



CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR  
GOOD GOVERNANCE



VIDAUS REIKALŲ  
MINISTERIJA

# **EUROPEAN LABEL OF GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE**

## **Second Round of ELoGE in Lithuania 2023**

# **REPORT**

December, 2023

## Contents

1. Introduction: European Label of Governance Excellence in Lithuania .....	3
2. Methodology and Implementation.....	6
2.1. Initiation, consultations.....	8
2.2. Citizens, employees and councillors survey .....	9
2.3. Evidence data collection and self-assessment.....	12
3. Results .....	12
4. ELoGE awards ceremony .....	20
5. Conclusions .....	23

## **1. Introduction: European Label of Governance Excellence in Lithuania**

The second round of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) in Lithuania was implemented from June 2023 to November 2023. The whole process was organised by the Ministry of the Interior, which is accredited to award the Label in Lithuania, with the support of the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance. The first round of ELoGE was completed in 2020.

This action aimed to identify and certify municipalities, which achieve a certain level of compliance with the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance, that are established in the Council of Europe Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level:

1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections
2. Responsiveness
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness
4. Openness and Transparency
5. Rule of Law
6. Ethical Conduct
7. Competency and Capacity
8. Innovation and openness to change.
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
10. Sound financial management
11. Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion
12. Accountability.

The assessment process consisted of self-evaluation by the participating municipalities, citizens as well as elected officials' surveys, and providing evidence to justify the self-assessments. Thereby, local authorities demonstrated that they ensure good governance, following the ELoGE benchmark and, in general terms, in the best interest of citizens.

The level of verification of the municipalities' adherence to the 12 Principles of Good Governance includes:

- self-assessment of the services where municipalities identified their level of maturity for each Principle.
- questionnaire addressed to the residents of the municipalities.

- questionnaire addressed to municipal employees and members of municipal councils.
- To share ownership of the results and maximise the transfer of know-how, all municipalities which participated in ELoGE had the ability to consult local experts during regular online meetings or as needed.

The Label was awarded to 29 Lithuanian municipalities for achieving a high level of good governance in accordance with the Council of Europe's Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance:

- Akmenė District Municipality;
- Alytus City Municipality;
- Birštonas Municipality;
- Biržai District Municipality;
- Druskininkai Municipality;
- Elektrėnai Municipality;
- Jonava District Municipality;
- Joniškis District Municipality;
- Kaišiadorys District Municipality;
- Kalvarija Municipality;
- Kaunas City Municipality;
- Kėdžianiai District Municipality;
- Klaipėda District Municipality;
- Lazdijai District Municipality;
- Mažeikiai District Municipality;
- Palanga City Municipality;
- Panevėžys City Municipality;
- Panevėžys District Municipality;
- Prienai District Municipality;
- Skuodas District Municipality;
- Šiauliai City Municipality;
- Šilalė District Municipality;
- Švenčionys District Municipality;
- Tauragė District Municipality;
- Trakai District Municipality;
- Vilkaviškis District Municipality;

- Vilnius City Municipality
- Vilnius District Municipality;
- Visaginas Municipality.

## 2. Methodology and Implementation

Before the start of the second round of the ELoGE self-evaluation process, the original Lithuanian version of the ELoGE benchmark, created during the implementation of the first round in 2020, was revised. A plan for the implementation of ELoGE LT2023 was also prepared.

The following research tools were examined before approval, considering the lessons learned from the 2020 first round of ELoGE:

- Online application questionnaires:
  - Questionnaire for citizens
  - Questionnaire for employees and council members
  - Self-assessment questionnaire
- Evidence data collection tool

The Ministry of the Interior, as the national accredited institution, considered a wide range of interests when establishing the National ELoGE Stakeholders' Platform (NESP). It invited representatives from national institutions, associations, universities, and non-governmental organisations.

The members of the National Stakeholders' Platform included representatives from the following institutions:

- Ministry of the Interior
- Association of Local Authorities
- Training Centre "Dainava" for Civil Servants and Local Administration
- Mykolas Romeris University
- Network of Public Administration Competencies
- Lithuanian Union of Local Community Organisations
- National Youth Council
- Association of Elders
- Lithuanian Women's Lobbying Organisation

The primary role of the NESP within this process was to approve the adapted benchmark, establish the methodology for assessing results, and approve the results at the end.

