

SOCIAL AUDIT REPORT FOR ISTOG

MONITORED PROJECTS “CONSTRUCTION OF THE ISTOG RIVERBED” “CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN MUZHEVINE, DREJE AND LUBOVË”





November 2025

This report has been drafted by the DEMOS Project, implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Kosovo.

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DEMOS Decentralisation and Municipal Support

The Decentralization and Municipal Support (DEMOS) Project supports 38 municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo in achieving more democratic local governance and better municipal management. Additionally, the DEMOS Project supports the Government of Kosovo in developing policies that are more favorable for rule-based municipal financing. The project is co-financed by the European Union in Kosovo, the Swiss Government, and the Swedish Government and is implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Kosovo. DEMOS support for Kosovos municipalities is part of the Municipal Performance Grant, which ensures support for well-performing municipalities.

A special focus of the Project is also the support for the central government where DEMOS focuses on providing assistance in building policies for a more favorable framework for decentralized governance. According to the first component of the Project, DEMOS III aims to open data for broader public review of municipal performance and to initiate Social Audits “to monitor the impact of Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects ODD citizens” The DEMOS project has also supported the development of activities involving citizens in decision-making, including Social Audit Teams that have overseen the implementation of projects financed by the Performance Grant.

BIRN Kosovo is an independent, non, governmental organization whose goals are to inform citizens, and contribute to the democratic transition process in the country, promote accountability, the rule of law, and policy reform. BIRN Kosovo specifically aims to serve as an oversight mechanism for public institutions by monitoring the work of governing and public institutions. In addition, through the production of high-quality and impartial televised debates and training young people on argumentation and debating skills, BIRN aims to promote and encourage a culture of debate in Kosovo.

BIRN vision is to secure its position as the leading investigative reporting organization in Kosovo, addressing the need for objective, high-quality, and sustainable reporting on the country's many challenges. BIRN Kosovo, in partnership with Democracy Plus, was commissioned by DEMOS to facilitate Social Auditing in 16 selected projects in six municipalities - Drenas, Lipjan, Istog, Dragash, Kaçanik, and Mamushe.

Democracy Plus (D+) is an independent, non-profit organization established in March 2016. D+ is committed to building a democratic society by increasing citizen participation in political processes, enhancing accountability, and influencing decision-making processes. D+ seeks to integrate information technology into all their efforts to promote the use of the Internet, which plays a vital role in democratizing societies. D+ aims to contribute to the creation of good governance practices by public institutions at both central and local levels, strengthen the rule of law, advance political parties, and support free and fair electoral processes. D+ undertakes initiatives aimed at bringing decision-makers closer to citizens through policy research, facilitation of dialogue or communication, and public education.

HANDIKOS was established in 2000 with the mission of advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring their full inclusion in social life. The organization brings together a wide group of persons with disabilities and their family members. In addition to providing assistance to persons with disabilities, its daily activities also include community engagement and advocacy for marginalized groups. The main objective of HANDIKOS Istog is the integration and full recognition of persons with disabilities in the society, advancement of their rights, and the enhancement of the living standards of this community.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with the predefined methodology, BIRN and HANDIKOS Istog facilitated the establishment of the “Social Audit” team in the Municipality of Istog. Within three months, the team was engaged in overseeing and analyzing six investment projects with a total value of 520,938 Euros, including: Construction of the Istog Riverbed and Construction of Roads in Muzhevina, Dreja and Lubova

The Social Audit Team worked in separate groups for onsite monitoring and, after the completion of the projects, conducted joint consultations to identify general and project-specific findings. The monitoring process identified a series of key issues related to transparency, quality of works, and compliance with project timelines. Specific recommendations were drawn for the municipality to improve the processes of managing and monitoring public projects, on the basis of these findings.

The Municipality of Istog is one of the beneficiaries of the Municipal Performance Grant. To enhance the quality of projects financed through this grant, a group of civil society activists from Istog, supported by the DEMOS Project and MLGA, launched in August 2025 a civic initiative to oversee the implementation of public projects.

Social Audit in Kosovo is implemented by DEMOS and civil society organizations since 2022 and was further developed during 2023–2025. With the support of DEMOS and MLGA, 35 groups have been established with more than 700 active citizens. With over 700 members engaged over the years, the Social Audit teams have provided more than 200 concrete recommendations for improving local governance and increasing institutional transparency.

