



EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI IN 2020

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INTRODUCTION:

Transparency International Georgia assessed the activities carried out by the City Council of Zugdidi municipality (Hereinafter Zugdidi City Council) in 2020.

The report is based on the information requested and received from the City Council as well as the information published on the official web-site of the City Council, and on observations of our organization.

The research covers the period of 2020.

Transparency International Georgia [evaluated](#) Zugdidi City Council's performance in 2020 as well. The study covered the period from November 2017 to 2019.

CHAPTER 1. MAIN FINDINGS

- During the research period, the oversight function of Zugdidi City Council over the Zugdidi City Hall and the legal entities has been partially improved. Based on the recommendation provided by Transparency International Georgia, the City Council of Zugdidi approved the abolition of the dysfunctional Zugdidagroservice LTD, which is a significant improvement in terms of resource management;
- The City Council has not identified a single case of the conflict of interests and a violation of any type in the activities of Zugdidi City Hall, including in the process of state procurements;
- Zugdidi City Council held 18 sessions, including 6 extraordinary sessions;
- Zugdidi City Council adopted 42 resolutions, 35 of which were authored/initiated by Zugdidi City Hall and 7 - by the City Council;
- Two individuals among Zugdidi City Council officials submitted incomplete asset declarations;
- During the same period, only two out of six factions of the City Council - Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia and Conservatives submitted initiatives. The factions - United National Movement, Industrials, Greens and European Georgia have not submitted a single initiative to the City Council.
- The expenditures made by Zugdidi municipality, which summed up to GEL 276,826, is greatly disproportional with the minimal performance of the factions;

As of 2020, only 7 out of 50 members of the City Council are [women](#), which is 14% of the total number;

- The Gender Equality Council operates in the City Council of Zugdidi, however, similar to the last period, the Gender Equality Council has not carried out the analysis of the legal acts nor has it provided the expertise on the draft legal acts. It has not elaborated the monitoring and evaluation system for ensuring gender equality. The Gender Equality Council has not submitted a report to the City Council, and has not prepared propositions and recommendations as well;
- During the research period, the members of the City Council were absent 333 times in total during the City Council sessions, including 321 absences - without a valid reason. The members of the City Council did not participate in the commission sittings 431 times, including 425 absences - without a valid reason;
- Among the members of the City Council, a member of Greens faction, Zviad Korshia, missed the most sessions of the City Council (16 sessions) without a valid reason, while a member of European Georgia faction, Irakli Gurtskaia and a member of United National Movement faction, Malkhaz Tsikutania, missed the most sessions of commissions (31 sessions) without a valid reason;
- 25 members of the City Council have not exercised their right to deliver a speech in 2020, including 4 with the status of a public official.
- 16 members of the City Council have not exercised their right to deliver a speech during the sessions of commissions of the City Council. 41 out of 50 members of the City Council have not delivered reports to the City Council.
- A total of GEL 1,316,000 was allocated for the City Council expenses in the 2020 budget of Zugdidi municipality, out of which GEL 1,036,444 was spent on the remuneration. GEL 17,200 was given to the City Council staff as a bonus. The City Council spent 42,2 tons of fuel (42,257 liters) worth of GEL 74,112.
- Among the fuel used by Zugdidi City Council, the Chairman of Zugdidi City Council, Mamuka Tsotseria and his Deputy Chairmen - Besik Tchezhia and Tazo Patsatsia consumed a total of 14,637 litres of fuel in 2020, worth of GEL 25,954 in total, which is 34.6% of the fuel consumed by Zugdidi City Council during the same period.

CHAPTER 2. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI

The City Council of Zugdidi is the representative body of Zugdidi Municipality, which exercises the [powers](#) determined by the Local Self-Government Code in **Zugdidi Municipality**. The City Council also **exercises control on the activities of the executive body and its officials** within the limits established by law and carries out other powers determined by the Constitution of Georgia, other legislative acts, and the Rules of Procedure of the City Council.

The City Council of Zugdidi has **50** members, **35** of whom were elected in local single-mandate majoritarian electoral districts, while **15** were elected through the proportional system.

There are only 7 [women](#) among members of the Municipal Council, which amounts to 14% of the total membership. Among the female members of the Council, 5 are officials, including 1 chairperson of the commission, 2 deputies of factions, and 2 deputy chairpersons of factions.

