamental law for the organization and functioning of SGL in Kosovo. The law sets the norms and standards for a SGL, which is based on the 4 main pillars:

- Organization and operation of SVQ;
- The governance of local authorities (Local authonomy);
- Local democracy (election of municipal bodies);
- Supervision of local authorities;

This representation is done directly by the citizens in two main bodies LSG, the Municipal Assembly and the Mayor. While the basic principle of local self-government is equal representation of citizens in decision-making, this law and the law on local elections, defining the municipality only one electoral zone, citizens are only allowed to represent proportional representation only through political parties and citizen initiatives, but not of the citizens themselves.

## Technological approach to municipal bodies

The Municipal Assembly services for citizens and the work processes of the municipal administration have always been a challenge both for the citizen and for the employees of the Municipal Assembly.

They have been most of the time overloaded with paperwork, formalities, long lines in front of administration offices, loss of time, and frustrations on both sides.

And seeing all these obstacles, ATI-KOS has designed and implemented the project for e-municipalities in Kosovo, a UNDP-funded project, the office in Pristina and the Foundation for an open society in Kosovo.

The aim of the project is to provide high quality services to citizens, faster, more efficiently and with lower price. The installation of "ATI-KOS intranet" software in the 30 municipalities of Kosovo started with version 1.0 from 2003 and today is very sophisticated, trainings were also organized for the leadership staff and the workers of the municipality and created hardcopy manuals and digital manuals to help the process even more.

Initially, the design and publication of the Municipal Websites was launched for the 15 largest municipalities and later was designed for other municipalities as well, and the intranet dynamic link to the web site or online application for document processing today is applied in almost all municipalities .

### Research, Analysis and Presentation of results

The research is comprised of a composed questionnaire consisting of six closed questions where respondents will have the opportunity to select one of the mentioned options, and their processing is done through graphs and the percentage representation for each question from the answers received by the respondents.

Questionnaires are distributed during the month of November and the results have been processed continuously.

The results, as well as the graphical presentation are as follows:

Count of 1. Si e vlerësoni punën për procedim të dokumenteve në Komuna:

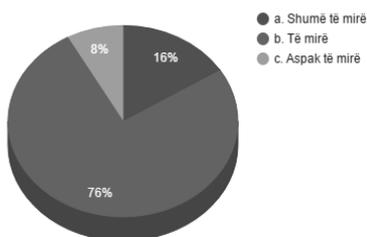


Figure 1. Graph of question 1

Count of 2. Cilën metodë të punës e preferoni kur shkoni në Komunën tuaj për procedimin e dokumenteve:

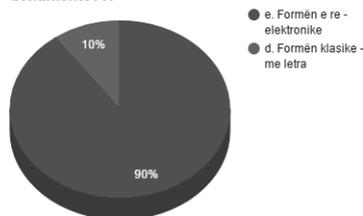


Figure 2. Graph of question 2

Count of 3. Si e vlerësoni qasjen teknologjike të instaluar në Komunë:

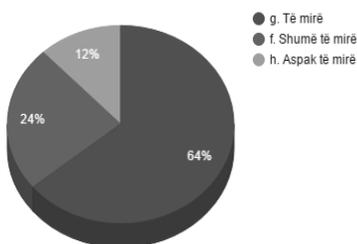


Figure 3. Graph of question 3

Count of 4. Çka ju lehtëson qasja teknologjike në Komunën tuaj:

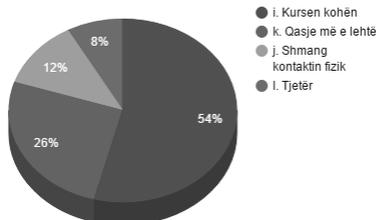


Figure 4. Graph question 4

Count of 5. Në çfarë barriera hasni gjatë procedimit të dokumenteve sa i përket qasjes teknologjike:

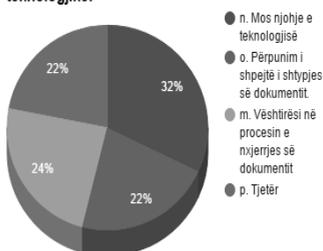


Figure 5. Graph of question 5

Count of 6. Qasja teknologjike ka krijuar lehtësim apo barrierë në përgjithësi për procedimin e dokumenteve në Komunën tuaj:

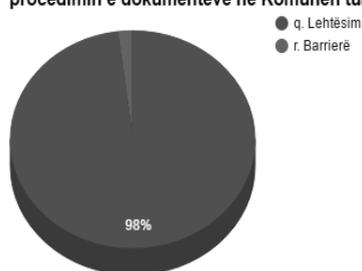


Figure 6. Graph of question 6

After presenting the results from the survey questionnaire, we see that in the first question on how citizens evaluate the processing of documents in Municipalities, 76% of them rated good, 16% rated them as very good, and the rest evaluated them as not good at processing the documents from the Municipality.

From the question of what form of services they request, we see that 90% of them choose the electronic method of work and 10% of them the old classical method.

And from question number three we see that the citizens opinion of the technological approach installed in the municipality evaluate it as a good approach (64%), some consider it very good (24%) and 12% not good at all.

Time saving, avoiding physical contact with staff and easier access are the main opponents of the technological approach.

And the most commonly encountered barriers to document processing in terms of technological access are the difficulties in the process of extracting the document, lack of technology knowledge, and quick document processing.

And in the last question the respondents answered that the technological approach generally facilitates the processing of documents in the Municipality.

So, from a structured questionnaire, distributed online (via the internet), where 50 respondents were randomly sampled, we got results and presented them graphically,

we saw that the technological approach facilitates the processing of documents in Municipalities as well as access technology shortens the time for documents to be extracted.

## Conclusions

After elaborating all that was introduced, we saw that the municipal bodies are used by each citizen and that each one has access to them to carry out change services and to process the various documents.

We saw that The Law on Municipalities has undergone changes like so technological intervention has greatly facilitated the municipality-citizen approach, therefore it is worth pointing out that the municipality should focus on the orientation and follow up of the technology, because from the questionnaire we have seen that many respondents have expressed concerns that they do not have enough information on technology and that they should be worked with and trained in order to provide the service efficiently.

Based on the results outlined, we conclude that the technological approach is a convenience on document processing because it shortens the time of service delivery and is considered as an easier access.

So, as a conclusion we have that the technological approach is not a barrier to the citizen but it is a convenience for performing communal services.

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