Throughout 2025, BIRN and D+, together with six local organizations — HANDIKOS Istog, HANDIKOS Kaçanik, HANDIKOS Drenas, NGO Avoko, YAHR, and MAMUŞA EMEKÇİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ — and with the support of DEMOS, established six Social Audit teams in the municipalities of Dragash, Drenas, Lipjan, Mamushë, Kaçanik, and Istog. These teams monitored 16 projects in the beneficiary municipalities and were trained through specialized sessions on the fundamentals of Social Audit, financial management, and strategic communication.

In Istog, following a research and community consultations, more than 20 citizens were selected to join the Social Audit Team. The trainings included lectures and field practice, such as establishing contacts with the municipality, analyzing documents, and verifying facts. 10 field visits and over 7 official meetings were carried out in the process. The team developed concrete recommendations, shared with the municipality, which the Municipality of Istog committed to implementing.

This process demonstrates the importance of citizen engagement in enhancing transparency, improving the management of public projects, and strengthening local organizations in municipal governance.

FINDINGS OF SOCIAL AUDIT TEAMS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS



The Municipality of Istog failed to fully implement the standards defined by the Administrative Instruction on Open Administration in the process of organizing budget hearings.



In the areas where the project was implemented, there were no clear instructions on the works and details of the project, as required by the MLGA's transparency guidelines.



Investment projects were not issued to public discussion in their planning phase and the municipality has no records of community consultations.



The municipality failed to take measures to secure the worksites where construction was underway.



There is a risk that the implementation of the project (riverbed) may be jeopardized due to the return of unspent grant funds within the fiscal year.



The Municipality has not allocated all the necessary funds to fully implement the project.

Findings for the Specific Project: Road Rehabilitation in the Villages of Muzhevinë, Drejë, and Lubovë



The municipal investment did not include the installation of curbstones/side protections that shield vehicles and pedestrians from accident risks.



Bridges and irrigation channels along the asphalted roads lack protective barriers and risk-warning signage.



The project did not foresee the installation of speed bumps or road signage to reduce vehicle speed.



Local residents noted that the area requires public street lighting.

Findings in the Riverbed Construction Project in Istog



Since the second phase of the riverbed construction project had not yet begun (as of November 2025), the Social Audit Team reviewed the project design and assessed the ongoing works from the first phase. Recommendations were issued to ensure that the second phase meets required standards.



The project does not ensure accessibility according to standards for persons with disabilities and those with sight impairment.



The first phase foresees concreting the riverbed, which has a significant environmental impact.



The project does not include child-safety protective measures across the entire area.



The investment area contains old trees that must be preserved and maintained under the new project.



The pedestrian promenade project does not include a public toilet, which is essential for this area.



WHAT SHOULD A SOCIAL AUDIT TEAM KNOW?

What should a Social Audit Team know? Teams need civic will and courage; it is recommended that they have basic knowledge in:

- The functioning of the Municipality;
- Access to public documents;
- The process of public consultations - in particular during budget planning and municipal investments;
- Public Procurement Process.

THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE SOCIAL AUDIT PROCESS TAKES PLACE

The Municipality of Istog has a population of 33,008 inhabitants and is among the medium-sized municipalities in Kosovo. REKOS2024 census data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS)¹ indicate that the number of inhabitants of Istog is similar that in Deçan, Kaçanik and Dragash.

The municipal budget is 15,937,257 Euros², of which 4,237,000 Euros allocated for capital investments, constituting about 26.6% of the total budget.

The evaluation in the Performance Report and the assessment of the Performance Grant criteria identified Istog as a municipality eligible to be a beneficiary of the Grant.

The Municipal Performance Grant is a financial support allocated to municipalities after the evaluation of their performance in managing local government. The grant annually evaluates over 100 indicators including transparency, provision of public services, budget planning and implementation of development projects.

Istog is among the municipalities benefiting from the Municipal Performance Grant. As a result of good management and successes achieved, it has been ranked among between municipalities benefiting from this grant, financed by MLGA and DEMOS. For the two projects, Istog benefited with around 1.1 million Euros.

The two important projects supported in this scheme are, Construction of the Istog Riverbed and Construction of Roads in Muzhevina, Dreja and Lubova.

The Istog riverbed remediation project is a vital project for the local community of Istog. The first phase of the project has been implemented by the municipality, while the Performance Grant funds are expected to be invested in the second phase of the project.

The other project financed by the grant funds, "Construction of roads in Muzhevina, Dreje and Lubovë", is also important for the community as over 300 thousand Euros have been spent on the construction of these roads in these three villages, which until now were unpaved.



