Regional Resilience Hub

Three Policy Recommendations

Strengthening Municipal Transparency and Inclusive Participation in Adjara

Prepared by Step Toward Success
within the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Fellowship

Updated working version | 1 November 2026



Principles for the Use of Evidence

This package distinguishes between (a) the applicable legal framework, (b) information published and verifiable on the municipalities' official websites, and (c) the experiences of project participants. Public sources were reviewed on 8 November 2026. The examples below are based on specific official webpages and published documents; they do not constitute a comprehensive audit of all municipal websites, procedures or practices.

Participant quotations, survey percentages and seminar findings have not been invented. Internal project documentation confirms that an advocacy seminar was held in Batumi, with participants from Batumi and Keda, and that the World Café method was used to identify challenges and needs. However, the interim report available to us does not contain specific participant quotations, survey results or a quantitative assessment of each topic. Such material should be added before final submission only after the original records have been checked.

All three recommendations are presented as proposals for governance improvements. They do not allege that Keda or Batumi Municipality is violating the law or failing to consider citizens' proposals. Examples of existing online services and published materials are used to show which mechanisms are already in place and how they could be linked, used and explained to citizens more easily.

Executive Summary

- Recommendation 1 — Unified, proactive and citizen-friendly access to municipal information.
- Recommendation 2 — Regular, inclusive and geographically accessible municipal consultations.
- Recommendation 3 — A transparent mechanism for recording, considering and responding to citizens' proposals.

RECOMMENDATION No. 1

Strengthening Proactive, Unified and Citizen-Friendly Access to Municipal Information

Recipients: Keda Municipality Sakrebulo (Municipal Council) and Batumi City Municipality Sakrebulo; relevant structural units of the respective Mayor's Offices.

Problem and objective: Information about municipal decisions and participation mechanisms may be distributed across different webpages, news items and documents. Citizens need to be able to easily find out what issue is being considered, when and where it will be discussed, which body makes the decision, how they can submit their views and where they can find the outcome. A review of public webpages shows that both municipalities already use various channels to publish information; this recommendation aims to connect those channels in a more citizen-oriented way.

Legal and institutional basis: Article 85[1] of the Organic Law of Georgia, the Local Self-Government Code, requires municipalities to inform the public and publish specified public information, including minutes of Sakrebulo and committee meetings, the draft budget and information about petitions. Paragraph 5 of the same article authorises the Sakrebulo to expand the list of information subject to proactive publication. Article 85 establishes guarantees and forms of citizen participation.

Recommendation

The Sakrebulos, in coordination with the relevant municipal departments, should create or strengthen one prominent digital space entitled "Citizen Participation and Municipal Decisions". This space should provide citizens, in one place, with meeting schedules, agendas, information about committee work, draft documents, minutes, adopted decisions, public consultations, and instructions on how to submit petitions and requests for public information. Where possible, the information should be accompanied by a short explanation written in plain language.

Recommended Practical Steps

- Create a separate, easy-to-find section that can be accessed from both computers and mobile phones.

- Bring together in one place the calendar of Sakrebulo and committee meetings, agendas, relevant draft documents, minutes, final decisions and participation instructions. Each item should show the date it was last updated and the responsible contact channel.
- Prepare a short explanation for important issues: what the issue concerns, whom it affects, which body is considering it, when the discussion will take place and how citizens can submit their views.
- Alongside digital information, use communication channels in administrative units, service centres and other channels accessible to local communities.
- The Sakrebulo should consider the option provided under Article 85¹(5) and, where appropriate, approve an expanded list of information for proactive publication.

Local Application

Keda Municipality: The official Keda Municipality website already displays digital services for citizens, including an online petition, an online survey and an online public-information request service. It also has separate sections for participatory budgeting and materials of the Civil Advisory Council. The page containing the 2026 Sakrebulo minutes includes minutes of the Sakrebulo and its Bureau, as well as documents of standing committees. A unified information page could connect these existing resources and explain to citizens how to use them.