The City Council has the authority to create commissions for the purpose of preparing issues for the City Council, facilitating the implementation of decisions, and exercising control on the structural units of the City Hall and legal entities established by the City Council. The City Council of Zugdidi has created the following **commissions** for the duration of its term of office:

1. The Commission on Legal, Mandate, and Human Rights Issues (Chairperson – Sandro Sordia);
2. The Commission on Finance, Budget, and Revision Issues (Chairperson – Davit Gakharia);
3. The Commission on Healthcare and Social Issues (Chairperson – Otar Kadaria);
4. The Commission on Education, Culture, Sports, Youth and Gender Issues (Chairperson – Ekaterine Kipaia);
5. The Commission on Economy, Urban Development and Property Management Issues (Chairperson – Irakli Lagvilava).

There are 6 factions in the City Council: Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia, United National Movement, Conservatives, Industrials, Greens, and European Georgia.

Each chairperson of every faction has a deputy chairperson, while the Chairperson of Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia faction has 2 deputy chairpersons.

Members of the Municipal Council exercise their powers without remuneration, only the work of officials of the Municipal Council is remunerated. In total, 21 of the 50 members of the Municipal Council of Zugdidi are officials. The detailed information can be found in the following annex.

General Statistics:

During the reporting period, the Municipal Council held 18 sessions in total, including 6 extraordinary sessions. The extraordinary sessions were initiated by the Mayor of Zugdidi. 5 out of 18 sessions carried out in 2020 were held online, because of the restrictions introduced due to COVID 19 pandemic.

Number of Sessions Carried Out by Zugdidi City Council in 2020	
Regular Sessions	12
Extraordinary Sessions	6

During the reporting period, the City Council of Zugdidi adopted 42 resolutions, 35 of which were initiated by the City Hall and 7 by the City Council.

The body responsible for the oversight on the legal acts adopted by the Municipal Council of Zugdidi prepared 3 reports/remarks. The City Council shared all of them.

Only a single petition was registered at Zugdidi City Council during the reporting period, which was supported by the City Council.

CHAPTER 3. IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

Transfer of property to the state free of charge:

During the reporting period, the Municipal Council of Zugdidi transferred the following pieces of property to the state free of charge:

A [plot of land](#) with an area of 320 sq/m, located on Tbilisi Street in the City of Zugdidi.

A plot of land with an area of 76 sq/m, located in the village of Kulishkari, Zugdidi (Cadastral Code: №43.07.41.975). This plot of land was transferred to Georgian State Electrosystem JSC on 4.09.2020.

Important documents adopted by Zugdidi City Council:

During the reporting period, Zugdidi City Council adopted a medium-term development document of Zugdidi municipality 2020 - 2023 (Decree N73, 03.07.2020).

Control of the bodies accountable to the City Council:

The City Council of Zugdidi has not identified any conflict of interest or infractions in the activities of the Zugdidi City Hall, including in the process of public procurements – not even when Transparency International Georgia [published](#) a research on the father of a member of the City Council, Zaza Prokopenko, who is involved in the simplified procurements of Zugdidi City Hall and expressed suspicions on the [legality](#) of the process.

Zugdidi City Council [abolished](#) Zugdidagroservice LTD founded by Zugdidi municipality, being dysfunctional, the company did not fulfill its obligations, while a part of its functions were executed by other public bodies. It did not have its income and completely relied on the subsidies (GEL 300,000 on average) received from the local budget. The decision was made by the City Council in January 2021, which does not coincide with the reporting period, however, the reports of the study group, fractions and the Audit Office, as well as Transparency International Georgia's [research](#) were published during the previous period.

CHAPTER 4. ACTIVITIES OF COMMISSIONS AND FACTIONS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Activities of commissions of the City Council:

The five standing commissions of the City Council of Zugdidi held 71 sessions in total during the reporting period. Two sessions of two commissions were cancelled due to lack of quorum. The commissions submitted a total of 9 issues to the City Council for consideration. In addition, the Commission on Legal, Mandate, and Human Rights Issues prepared 158 reports on the compliance of draft legal acts with legislation to be considered by the City Council.

Number of Sessions of Commissions Held in 2020				
Commission on Legal, Mandate and Human Rights Issues	Commission on Healthcare and Social Issues	Commission on Finance, Budget and Revision Issues	Commission on Education, Culture, Sports, Youth and Gender Issues	Commission on Economy, Urban Development and Property Management Issues
15	7	14	12	23

Number of issues submitted by commissions to the City Council				
Commission on Legal, Mandate and Human Rights Issues	Commission on Healthcare and Social Issues	Commission on Finance, Budget and Revision Issues	Commission on Education, Culture, Sports, Youth and Gender Issues	Commission on Economy, Urban Development and Property Management Issues
36	8	9	9	89

Activities of factions of the City Council:

There are 6 factions in total in the City Council of Zugdidi elected as of 2020. Four of these factions didn't initiate a single issue in 2020.