¹ REKOS 2024, Population Census in Kosovo

² Istog Municipality Budget

CHAPTER I

COMMON FINDINGS IN MONITORED PROJECTS IN ISTOG



Findings in the organization of budget hearings

In 2023, the Ministry of Local Government Administration, with the support of the DEMOS Project, redefined the legal framework under which municipalities conduct citizen consultation processes. The Administrative Instruction on Open Administration in Municipalities outlines advanced standards for municipalities in organizing public consultations and disclosing public data.

Based on this instruction, municipalities hold meetings with citizens with the aim of ensuring wider inclusion in decision-making. According to the principles, the Municipality consults citizens through:

- Public meetings;
- Public consultation on projects, normative acts and policy documents;
- Consultative meetings with citizens;
- Budget hearings.

During the training program, the Social Audit Team was informed about the obligations of local authorities regarding the public consultation process. Based on these principles, the team examined whether the applied the minimum standards of the Administrative Instruction on Open Administration.

The team reviewed the public documents of the municipality that were prepared following the consultations conducted by the Municipality. During the work, the team analyzed the invitations to public hearings, meeting minutes, and final reports from the budget hearings published on the official website of the Municipality of Istog.

Based on the published documents, minutes, and reports, the team found that the public

consultations held in 2025 in the Municipality of Istog represented an important step toward strengthening local democracy and institutional transparency.

The Municipality held over 10 meetings with citizens for the drafting of two key budget documents—the Medium-Term Budget Framework and the Municipal Budget. From the reports published online, the team observed that citizen participation in these hearings has been increasing; however, the meetings still gather fewer than 30 participants on average.

Public consultations are attended by 65% men and 35% women, and not all participants present requests during the hearings.

The minutes and the report of the hearings seem to have been drafted in accordance with the rules; however, their content needs to be improved. The data from the minutes and final reports show that the content is incomplete: citizens' requests are recorded very briefly, and the justifications for accepting or rejecting these requests are short and formulaic.

According to the Administrative Instruction on Municipal Transparency, the working group responsible for budget hearings must provide detailed justifications for the approval or rejection of proposed projects. In the Municipality of Istog, these justifications are too brief and do not provide a clear explanation of the reasons for rejecting specific requests.

Istog is estimated to have met the criterion for employing people with disabilities in public institutions at only 42%.

Another issue identified during the review of materials is the significant absence of the voices of persons with disabilities in the specific budget hearings, where the proposed projects did not include components addressing the needs of persons with

disabilities. Across all budget hearings, no instances were observed where the full adaptation of infrastructure to guarantee accessibility for persons with disabilities was requested.

In reviewing the online materials, the group found that the municipality has adhered to the requirements of the AI by informing citizens about the meeting schedule and promoting the meetings through the municipality's social media channels.



Findings on the Discussion of Investment Projects

Article 17 of the [Administrative Instruction on Open Administration in Municipalities](#) promotes the standard that capital investment projects must be discussed with the community during the early stages of planning. According to this standard, project designers and municipalities should discuss projects with citizens prior to implementation, ensuring that projects are comprehensive and well-understood by the entire community.

Based on this standard, before launching the procurement process and during project design, municipalities are expected to organize meetings with citizens to showcase the project, the available budget, and its anticipated impact on the local community.

The Social Audit Team found that no formal meetings with the community were held for the two projects implemented Istog.

Because the riverbed project is in its initial phase and the tender has not yet been announced, the Social Audit team has decided to engage in this discussion format to provide their comments on the project's preparatory phase.

Based on this principle, the team analyzed the situation on the ground, discussed with municipal officials, and provided specific recommendations that should be implemented in the project.

Article 17 Forms of citizen involvement in decision-making

- 1. The municipality must ensure the involvement of citizens in consultations and decision-making by using but not limited to holding:*
 - 1.1 Public meetings;*
 - 1.2 Public consultation on draft normative acts and policy documents;*
 - 1.3 Consultative meetings with citizens;*
 - 1.4 Budget hearings.*
- 2. Handling requests, petitions and individual and group requests of citizens.*
- 3. In order to obtain the views of citizens in the decision-making process, the municipality ensures the implementation of the minimum standards of public consultation set out in this Administrative Instruction.*
- 4. In order to document the holding of meetings, public consultations, budget hearings and other meetings, the municipality ensures the invitations, materials, provision of conditions, keeping minutes and drafting reports from meetings and activities of involving citizens in public discussions and consultations, during the drafting of local acts and documents.*
- 5. The municipality's website and government platforms for public consultations will be used as platforms for the realization of the purposes of this article.*
- 6. The Office for Public Communication is responsible for informing citizens about the place, date, time, venue, agenda, when meetings, budget hearings, public consultations and other additional meetings will be held.*



Findings on Fulfilling the Obligation to Inform Citizens

The Administrative Instruction on Open Administration requires municipalities to provide citizens with sufficient information on all investment projects. Under these principles, municipalities must publish contracts and investment project documents on their official websites to ensure citizens have access.