Batumi City Municipality: The official Batumi Sakrebulo website published schedules for committee, Bureau and Sakrebulo meetings: four committee meetings were scheduled for 29 October 2026, followed by a regular Sakrebulo meeting on 30 October. The agenda of a working group meeting dated 10 September 2026 concerned examination of a proposed change to the city's administrative boundaries. For issues of this kind, a unified page should show citizens not only the meeting time but also the substance of the issue, relevant documents and a channel for feedback.

Publicly Verifiable Evidence

No. / Source	Specific, Verifiable Fact	What This Confirms and Its Limitations
1. Organic Law of Georgia, Article 85¹ წყაროს გახსნა	The law requires municipalities to inform the public about participation opportunities and publish minutes of Sakrebulo/committee meetings, the draft budget, petitions and other listed public information.	This is the basis for legal obligations; it is not evidence that a specific municipality has failed to comply.
2. Official Keda Municipality page — 2026 minutes and citizen services წყაროს გახსნა	The Keda website publishes a section with 2026 Sakrebulo and Bureau minutes; it separately lists the Finance and Budget, Social Affairs, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, Mandate/Procedural/Ethics, and Property Management committees. The homepage displays online petitions, online surveys and requests for public information.	Confirms that information channels and documents exist; ease of finding the pages, update frequency and actual citizen use have not been fully measured.
3. Batumi Sakrebulo meeting schedule and working-group agenda წყაროს გახსნა	The Sakrebulo website published the 29 October committee schedule (Education/Culture/Tourism/Sport; Infrastructure; Finance/Economic Development; Legal and Procedural Matters) and the regular Sakrebulo meeting on 30 October. On 10 September, it published the agenda of a working group on changes to administrative boundaries.	Confirms publication of information about meetings and specific issues; it does not confirm that all documents are available in one place or in plain language.

Project-specific evidence that may be attached: whether a citizen information page exists; dates when the page was updated; the number of active links brought together in one place; the number of short explanations published about meetings and consultations; and the topics of enquiries related to finding public information.

Expected outcome: The project interim report confirms that an advocacy seminar was held in Batumi with participants from Batumi and Keda, using the World Café format. The final document may include the event programme, agenda, anonymised working notes and actual examples from participants about finding information—but only where these can be located in the original records.

Possible indicators: Citizens can find all key stages of the decision-making process in one place; opportunities for timely information and for submitting views before a decision are increased.

Important methodological note: Public sources confirm the mechanisms and published matters reflected in those sources. By themselves, they do not establish that citizens experience barriers, that responses are delayed or that a legal violation has occurred. Such conclusions require participant records, survey results or documentation of specific cases.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2

Strengthening Regular, Inclusive and Geographically Accessible Municipal Consultations

Recipients: Keda Municipality Sakrebulo and Batumi City Municipality Sakrebulo, in coordination with the relevant structural units of the respective Mayor's Offices.

Problem and objective: The existence of formal participation mechanisms is important, but their use depends on how promptly information is shared, where meetings are held, the language and format of the discussion, and whether views can be submitted in person, in writing or online. Accessibility for rural residents, women, young people and representatives of religious minorities should be assessed through specific consultations rather than assumed in advance.

Legal and institutional basis: Article 85 of the Local Self-Government Code identifies the following forms of citizen participation: a general assembly of a settlement, a petition, a Civil Advisory Council, participation in Sakrebulo and committee meetings, and hearings of reports by elected officials. Municipalities may also define additional forms. Article 86[1] sets out the role of the Civil Advisory Council and the possibility for it to consider the budget, spatial-planning, infrastructure and social projects.

Recommendation

The Sakrebulos and Mayor's Offices should develop an annual public-engagement plan that includes consultations both in administrative centres and in relevant villages and city neighbourhoods. The plan should combine online and in-person participation, advance information in plain language, and publication of an anonymised summary after each meeting.