The factions of the City Council were only able to initiate 18 [issues](#) during the reporting period. The Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia faction initiated 16 [issues](#), while the

Conservatives initiated 2 issues. A relevant decree was adopted by the City Council in each case. It is noteworthy that the aforementioned two factions were the only ones [submitting](#) the initiatives during the previous period (November 2017 to 2019) too.

Faction	Number of Initiated Issues
Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia	16
United National Movement	0
Conservatives	2
Industrials	0
Greens	0
European Georgia	0
Total Number of Initiated Issues	12

Considering the minimum activity carried out by the factions, the expenditures incurred by Zugdidi Municipality on its functioning – which amounted to **GEL 276,826** in total – are disproportionately large, specifically:

Expenditures incurred on the activities of factions (in GEL)			
Telephone Communication	Fuel Costs	Remunerations	Business Trips
2,030	25,457	248,999	340

CHAPTER 5. MONITORING OF THE BODIES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE CITY COUNCIL

According to the Local Self-Government Code, the city council has the powers to monitor the activities of the municipality's executive bodies and of their officials and to hear and evaluate¹ their reports, and the mayor is accountable to the municipal council of the municipality and to the population².

The City Council of Zugdidi heard and positively evaluated the reports of the Mayor of Zugdidi and as well as individual officials of the City Hall. Representatives of the City Hall were invited by the City Council, the commissions and the factions to discuss individual issues 84 times.

According to the City Council, only a single member of the Council has approached the Mayor of Zugdidi with a question addressing the information on the projects of mini stadiums implemented in 2018-2020.

Zugdidi City Council has not identified any conflict of interest or misconduct in the City Hall's activities, including in the process of public procurements, when Transparency International Georgia [published](#) a research on the father of a member of the City Council, Zaza Prokopenko, who is involved in the simplified procurements of Zugdidi City Hall and expressed suspicions on the [legality](#) of the process.

The City Council has approved all the initiatives brought forward by the Mayor of Zugdidi. The City Council has not identified any fact of violation of the Ethics Code.

In 2020, individual commissions and factions addressed Zugdidi City Hall with 22 different [recommendations](#), 8 of them were fully approved by the City Hall, 5 of them partially, while 9 recommendations were disapproved.

1 Article 24, Paragraph 1, subparagraph 1 "g.a"

2 The Code of Local Self- Government, Article 48, Paragraph 2

CHAPTER 6: INCOMPLETE ASSET DECLARATIONS AND INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITY

Only two individuals among Zugdidi City Council officials submitted the incomplete asset declarations:



Mikheil Jobava

The Chairman of the faction "Industrials"

In his [declaration](#) submitted in February 2021, Mikheil Jobava noted that he owns 50/50% of shares in [Nigi 21](#) LTD and [Georgian National Product](#) LTD, however, he has not transferred the shares with

management right to another person despite the requirements of the [law](#).

It is noteworthy, the Chairman of the faction "European Georgia" - Batlome Shelia is Mikheil Jobava's business partner in Nigi 21 LTD..



Batlome Shelia

Chairman of the faction "European Georgia"

In his [declaration](#) submitted in July 2020, Batlome Shelia noted that he is the director and owns 25% of

shares in [Nigi 21](#) LTD. However, he has not left the Director's position and has not transferred the shares

with management right to another person despite the requirements of the [law](#).

Requirement of legislation:

According to the [Law](#) on Conflict of Interest and Corruption in Public Institutions, an official is obliged to fill out an asset declaration completely within two months after his/her appointment to the office³, indicate information about his/her and his/her family members' property and economic interests⁴, transfer the management rights of his/her stakes in business entities to another person⁵, and resign from the position of the head (director) of the business entity within 10 days after being appointed to the office.⁶

3 Paragraph 1, Article 14

4 Article 15

5 Paragraph 6, Article 16

6 Article 14, Paragraph 10

CHAPTER 7: INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

The [Rules of Procedure](#) of the City Council of Zugdidi does not specify what kind of absence from a session by a member of the City Council should be considered as absence without a valid reason. The Rules of Procedure rely on a provision of the Local self-Government Code, [according](#) to which the powers of a member of a city council is to be prematurely terminated if he/she has not participated, without a valid reason, in the work of the city council for 6 consecutive months.