The team found that the Municipality of Istog has published the contract for the road project, while the riverbed project is not accessible online.

Administrative Instruction on Open Administration in Municipalities

For every project, the municipality must place an informational board at the procurement activity site, indicating the project name, the investor, the implementing company, and the project duration. To enhance transparency, the municipality must also include the full name and contact details of the project manager, supervisor, or supervising company.

In this context, the team also assessed transparency at the physical project sites. According to the Administrative Instruction, the municipality must place an informational board at every worksite, clearly stating the investor and identifying the person responsible for supervising the contract.

The team found that such data is missing from the road project, as the municipality has not placed information boards or notices, as required by the Administrative Instruction for Open Administration in Municipalities.



Findings on Worksite Safety

During field visits, the Social Audit Team found that the Municipality of Istog had not ensured compliance with occupational health and safety rules, required by Law, at several public worksites under its responsibility.

The Law on Occupational Safety and Health requires employers and responsible authorities to take measures to ensure the workplace is safe and workers protected from risks. The law sets out the employer's responsibility to identify and assess risks, create safe working conditions, provide worker training, and issue instructions on the use of equipment and machinery. It also requires employers to appoint trained personnel for workplace safety and health, who monitor and implement preventive measures, including documenting risks and the measures taken to mitigate them.

Specific details regarding the placement of warning signs and fencing around danger areas are not included directly in the law, but are defined in secondary legislation.

In areas where road works have been carried out, no warning signs or signage have been placed for the ongoing works, while the investment project for regulating the riverbed is not fenced off and the construction area is accessible to citizens, including passersby and children. Likewise, there were no instructions or warnings regarding potential hazards.

This finding is particularly significant because the Law on Occupational Safety and Health requires companies and responsible authorities to take safety measures at worksites, ensuring that they are fenced, marked, and provide clear instructions for citizens and workers about risks. Failure to comply with this legal obligation significantly increases the risk of accidents and physical injuries.

The absence of safety measures at public worksites presents a serious risk to citizens and workers. Unprotected and unmarked areas can cause accidents, falls, physical injuries (including property damage), and pose legal and financial liabilities for the municipality.

They also damage the institution's reputation for failing to uphold basic safety and protection standards. On 31 October 2025, the Social Audit Team submitted a recommendation to the Municipality of Istog, requesting

the enforcement of this rule. In its official response, the municipality stated that the fencing and securing of construction sites would begin immediately.³



Findings on accessibility for persons with disabilities

During the Social Audit process, it was found that the municipality's road-paving projects do not include advanced accessibility measures for persons with disabilities. Since these projects involve roads, they generally do not require high levels of adaptation for accessibility. However, the Social Audit Team focused its assessment on the riverbed rehabilitation project to identify accessibility-related issues.

In reviewing the first phase of the riverbed project—which has already been implemented—the team observed that the area lacks designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities, tactile guiding tiles for blind persons, and accessible seating adapted for wheelchair users.

The team also noted that in the second phase of the project, which was the focus of monitoring, several planned bridges are not suitable for wheelchair users.

The Social Audit Team identified that future projects must include concrete measures to ensure universal accessibility, including:

- designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities,
- tactile guiding strips for blind persons,
- adapted seating for wheelchair users,
- and mobility-friendly infrastructure for users of assistive devices.

These shortcomings demonstrate a lack of inclusion of vulnerable groups in project design and implementation, increasing access barriers for citizens with disabilities and failing to meet universal design standards.



³ Municipality of Istog_Meeting with the director Genc Ademaj_06.11.2025

CHAPTER II

SPECIFIC FINDINGS FOR THE PROJECT “CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIVERBED”



Delays in Procurement Procedures and Project Transparency

During monitoring of the riverbed construction project in Istog in September, the team found that procurement procedures for contracting the works have not yet begun. The tender for construction of the riverbed was published on 30.12.2025, and the deadline for submission of bids/applications is 10.12. 2025. According to the contract notice, the duration of the contract will be 24 months, and the estimated contract value is 7,498,356 Euros.