Recommended Practical Steps

- Publish a consultation calendar annually, setting out in advance the periods for discussing the budget, municipal programmes, infrastructure priorities and other important issues.
- In Keda, plan outreach meetings in different administrative units and villages; in Batumi, plan them in different administrative districts and neighbourhoods, according to the area affected by the issue.
- As a pilot standard, plan at least two outreach or community-based consultation meetings per year in each municipality; increase the number where necessary.
- Enable citizens to submit their views at meetings, in writing, through online forms, or through petitions and other mechanisms established by law.
- After each meeting, publish a short summary of the issues discussed, proposals raised, next steps and responsible unit. Do not publish personal or sensitive data.

Local Application

Keda Municipality: The official Keda website lists participatory budgeting, the Civil Advisory Council and a municipal council working on women's and children's issues among the mechanisms available to citizens. The recommendation is to complement these existing channels with a pre-planned cycle of in-person consultations in villages, particularly when discussing the budget, social programmes and spatial-planning or infrastructure issues.

Batumi City Municipality: Consultation topics in Batumi can be linked to the actual areas of responsibility of Sakrebulo committees: infrastructure; finance and economic development; education, culture, tourism and sport; and legal and procedural matters. By a Sakrebulo decision of 30 June 2026, amendments were made to the support programme for homeowners' associations and its registration rules. When programmes of this kind are discussed, consultations could be held in the relevant neighbourhoods and with homeowners' associations.

Publicly Verifiable Evidence

No. / Source	Specific, Verifiable Fact	What This Confirms and Its Limitations

No. / Source	Specific, Verifiable Fact	What This Confirms and Its Limitations
1. Organic Law of Georgia, Articles 85 and 86¹ წყაროს გახსნა	The Code identifies general assemblies of settlements, petitions, Civil Advisory Councils and participation in Sakrebulo/committee meetings as forms of citizen participation; the Advisory Council is to be presented with the draft budget and important infrastructure/social projects.	Confirms the legal channels for participation; it does not establish how frequently or inclusively citizens use them.
2. Keda Municipality citizen services წყაროს გახსნა	The official page separately lists participatory budgeting, the Civil Advisory Council, the municipal council working on women's and children's issues, online petitions and surveys.	Provides a practical basis for expanding the use of existing forms; website links do not show participant numbers or geographic coverage.
3. Batumi Sakrebulo committee schedule and homeowners' association programme წყაროს გახსნა	The schedule for 29 October 2026 lists four committee meetings and the Sakrebulo meeting on 30 October. A decision of 30 June 2026 amended the support programme for homeowners' associations and its registration rules.	These specific municipal areas could become topics for neighbourhood-based consultations; the source does not establish that consultations on these matters have not taken place.

Project-specific evidence that may be attached: number and geographic coverage of consultations; number of participants and voluntarily provided, aggregated gender/age data; number of written and oral proposals; publication of meeting summaries; and the number of proposals reflected in municipal plans or programmes.

Expected outcome: According to the project interim report, participants from Batumi and Keda took part in the first advocacy seminar and discussed challenges and needs using the World Café format. Evidence may include the actual seminar notes or flipcharts, anonymised participant feedback and meeting attendance records. Specific barriers or quotations should be recorded only after the source has been checked.

Possible indicators: Consultations increasingly include urban and rural communities; participants have more than one channel through which to submit their views; and municipalities have documented information about local needs.

Important methodological note: Public sources confirm the mechanisms and published matters reflected in those sources. By themselves, they do not establish that citizens experience barriers, that responses are delayed or that a legal violation has occurred. Such conclusions require participant records, survey results or documentation of specific cases.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3

Establishing a Transparent Mechanism for Recording, Reviewing and Responding to Citizens' Proposals

Recipients: Keda Municipality Sakrebulo and Batumi City Municipality Sakrebulo, in coordination with the relevant structural units of the respective Mayor's Offices.

Problem and objective: Citizens may participate through different channels—a petition, a general assembly of a settlement, a Civil Advisory Council, a public consultation or participation in a Sakrebulo meeting. After submitting a proposal, citizens need to know whether it has been registered, which body or committee will consider it, what stage it has reached and what response or decision has been made. The documents available to the project do not confirm the number of specific cases in which citizens did not receive a response; therefore, this recommendation is presented as a preventive proposal to improve the process.