Participation in sessions of the Municipal Council:

Members of the City Council were absent from the Council's sessions 333 times, including 321 absences without a valid reason.

Among members of the City Council, the Deputy Chairperson of the Greens faction, Zviad Korshia, missed the most sessions (16 sessions) of the City Council without a valid reason, followed by a member of the United National Movement faction, Ana Tstlidze, the Deputy Chairperson of the European Georgia faction, Gela Toloraia, and a member of the Georgian Dream faction, Otar Shamatava (15-15 sessions).

See the detailed information in the annex.

Participation in sessions of the Municipal Council's commissions:

Members of the City Council also missed sessions of commissions. There were 431 absences in total, including 425 absences without a valid reason.

Among members of the City Council, Irakli Ghurtskaia, a member of the European Georgia faction, missed the most sessions of commissions (31 sessions) without a valid reason and Malkhaz Tsikutania, a member of the United National Movement faction (31 sessions).

The Chairperson of the City Council, Mamuka Tsotseria, and the Deputy Chairpersons, Besik Tchezhia and Tazo Patsatsia, are not members of commissions and, accordingly, they do not take part in sessions of commissions with the status of a commission member.

See the detailed information in the annex.

An indicator of delivery of speeches and reports at the sessions of the City Council and delivery of speeches at the sessions of commissions of the City Council

25 members of Zugdidi City Council have not exercised their right to deliver a speech at the sessions of the City Council in 2020, including four public officials: The Chairperson of the Greens faction, Joni Jikia; The Deputy Chairperson of the Conservatives faction,

Giorgi Todua; The Deputy Chairperson of the United National Movement faction, Data Shelia, and the Deputy Chairperson of the European Georgia faction, Gela Toloraia.

Additional “silent” members of the City Council are:

- Members of the Georgian Dream faction: Joni Zarandia, Otar Marshava, Salome Patsatsia, Zaza Andriadze, Giorgi Kukava, Zaza Khubua, Gogita Zarkua, Davit Chapandze, Mamuka Toloraia, Gogi Todua, Gia Danelia, Soso Gogokhia, Paata Ebralidze, Ramaz Jabua, Irakli Janashia, Zviad Kiria and Tengiz Almasia;
- A member of the Greens faction, Zviad Korshia;
- A member of the Industrials faction, Lasha Esebua;
- A member of the United National Movement faction, Malkhaz Tsikutania;
- A member of the European Georgia faction, Irakli Ghurtskaia.

16 members of the City Council have not exercised their right to deliver a speech at the sessions of the commissions of the City Council in 2020. Regarding presentation of reports, 41 out of 50 members of the City Council have not used this opportunity.

See the detailed information on the delivery of speeches of the members of Zugdidi City Council at the sessions of the City Council and Commissions and presentation of reports at the sessions of the City Council in annex.

CHAPTER 8. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

The City Council of Zugdidi has adopted, by relevant resolutions, all the regulations that ensure citizen involvement in the activities of the municipality, including in those of the City Council:

- As we have been informed by the City Council, the website of the municipality has been updated, and an electronic system of petitions is now being introduced;
- The Civil Budgeting Program has been introduced, by which citizens themselves decide what should be done with allocated funds;
- Citizens are informed about important issues through SMS Info;

The Zugdidi Municipality is the only municipality in the region in which members of the City Council [submit](#) activity reports four times a year;

The City Council holds public discussions of the budget together with the City Hall;

Members of the Municipal Council are involved in “general assemblies” and in the process of implementation of the Village Support Program; they also hold meetings with constituents;

The quality of access to public information has [improved significantly](#).

CHAPTER 9: ACTIVITIES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY COUNCIL

The Gender Equality Council has been operating in Zugdidi City Council since 2018. The action plan was approved by the Municipal Council on April 5, 2019, however, despite this fact, similar to the previous study period, in 2020, the Gender Equality Council:

- Has not analyzed the legal acts
- Has not provided the expertise on a single draft legal acts
- Has not elaborated the oversight and evaluation system for ensuring gender equality
- Has not submitted a report at the City Council, not has it created proposals and recommendations.

CHAPTER 10: EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI

Remunerations and bonuses:

In 2020, the total amount of salaries given to members and staff of the City Council of Zugdidi amounts to GEL 1,036,444. During the same period, bonuses were only given to the City Council's staff, with a total amount of GEL 17,200.

