

# Report on the monitoring of local administration – **The municipality of Bečej**



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## Summary

The monitoring and evaluation of the functioning of the municipal administration in Bečej, carried out during 2022, showed that the situation in all six analyzed areas of public administration in this municipality was evaluated with a total score of 3, on a six-point scale 0–5. The analysis, on the one hand, showed that the best situation in Bečej is in two areas – Human resource management and Accountability. Within the first area, the institutionalization of human resources management was the best rated, while in the second, the proactivity of the local administration in publishing information on the official website was rated the best.

On the other hand, the monitoring showed that Bečej has the worst situation in the areas of public administration related to the Service delivery and Policy development and coordination. Specifically, within the first mentioned area, the availability and quality of providing administrative services to citizens was rated worst, while inclusiveness and openness in policymaking in local administration were rated worst within the second.

## Conclusions

The findings of the research showed that the Municipality of Bečej won a total of 157 points (out of a possible 262), that is, **that the analyzed indicators in all 6 areas of public administration were met by 59.9%. The overall assessment in all six analyzed areas of public administration is 3, on a six-point scale 0-5.** Additionally, the analysis showed that Bečej has the best situation in the area of human resources management, with 73.6% of points scored, and the worst in the area of providing administrative services to citizens, with 35.7% of points scored.



## Strategic framework for public administration reform

Within the first area – *Strategic framework for public administration reform*, it was determined that municipality of Bečej administration ensured the participation of the civil sector and interested parties in public consultations during the preparation of the LAP for the fight against corruption and AP for improving the position of women and gender equality 2018-2022. These are documents that, among other things, contain goals related to the improvement of the functioning of certain segments of the municipal administration. The identified deficiencies refer to the lack of participation of CSO representatives in all bodies formed for the implementation and monitoring of these documents, as well as the fact that these bodies do not meet regularly (at least once every six months) and do not prepare annual reports on the implementation of the adopted documents.



## Policy development and coordination

Within the second area – *Policy development and coordination*, research findings showed that the transparency of the work of the Municipal Council is ensured to a large extent, as minutes and adopted proposals for decisions and other acts are publicly published after the sessions. However, the public is not informed about the scheduled sessions and their agenda, nor the information is prepared to bring citizens closer to the essence of the adopted decision proposals, first of all, in terms of understanding their impact and benefits for the citizens themselves. Also, public consultations in the process of drafting regulations and public policies are generally carried out in accordance with the law, and the public is informed about the public consultations in half of the cases by numerous communication channels (official internet presentation of LGUs, official account of LGUs on Facebook, daily newspapers). However, early public inspection is carried out exclusively with regard to the adoption and modification of spatial plans, because it is a legal obligation, and it did not take root as a form of consultation in the early phase when drafting other documents and regulations. Other shortcomings include the fact that there is no single place (page, banner, etc.) on the official internet presentation of the municipality where all information about public consultations (public hearings, public inspection, etc.) is published, as well as the fact that reports on public consultations are not publicly available in all cases.



## Public services and human resource management

Monitoring of the third area – *Public services and human resource management*, established that the basic directions and goals in the area of human resources management are defined by a special act, as well as that an adequate institutional framework has been established for the performance of HRM activities in accordance with the size of the municipality. Also, the internal acts of the municipality provide for the performance of all work in the area of HRM, and as a good practice, the up-to-date management of personnel records on employees, as well as the preparation and public publication of reports on the number and structure of employees, are highlighted. Furthermore, the analysis pointed to serious shortcomings in the process of officials' recruitment for executive positions, such as: public competitions do not contain job descriptions for advertised job positions, in certain situations the conditions for the positions are adjusted before the competition is announced for the admission of pre-determined candidates, decisions on the selection of candidates in public competitions are not made public. Also, it was concluded that in the last two years, there were no unsuccessful competitions for filling the positions of civil servants, as well as their dismissal without legal grounds. There was no appointment of acting officials to these positions in the previous period. When we talk about the effectiveness of measures to improve integrity and prevent corruption, it is concluded that the municipal administration has established all the measures/mechanisms provided for by law – the Code of Conduct for officers and officials, the Local Anti-Corruption Plan and the Complaints Commission, but that reports on their implementation are not drawn up or are not publicly available.



## Accountability

Within the fourth area – *Accountability*, a high level of proactiveness of the municipal administration in publishing information about its work on the official internet presentation was identified. The general picture, however, is spoiled by the findings that most of the analyzed documents were published only in the Serbian language, while the Hungarian language versions are available mostly in the official gazette of the municipality, and less often on the Hungarian version of the website. Given that citizens, as a rule, do not get informed by reading official gazette, this practice is not positively evaluated since Hungarians make up the majority of the population in the municipality. On the official website of the municipality, one can find information about the internal arrangement and organization of the municipal administration, with detailed contact information of each organizational unit, but without a description of the work they perform. Also, the Information sheet, the Municipal statute, the Public procurement plan, all valid planning documents, as well as all documents related to the adoption and execution of the budget, are available.



## Service delivery

Within the fifth area – *Service delivery*, it was established that there is no separate planning document related to the improvement of the quality of public services provided to citizens, but that the LAP for the fight against corruption contains goals aimed at improving the quality of administrative services. In the municipal administration, the establishment of a Single administrative point is in progress, and until now citizens have been able to submit several different requests and exercise more of their rights/services in one place and in all official languages in use at the municipality Service Center. The municipal administration did not have a "Guest book" nor did it measure the degree of satisfaction of citizens with the services provided in the Service Center. When it comes to the provision of online services, using electronic services such as the national *eUprava* portal, the analysis showed that municipality administration of Bečej does not use this portal to a significant extent to provide its services, but that there are several online services on its official website, such as a virtual registrar. Finally, the research confirmed that in Bečej, the technical standards prescribed by law are largely met, which enable unhindered access and availability of administrative services for persons with disabilities.



## Public financial management

Within the sixth area – *Public financial management*, the monitoring findings showed that the budget calendar is not respected during the adoption of the municipal budget. Budget expenses and expenditures are shown according to program classification, but the budget does not contain any gender-responsive goal. The deviation between the initially planned and realized budget revenues and expenditures in 2020 amounted to less than 15%, which can be considered a good result. The analysis further pointed to a high level of transparency of the municipal budget, first of all, in terms of the easy availability of documents related to its adoption and execution. However, certain shortcomings were also observed, related to: the unavailability of the report on the use of the budget reserve, the non-publication of the citizens' guide through the Decision on the final account of the municipal budget and the irregular publication of budget documents in an open format. In the field of implementation of public procurement, it was concluded that public procurement procedures are carried

out on the principles of transparency, equal treatment of bidders, prohibition of discrimination, and that a commission is formed for their implementation in accordance with the provisions of the law. However, the low level of competitiveness of the implemented public procurement procedures is noticeable, first of all, bearing in mind the small number of bidders per procedure, i.e. the fact that in more than half of completed public procurements, the contract is awarded to the only bidder in the procedure.

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