Legal and institutional basis: Article 85[1] of the Local Self-Government Code provides for publication of petitions within 10 days of their registration. Article 86 establishes the procedures for submitting and registering a petition, referring it to the relevant committee or working group or to the Mayor, and informing the applicant. The Code also establishes the framework for Civil Advisory Councils and participation in public meetings. The proposed additional register should complement these legal procedures and must not replace or alter statutory deadlines or rules.

Recommendation

The Sakrebulos, in cooperation with the Mayor's Offices, should introduce a publicly accessible, anonymised mechanism for recording citizens' proposals and tracking follow-up action. It should show the registration date or number, topic, responsible committee or department, stage of consideration, decision, date of response and next step. The applicant's personal data must not appear in the public version.

Recommended Practical Steps

- Create a register or table for petitions, decisions of general assemblies of settlements, recommendations from Civil Advisory Councils and proposals received through public consultations.
- Assign a number or date to each entry and indicate the responsible structure, stage of consideration, date of the official response or decision and a link to the relevant public document.
- Use clear status labels: "Registered", "Referred for consideration", "Under review", "Accepted", "Partially taken into account", "Not taken into account—with reasons", "Implementation planned" and "Implemented".
- After submission, send the citizen an acknowledgement of receipt and information about the next stages. Existing statutory deadlines and procedures must remain unchanged.
- Publish an anonymised short report every quarter entitled "Your Proposal—The Municipality's Response", showing the number of proposals received, their topics, consideration outcomes and next steps.

Local Application

Keda Municipality: The Keda website already lists online petition and online public-information request services for citizens; a separate page publishes the 2026 Sakrebulo and Bureau minutes. The recommendation is to connect the channel for submitting a petition or proposal with information about its subsequent consideration, so that citizens can view its status, the responsible committee and the decision made in one place.

Batumi City Municipality: The Batumi Sakrebulo website has separate sections for "Petitions", "Access to Public Information", "Budget and Reports", and an archive of Sakrebulo decisions and meetings. The recommendation is to create a visible link between these existing sources of information, showing citizens how a particular petition moves to committee consideration and what final response is provided.

Publicly Verifiable Evidence

No. / Source	Specific, Verifiable Fact	What This Confirms and Its Limitations

No. / Source	Specific, Verifiable Fact	What This Confirms and Its Limitations
1. Organic Law of Georgia, Articles 85¹ and 86 წყაროს გახსნა	Article 85¹ provides for publication of petitions within 10 days of registration. Article 86 establishes the process for registering a petition, referring it to the relevant committee/working group or Mayor, and informing the applicant.	The legal mechanism exists; the recommendation proposes a unified, easy-to-read status view for citizens and does not change the procedures established by law.
2. Official Keda Municipality portal წყაროს გახსნა	The Keda homepage provides access to online petitions and online requests for public information; a separate page publishes the 2026 Sakrebulo and Bureau minutes.	Confirms existing channels for submission and locating documents; the public page does not show the individual status of each submitted proposal unless that information is published separately.
3. Official Batumi City Municipality Sakrebulo portal წყაროს გახსნა	The Sakrebulo website has sections for petitions, access to public information, the budget and reports; it also publishes meeting schedules and an archive of decisions.	Confirms the existence of several relevant information channels for citizens; a full audit of the status of every petition case has not been conducted.

Project-specific evidence that may be attached: number of proposals recorded in the register; share of applicants informed within statutory time limits; number of reasoned responses published; number of proposals reflected in decisions or programmes; and publication of quarterly reports.

Expected outcome: The project interim report confirms that the Policy Lab was intended to prepare three recommendations on municipal transparency and minority inclusion. Specific cases in which participants had difficulty finding out the status of a submitted proposal should be added only on the basis of a verified record, survey or anonymised quotation obtained with consent.

Possible indicators: Citizens have clear information about the stage and outcome of consideration of their proposals; municipalities have a better-documented process for participation and feedback.

Important methodological note: Public sources confirm the mechanisms and published matters reflected in those sources. By themselves, they do not establish that citizens experience barriers, that responses are delayed or that a legal violation has occurred. Such conclusions require participant records, survey results or documentation of specific cases.