Remunerations issued at the City Council of Zugdidi elected in 2020 (in GEL)	
Public Officials	485,399
Staff members of the City Council	551,045
Total	1,036,444

See the detailed information on remunerations issued for Zugdidi City Council officials in 2020 in the annex.

Remuneration for the work of members of the City Council:

The Local Self-Government Code provides the possibility of reimbursement of costs incurred for those members of the City Council who are not officials and, accordingly, do not receive remuneration. The total amount of these reimbursements at the City Council of Zugdidi equaled GEL **134,583** in 2020.

Expenses of business trips:

During the reporting period, a total of GEL **3,115** was spent on the work trips of members and staff of the City Council of Zugdidi within the country and abroad.

Telephone communication expenses:

Zugdidi City Council spent GEL **9,304** on telephone communication.

Vehicles and fuel expenses:

There are four vehicles on the balance sheet of the City Council of Zugdidi:

Vehicle Brand	Year of Issue	Year of Purchase	Amount Paid	Used By
Hyundai IX5	2011	2011	43,800	The Chairperson of the City Council - Mamuka Tsotseria
Toyota Camry	2012	2012	44,500	The Deputy Chairperson of the City Council - Besik Chezha
Hyundai Sonata	2010	2011	47,500	The Deputy Chairperson of the City Council - Tazo Patsatsia
Mitsubishi Chariot	2000	2012	11,750	Staff of the City Council

GEL **14,196** was spent on the repair and changing of tires of the vehicles on the balance sheet of the City Council of Zugdidi.

Only the officials of the City Council use the fuel purchased with the local budget; the Chairperson was given a limit of 700 liters of fuel per month, the Deputy Chairpersons - 400 liters, and the chairpersons of commissions and factions spend an average of 150 liters and the limit for the Chairpersons of the factions equals 50 liters. The staff of the City Council is given a limit of 500 liters per month.

In total, the City Council of Zugdidi [spent](#) 42,2 tons (42,257 litres) of fuel in 2020, with [a value](#) of GEL **74,112**.

The Chairperson of the City Council of Zugdidi, Mamuka Tsotseria, and his Deputy Chairpersons, Besik Chezha and Tazo Patsatsia, spent 14,637 litres of fuel in total in 2020, with a total value of GEL 25,954, which amounts to 34,6% of the fuel spent by the City Council during the same period.

Name/Surname	Amount of the Fuel Spent	Cost of the Fuel Spent
Mamuka Tsotseria - Chairman of the City Council	6,716	11,956
Besik Chezha - Deputy Chairman of the City Council	3,127	5,538
Tazo Patsatsia - Deputy Chairman of the City Council	4,793	8,459

RECOMMENDATIONS

Exercise of oversight function:

- Members of the City Council of Zugdidi should be actively involved in oversight activities. In particular, they should use control mechanisms more often and should supervise the process of public procurements and large infrastructure projects more effectively;
- The standing commissions of the City Council should be actively involved in the process of oversight of the activities of the executive bodies;
- The City Council should actively and conscientiously reveal cases of conflict of interest, incompatibility with office, and violations of the Rules of Procedure of the City Council and of ethical norms in the municipality.

Accountability:

- Attendance of members of the City Council at the sessions of the Council and its commissions should be improved. We believe that every member of a City Council should take responsibility and attend the sessions. In addition, members of a City Council should be subjected to corresponding sanctions in the event of missing a session without a valid reason;
- Members of the City Council should actively exercise their right to deliver a speech at the sessions of the City Council and Commissions, submit their thoughts on the issues under discussion, and provide the information on specific needs of citizens to the City Council as well as to the City Hall;
- Filling out asset declarations by officials is an important mechanism for ensuring transparency and accountability. At the same time, filling out declarations incompletely also contains a risk of corruption. For this reason, it is necessary that officials fill out declarations completely and without any shortcomings.

Activities of factions:

- It is important for the activities of factions to be beneficial for the relevant self-government. Factions should get actively involved in the process of considering and deciding on issues that fall under the powers of the City Council, study / control the activities of the City Hall and municipal legal entities; submit initiatives to the City Council; get actively involved in the budgeting process; etc. Factions increase citizens' involvement in self-government, as well as support local initiatives and advocate for citizens' needs and problems. Therefore, we call upon the factions to use these instruments actively.

Expenditures of the City Council:

- It is important that the expenses incurred by the City Council to be in compliance with the exercise of the powers assigned to the Council by law;
- The City Council should exercise strict control on the administrative expenditures of both the representative body and the municipality in general, and should be oriented on efficient spending of financial resources.