

→ Setting up a complaints procedure

Country Turkey

Project title Setting up a complaints procedure in Bergama

Twinning Municipality of Alkmaar (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Bergama (Turkey)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 27,918

Project objective

Improve the quality of public services in Bergama by establishing a standard complaints procedure dealing with citizens' wishes and complaints.

Project summary

The project targeted awareness-raising of both municipal organization and citizens as to addressing complaints, the creation of a procedure for this, and communicating the benefits to everyone of effective registering, reporting and processing of complaints.

Core information

Bergama is an ancient Turkish town of 55,000 inhabitants with various renowned historical and archaeological treasures. Agriculture, trade and tourism are the main pillars of the local economy. The municipality of Bergama is the local administration serving citizens especially in the fields of infrastructure, city planning, and social services.

Problem analysis

The municipality of Bergama experienced insufficient insight into the quality of its service delivery and citizen's opinions and complaints in general. There was no formalized procedure to deal with complaints. There was also little involvement of citizens in local administration causing an increasing distrust among citizens as to the activities of local government.

Project implementation

The first thing done was to formulate a communication and PR plan. Then questionnaires were used to enquire as to the level of citizen satisfaction and the way complaints were submitted. 1004 completed questionnaires led to a research report. Based on the results an action plan was

A practice to improve service delivery of local governments

formulated targeting awareness-raising for communication with citizens. A pilot project was formulated to test the new complaints procedure with one municipal department and one neighbourhood. This provided inputs for the final adaptation of the new procedure for the municipality.

Process management

In addition to municipal departments, local settlement and neighbourhood administrators (muhtars), citizens and universities were all included in the process of change. A new complaint management procedure implies capacity building measures and requires a strong policy and organizational change.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Involve all related stakeholders in the research and preparation of the investigation. In Turkey especially muhtars (neighbourhood administrators) need to be involved;
- Make an in-depth analysis of the current situation to understand weaknesses;
- Provide potential solutions;
- Select or design the procedure;
- Carefully test the optimal procedure;
- Have active involvement at the political level and include the complaints procedure in the strategic plan of the municipality.