The Social Audit Team concluded that the project must be published and accessible to citizens in order to guarantee transparency and community involvement in the investment process. Publishing the project allows citizens to be informed about planned interventions, provide comments and suggestions, and increases public trust in municipal investments. This practice is also essential to avoid misunderstandings, potential misuse of funds, and to ensure that the project is implemented in line with legal and social standards.



Findings on Environmental Impact

The Social Audit Team observed that the ongoing projects have a direct impact on the environment, especially in the case of the riverbed rehabilitation. Logging of trees for the riverbed cleaning must be conducted in a controlled manner, avoiding the cutting of mature trees and preserving biodiversity. Planting new trees should be carried out by analyzing the terrain and choosing species suitable for the climate of Istog, as experience from other municipalities shows that trees planted without planning do not survive the first year.

The municipality must also ensure that wastewater discharge into the rehabilitated section of the river is not allowed until wastewater treatment facilities are installed. This measure is necessary to allow the use of the river promenade and prevent foul odors caused by wastewater.

The Social Audit Team recommends re-evaluating the plan to reinforce the final section of the riverbed with stones and concrete due to potential environmental damage. The practice of the Municipality of Malisheva has shown that concrete-lining caused nearby wells to dry up and had negative effects on aquatic life.



Infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities

The Social Audit Team found that the riverbed construction project in Istog does not provide accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Future projects must include designated parking spaces, tactile guiding strips for blind persons, accessible seating for wheelchair

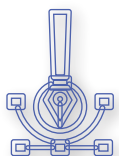
users, and infrastructure adapted for persons using assistive mobility devices. Currently, the project lacks tactile tiles for blind persons and does not offer adapted seating or parking for persons with special needs.



Lighting and Safety

Discussions with municipal officials, and data from the project board for the riverbed, reveal that no public lighting has been envisaged so far. The Social Audit Team recommends that the project include public lighting to allow for walking and mobility of citizens in evening

hours. Furthermore, the absence of protective side barriers along the riverbed poses a safety risk for citizens, considering the considerable distance from the promenade to the river.



Additional Infrastructure and Services for Citizens

During its work, the Social Audit Team identified the need for additional investments to adapt the surrounding spaces along the river in Istog. The team found that it is necessary to build a paid public toilet near the promenades, which should also be accessible for persons with disabilities. A symbolic fee may be used for its maintenance.

It is also recommended to add more pedestrian bridges allowing passage from one side of the river to the other, suitable for all categories, including persons with disabilities and parents with strollers. Currently, the project table envisages only one arched bridge, which does not appear appropriate for passage by persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER III

SPECIFIC FINDINGS FOR THE PROJECT “CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN MUZHEVINĚ, DREJĚ AND LUBOVĚ”



Findings on Road Safety and Irrigation Channels

The Social Audit Team found that in the village of Muzhevině, the irrigation channel remains open alongside the road, posing a significant risk for residents, especially children who move near it.

Along the length of the road, there is a lack of clear signage in the areas near this channel, which should warn residents and visitors of the open channel, ensuring safe movement.

The Social Audit Team recommends that the bridge over the channel be equipped with protective side rails on both sides to prevent accidental falls. The team also found that barriers and warning signs should be placed along the road to increase safety for citizens and children who frequent the area. Furthermore, it is necessary to install public lighting and waste bins along the asphalted roads to maintain the safety and hygiene of the area.



Quality and Supervision of Road Paving

The Social Audit Team in Istog found that the paving of roads in Muzhevině, Drejě and Lubově must be supervised to ensure that the thickness and width of the asphalt match the approved project. The paving must not obstruct the natural flow of water, in order to avoid the risk of flooding during rainy seasons.

Additionally, the group recommends that road signage indicate the weight limits of vehicles allowed to pass, in order to preserve

the integrity of the asphalt. The municipality must ensure that the road paving will not be damaged in the future by the installation of sewer or water supply networks, and must set the requirement that roads be paved only in areas where underground infrastructure has already been planned, in order to avoid asphalt damage during maintenance or repairs. Road signage must be added, as most roads in the area lack traffic signs and white road markings.



