



Date: September 25, 2020

From: Mayor of Vinnytsia Serhii Morhunov

To: OGP Local 2020 Selection Committee

Letter of Support

Distinguished representatives of the Open Government Partnership Local 2020 Selection Committee. It is an honor and a privilege, in my position of Mayor of Vinnytsia, to reiterate our commitment for joining the OGP Local Program. We remain hopeful that we will become part of the OGP community and be able to both learn from the international peers, but also contribute with our best practices on open government.

Vinnytsia Amalgamated Territorial Community (VATC) has the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement at heart of its processes. It acknowledges that the introduction of democratic open government is a vital at the local level, given that it is here, locally, where local authorities are closest to their citizens. Moreover, citizens can engage in the decision making processes and thus, feel an integral part of their community.

Openness and transparency of local government have been transposed in practice via access to public information, working with citizens' appeals and complaints, implementing the e-petitions and public hearings, conducting open and inclusive public discussions, supporting locally driven initiatives, to name a few.

Thus, for us, joining OGP Local Program will contribute to consolidating our efforts around open government initiatives, through confidence building and a greater interaction between Vinnytsia Amalgamated Territorial Community and its citizens. It will generate additional new venues for increased government transparency, inclusive participation, and will lead more effective local government, particularly in the areas of digital management, administrative services, the right to information, citizen participation, and education.

On the other hand, Vinnytsia can serve as an example and a model in the implementation of open governance practices for other cities in Ukraine and beyond. Having rich experience in the organization of study visits for different cities, we would be happy to share our best practices with peers from across OGP Local Program. We have a dynamic co-creation process around the elaboration of strategic documents on Vinnytsia urban development, which is carried out with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Vinnytsia 2020 Development Strategy, commits to the development of civil society by expanding the participation of civil society institutions in decision-making processes. While the Concept of Integrated Development of Vinnytsia 2030, introduces the principles of participation in city development planning. Vinnytsia Amalgamated Territorial Community Development Strategy, Strategy of Vinnytsia 3.0, sets up the long term vision for the future, among which active participation of the community members and promotion of the open government principles.

In implementing such ambitious initiatives, VATC has many reliable partners among local civil society organizations. VATC together with "Podolian Agency for Regional Development" CSO implemented the "Development and Promotion of E-Governance practices in Vinnytsia" project,



which was the first stage of the development of the e-government component in Vinnytsia City Council, i.e. installed terminals of access to city e-resources, created public portal, designed document flow processes, etc. The E-Governance Center was established in 2012 on the initiative of the Podolian Agency for Regional Development and VATC, with support from International Renaissance Foundation (IRF).

There are several other CSOs which the City Council partners with on various projects, among which: “Harmonia”, Charity Foundation “Podilska Hromada” (“Podolian Community”), Vinnytsia Regional Human Rights Organization “Dzherelo Nadii” (“Source of Hope”), Association of Displaced Persons “Spilna Sprava” (“Common Cause”), NGO “Center Podillia-Socium”, NGO Philosophia Sertsia (“Philosophy of Heart”), and Vinnytsia Regional Information Center “Kreatyv” (“Creative”).

In addition to the above, it is important for us to highlight that the Municipality of Vinnytsia has an integrated approach when it comes to its civil society development agenda and here are few examples:

- The Program for Promotion of Civil Society Institutions Development for 2015-2017, under which the HUB Misto Zmistiv (City of Contents HUB, a support center of civic society institutions) has been created and which berings under its’ umbrella 33 active CSOs. It is a social innovation, applied for the first time in Ukraine.
- Financial Support to Civil Society Institutions is another important milestone, as it focuses on the implementation of social and cultural projects in Vinnytsia Amalgamated Territorial Community. The most important part of it is related to creating favorable conditions for the development of CSOs, providing them with practical, methodological and financial assistance for the implementation of commitments as part of Vinnytsia 2020 Urban Development Strategy.
- Other initiatives such as Public Budget Initiatives (since 2015), School Budget Initiatives (since 2019) have been introduced. These mechanisms stimulate public and creative activity of citizens, encouraging them to be more engaged. Funding for such initiatives has been increased on annual basis.
- General public meetings with community members is a sustainable public engagement mechanism particularly around local problem solving.

We are confident that we have a lot to bring to the OGP Local Community and we are proud of several other achievements among which:

Vinnytsia ranked as the most comfortable city in Ukraine for the sixth year in a row and ranks the first in Ukraine in terms of service quality, being ahead of other regional centers (according to the 6th All-Ukrainian Municipal Poll conducted by the International Republican Institute “Rating of Cities of Ukraine” in March 2020).

Currently, Vinnytsia is one of the leaders in the implementation of the decentralization reform, which has largely based on Vinnytsia's experience in the development of municipal government and local self-government.

The city has one of the best systems in Ukraine in providing administrative and other public services to citizens, a model developed and implemented in here, in Vinnytsia, for the first time.

By digitizing its municipal services, the city improves both quality and accessibility.



Vinnytsia Resident Card, electronic patient account, a comprehensive e-service for parents, combining several services related to child's birth, "E-Maliatko" have been successfully introduced, and online administrative services are provided.

In 2020, the East Europe Foundation, Vinnytsia City Council and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Cooperation within the "The E-Governance for Accountability and Participation (EGAP)" project.

In 2020, Vinnytsia was included in the top 5 cities with the highest level of transparency according to the annual Transparency International rating.

With this, we acknowledge our commitment to join the global OGP Community, engage and contribute in most meaningful and constructive way.

We are grateful for this opportunity and looking forward to co-create OGP Local practices and initiatives together with global community.

Respectfully,

Mayor of Vinnytsia

Serhii Morhunov