Legal Status and Public Access

The Social Audit Team finds that the municipality must ensure that all paved roads are public and that their construction does not violate the law. This is essential to guarantee free access for citizens and to comply with legal standards for the ownership and use of public infrastructure.



CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the project, the Social Audit Team analyzed the work and drew several conclusions submitted to the municipality, as recommendations.

Through the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

1. Recommendations for citizen involvement



- When preparing projects, the Municipality must promote their public discussion during the planning stage, as recommended by the Administrative Instruction on Municipal Transparency.
- During budget hearings and the drafting of planning documents, the Municipality must provide detailed justifications for accepting or rejecting proposed investment projects.
- In the future, the Municipality of Istog must publish detailed information about projects, including contract management documents, paid invoices, completed and paid works, any contract amendments, and the reasoning behind those amendments.
- The Municipality must fulfill its obligation to install information boards at project sites, publicly displaying the names of project supervisors and their contact details.
- Alternative methods should be found to increase the participation of women and persons with disabilities in budget hearings and consultations.

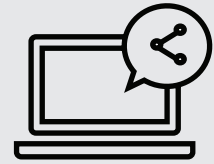
2. Recommendations for the Project Planning Process



Through the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- Procurement procedures must be carried out on time to avoid losing donor funds and to respect contractual deadlines.
- Planned projects must ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with relevant standards.
- Projects should be designed to guarantee long-term sustainability and to avoid the need for repeated interventions on curbs, bridge protections, and irrigation canals.

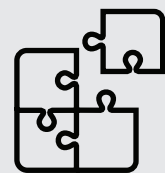
3. Recommendations for Project Supervision



Through the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- Supervision of works must be active and ensure that construction is carried out in full compliance with the project design and applicable standards.
- Particular attention must be given to road signage during supervision.
- Warning signs and protective barriers must be installed at all public construction sites and on roads where works are taking place.
- Ensuring the fencing of construction areas, especially the riverbed, to prevent the entry of citizens, especially children.
- Clear guidance must be provided to citizens and workers about potential hazards at construction sites.

4. Recommendations for new investments in the project



In the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- To build a tactile path for blind people near the river promenade.
- To install adequate benches for persons with disabilities.
- In some areas of the river promenade, reserved parking spaces for people with disabilities should be envisaged.
- Install additional signage on roads in the villages of Istog.

5. Recommendations for environmental impact



In the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- Logging of trees to be carried out in a controlled manner, preserving perennial trees and biodiversity.
- Planting new trees should be planned taking into account suitability for the climate and terrain of Istog.
- Prevent the discharge of wastewater into the riverbed until wastewater processing plants are in place.
- Review the riverbed concreting plan to minimize negative impacts on the environment and water resources near the river.

6. Recommendations for accessibility for persons with disabilities



Through the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- Ensure universal access to river and road construction projects, including:
 - Provide designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities.
 - Tactile guiding strips for blind persons.
 - Assistive devices and seats adapted for blind people.
 - Family infrastructure for wheelchair users.
- Add bridges suitable for all categories and people with disabilities..

7. Recommendations for citizen involvement



Through the Social Audit process, the team has formulated the following recommendations:

- Install public lighting on walkways, streets and work areas to facilitate movement at night.
- Place protective barriers on riverbeds and near high-traffic roads to prevent accidents.
- Install of vehicle weight limit signage and danger warning signs along roads.
- Road signs and speed bumps to reduce vehicle speed to increase citizen safety.
- Ensure that paved roads are public and do not conflict with the law.

METHODOLOGY

This Report presents data collected through interviews, requests for access to public documents, field visits, and conversations with the community. In July, DEMOS and the Ministry of Local Government Administration - based on predetermined parameters -

selected 16 Projects, in 6 Municipalities of Kosovo - to be included in the Social Audit process. 16 Projects in six Municipalities were included in the Social Audit process.

Project name	Municipality	Value	Project Phase at the start of the Audit
Asphalting of the Llapushnik-Berishë Road - Second Phase	Drenas	497,724.00 €	Implementation
Construction of the water supply capacity in Drenas - Second Phase	Drenas	299,652.50 €	Implementation
Road rehabilitation and sidewalk construction in Arllat-Negroc-Vuçak	Drenas	700,000.00 €	Tendering
Installation of solar panels on the roof of the Municipality building	Drenas	17,812.32 €	Tendering
Construction and regulation of public areas in - Kaçanik, Bëgracë and Kovaçec	Kaçanik	241,111.11 €	Implementation
Construction and regulation of sports fields in the local communities of Doganaj - Soponica, Duraj	Kaçanik	260,885.45 €	Implementation
Construction of the Brodosane-Zapluzhe and Brrut-Bellobrad sidewalks	Dragash	80,299.82 €	Implementation
Pavement of roads with cobblestone in the Opoja region	Dragash	101,994.69 €	Implementation
"Construction of the Dragash - Shajne Village Bridge sidewalk", "Construction of the protective wall at the city cemetery, Lighting on the Dragash ring road"	Dragash	135,329.28 €	Implementation
Pavement with asphalt and cobblestone of roads in the villages of Gora (Restelica and Radesha)	Dragash	122,219.00 €	Tendering
Construction of the Istog Riverbed and Construction of Roads in Muzhevina, Dreja and Lubova	Istog	The estimated value of the contract is 7,498,356€ (Riverbed) 301,155 € (roads)	Tendering Implementation

Generator and electrical equipment for cleaning floors - for municipal facilities (administration, education and health)	Mamushë	52,333.66 €	Tendering
Gabion wall in the village of Gadime e Ulet (at the cave)	Lipjan	59,925.88 €	Implementation
Construction of the KLA Veterans' House Museum - Krojmir	Lipjan	121,555.55 €	Implementation
Reconstruction of the Dobrotinë-Sillovi road	Lipjan	267,381.95 €	Implementation
Reconstruction of the Ajet Kozhani Poturovc and Ribar i Madh roads	Lipjan	266,715.00 €	Implementation

Who Established the Social Audit Group?

The Social Audit Group is a group of citizens who voluntarily respond to the initiative to “engage in the oversight of projects.” To ensure broad community inclusion, BIRN and D+, in cooperation with local NGO partners of the project, developed a list of professions and community representatives who would be invited to join the group.

Selection criteria prioritized the inclusion of marginalized groups in society, such as women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and non-majority communities.

The aim was to create a group with diverse professions and ages to guarantee inclusivity.

Teams of partner NGOs, facilitated by BIRN and D+ staff, reached out to over 200 citizens from six municipalities to invite them to join the groups. As a result, 120 citizens from the targeted municipalities became part of the groups.

A group was established in Istog with 22 citizens, to oversee project implementation.

How were the data collected?

To compile this report, the established Social Audit Team used several techniques for data collection.

Team conduct online queries in municipal public data, drafted a list of questions about the projects and requested information from the municipality, and submitted requests for access to public documents and analyzed the received documents. It conducted field visits

to document findings, and held meetings with municipal officials in Istog. The data in the report was collected by 22 members of the Social Audit team and the report was drafted by Handikos in Istog, with the assistance and support of the BIRN team. The report was made public after comments provided by the municipality of Istog were addressed.

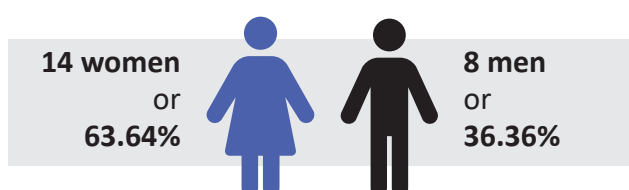
Data validation

The Social Audit Team in Istog worked on identifying problems in projects implemented in this municipality to write the report. During meetings, the team agreed on the systematic findings related to both projects and specific findings related to individual projects. The team also agreed on the recommendations included in this report.

After structuring the findings, the team met with the Director of Economic Development, Genc Ademaj, who is also the contracts supervisor, and requested comments from the municipality on the findings in the report. Before publication, the municipality received the report for comments.

Team Composition

Team Composition: **22 members**



Lawyer; Economist; Journalist; Physiotherapist; Pensioner; Police Officer; Accountant; Engineer/Professor; Professor of Physical Education; Resident in the areas where the projects are being developed; Businessmen; Representative/ Association of the Blind, Istog; Representative/ Handikos Association Istog; Civil society representatives.

Social Audit Group Activities

August 2025	● Signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipality of Istog ● Publishing promotional materials on social networks;
September 2025	● Training for local NGOs, project partners ● Targeting and identifying profiles that will be part of the Team; ● Preparation of the List with the profiles of the members of the Social Audit Team by Handikos in Istog; ● Selection of Social Audit Team members. ● Submission of requests for access to public documents in the Municipality of Istog ● Training for the Social Audit team ● Creating a 'Viber' group; ● Receiving responses and documents requested by the Municipality of Istog ● Training, discussion and analysis of documents received from the Municipality ● Field visit of the Social Audit team to monitoring projects ● Team meeting with Contract Managers
October 2025	● Field visit of the Social Audit team ● Team meeting to agree on the final findings and recommendations in drafting the report ● Establishing the structure and defining the Report Drafting Points ● Allocation of the task of report drafting to the head of the Social Audit team, from the HANDIKOS Istog. ● Drafting the report with the findings and recommendations;

SOCIAL AUDIT TEAM IN ISTOG

No.	Name/Surname:	Profession/Function
1	Vjosa Zogaj	Physiotherapist
2	Fabian Ferizaj	Journalist
3	Ajmane Metaj	NGO Forca e Gruas
4	Aferdita Kerellaj	Resident of the village Dreja
5	Shemsi Kerellaj	Resident of the village Dreja
6	Nezir Jahaj	Lawyer
7	Besarta Gorqaj	Association of the Blind-Istog
8	Esat Shabanaj	Association of the Blind-Istog
9	Suzana Haxhijaj	Coach / Syri Vizion
10	Azdren Hasanaj	NGO LIRIA I
11	Emirjana Demaj	Lawyer / Police Officer
12	Fatime Mustafaj	Pensioner
13	Mirdita Kurtaj	Resident of the village Muzhevine
14	Diolinda Kurtaj	Resident of the village Muzhevine
15	Sinavere Dreshaj	Resident of the village Lubovë
16	Elfete Mehaj	NGO Vision 02
17	Njomza Alijaj	Member of Handikos - Istog
18	Vesel Kajtazaj	Resident of the village Lubovë
19	Blendineta Shatri	Accountant
20	Shkelqim Januzaj	Teacher
21	Fidan Qeta	Engineer
22	Shengyle Delijaj	Member of Handikos - Istog

LETTER OF THE MAYOR OF ISTOG



*Dear citizens of the Municipality of Istog,
Honoured partners of the “Social Audit” project,*

It is a special pleasure for me, and for the Municipality of Istog, to be part of this important project implemented by BIRN and DEMOS. This cooperation is a testament to our continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and open governance toward our citizens. Social Audit is a modern approach that helps municipalities measure the real impact of projects on the everyday lives of citizens.

Through this process, we not only analyze the technical and financial aspects of investments, but we also gather the views and assessments of the citizens themselves—the very people who directly benefit from these projects. In Istog, several significant infrastructural investments have been reviewed through this project, all aimed at improving the quality of life in the town and surrounding villages.

The findings of this audit help us better understand where we stand, what we have done well, and where we need to work harder in order to be more efficient and more responsible to you—our citizens. One of the greatest values of the Social Audit is the active participation of citizens in decision-making processes. This project has created new avenues for dialog and cooperation between the municipality and civil society, contributing to the development of a new culture of communication and engagement.

It is precisely this cooperation that forms the foundation of transparent and fair governance. In closing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to BIRN and DEMOS for their professional support, close cooperation, and dedication in carrying out this important project. I also wish to thank all our citizens who contributed with ideas, comments, and suggestions throughout the process. The Municipality of Istog will remain open to every initiative that strengthens accountability and brings governance closer to the people. A fair and transparent municipality for all.

*Sincerely,
Ilir Ferati – Mayor of the Municipality of Istog*

LETTER FROM THE SOCIAL AUDIT TEAM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ISTOG



When I received the invitation to join the community team for the Social Audit of the “Riverbed Construction in Istog and Road Rehabilitation in Muzhevinë, Drejë, and Lubovë” project, I took it as an important responsibility. It was an opportunity to represent the voice of citizens and contribute to improving transparency and public accountability.

This team is composed of citizens from different communities, of various ages, and representatives of local organizations. Its diversity has enriched the audit process, as we have brought forward different perspectives, different needs, and real experiences from the field.

The projects we are auditing are financed by the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) and the Swiss project DEMOS, as part of the municipal performance grant scheme. This makes the responsibility for proper and effective implementation even greater. So far, through field observations and meetings with residents, we have identified several findings, including delays in construction works, a lack of information provided to residents, and the need for better quality control.

From the very beginning, we have been engaged in monitoring the implementation of these projects through field visits, citizen meetings, and discussions with municipal authorities. To date, we have identified a number of important findings that form part of this report. This process has helped me understand more deeply the importance of citizen participation and the power we have as a community to demand accountability and influence decision-making.





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