The methodology for calculating the final score, as approved by the NESP, consists of the following proportions:

- Self-assessment average score, representing 50 percent of the total final score.
- Score received from the citizens' questionnaire, constituting 30 percent of the total final score.
- Score received from the employees and members of councils' questionnaire, constituting 20 percent of the total final score.

During a meeting with recently elected mayors, on 12 May 2023 the Minister of the Interior Agnė Bilotaitė invited all mayors and their municipalities to take active part in the second round of ELoGE evaluations and demonstrate their commitment to ensuring good democratic governance at the local level.



The teams in each local government that decided to participate in the programme undertook the challenging task of self-assessing and justifying their self-evaluation of the quality of implemented actions for good governance. This involved placing a special emphasis on raising the standards of their work in the areas subject to self-assessment.

## 2.1. Initiation, consultations

The first ELoGE introductory meeting with municipalities expressing interest in participating in the evaluation process took place at the end of June 2023, organised by the Ministry of the Interior. During the meeting, the Ministry's team and national experts presented the 12 Principles of Good Governance, the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) Benchmark, and the application process for ELoGE. Out of a total of 60 municipalities in Lithuania, 39 expressed their willingness to participate in this programme, representing 65 percent of all local authorities in Lithuania.



During the self-assessment process, regular meetings were held with representatives of the participating municipalities where issues related to the evidence needed, feedback from citizens and municipalities, etc., were discussed with the experts. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the ELoGE process was created on the Ministry of the Interior's website, where all ELoGE-related documents were available.

A new email address [eloge@vrm.lt](mailto:eloge@vrm.lt) was proposed to ensure smooth communication.

Additionally, all meetings with the experts were recorded to share common information with all participating municipalities.



## 2.2. Citizens, employees and councillors survey

The municipalities that applied to the programme conducted surveys among residents, employees, and council members. Questionnaires were prepared for each municipality in advance using the online survey platform ([www.manoapklausait.it](http://www.manoapklausait.it)). The results served as a verification of the self-assessment, and the average scores of both questionnaires (citizens and employees and council members) were calculated into the final score. The questionnaires contained 12 questions concerning the 12 Principles of good governance from the Benchmark, and all questions were adapted to the local context.

The required thresholds for accepting the results of the citizens' surveys have been determined as follows:

<b>Number of residents in Municipality</b>	<b>The minimum number of participants in the research</b>
up to 10 000 (3 participating municipalities)	100
10 000 – 30 000 (14 participating municipalities)	200
30000-60000 (14 participating municipalities)	300
More than 60 000 (8 participating municipalities)	350

The required thresholds in the surveys for employees and council members have been determined as follows:

- At least 50 percent of council members
- At least 25 percent of employees

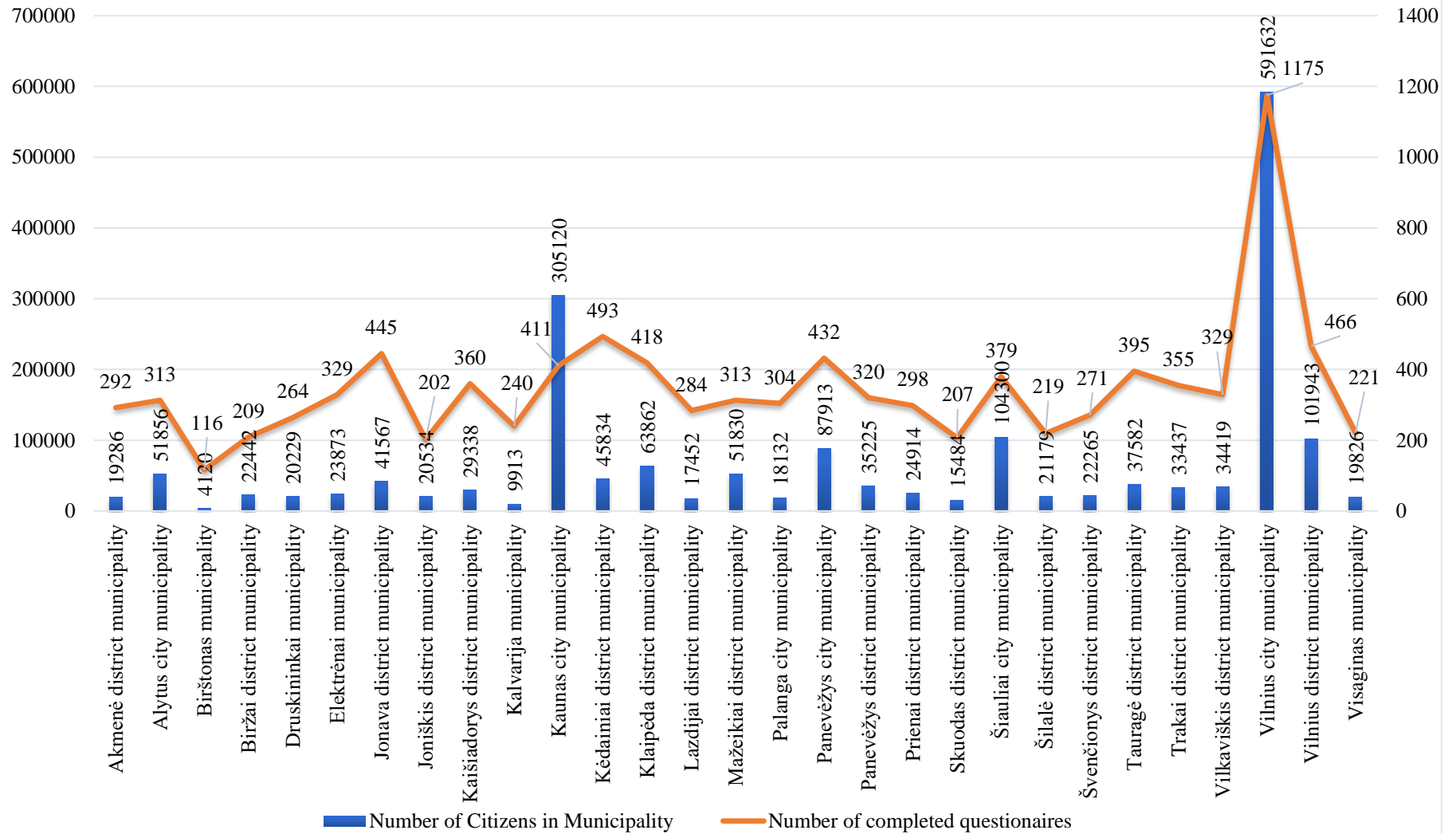
To gather feedback from employees and council members, each municipality received an email with a dedicated link to their respective surveys. The surveys were completed online and collected in the [www.manoapklausait.it](http://www.manoapklausait.it) system.

The municipalities were responsible for promoting the participation of their employees and council members in the survey. Most municipalities placed the link for the employee and council member survey on their intranet webpage or shared it by email.

To gather feedback from residents, municipalities shared the link to the citizens' survey on social media (webpage, Facebook, etc.) and in the local press. Some municipalities were particularly creative in their efforts to increase citizen participation in the survey. For example, one municipality shared the link with kindergartens and schools, encouraging young parents to participate in filling out the survey for local residents.

In the first round of ELoGE in 2020, 8,378 citizens' replies were received. In 2023, this number increased to 10,060.

## Number of citizens and number of completed questionnaires of each Municipalities



### 2.3. Evidence data collection and self-assessment

Municipalities participating in the programme had to present evidence to demonstrate the adherence to each of the twelve principles. More than 170 examples of good governance evidence were submitted by the municipalities.

To enhance the assimilation of the requirements for evidence related to each of the twelve principles, the municipalities were advised to establish a team with the capability to discuss data and evidence collection.

### 3. Results

The results of the surveys of citizens and employees and members of councillors were collected in the [www.manoapklausas.lt](http://www.manoapklausas.lt) survey system and prepared for analysis in the form of tables.

The results of the self-evaluation and the lists of evidence supporting the scores under each principle were sent by email. The final average score of each survey were calculated according to the methodology and proportion explained in chapter 2 of this report.

As stipulated in the ELoGE Benchmark, the municipalities that scored 3 or more points were nominated for an award.

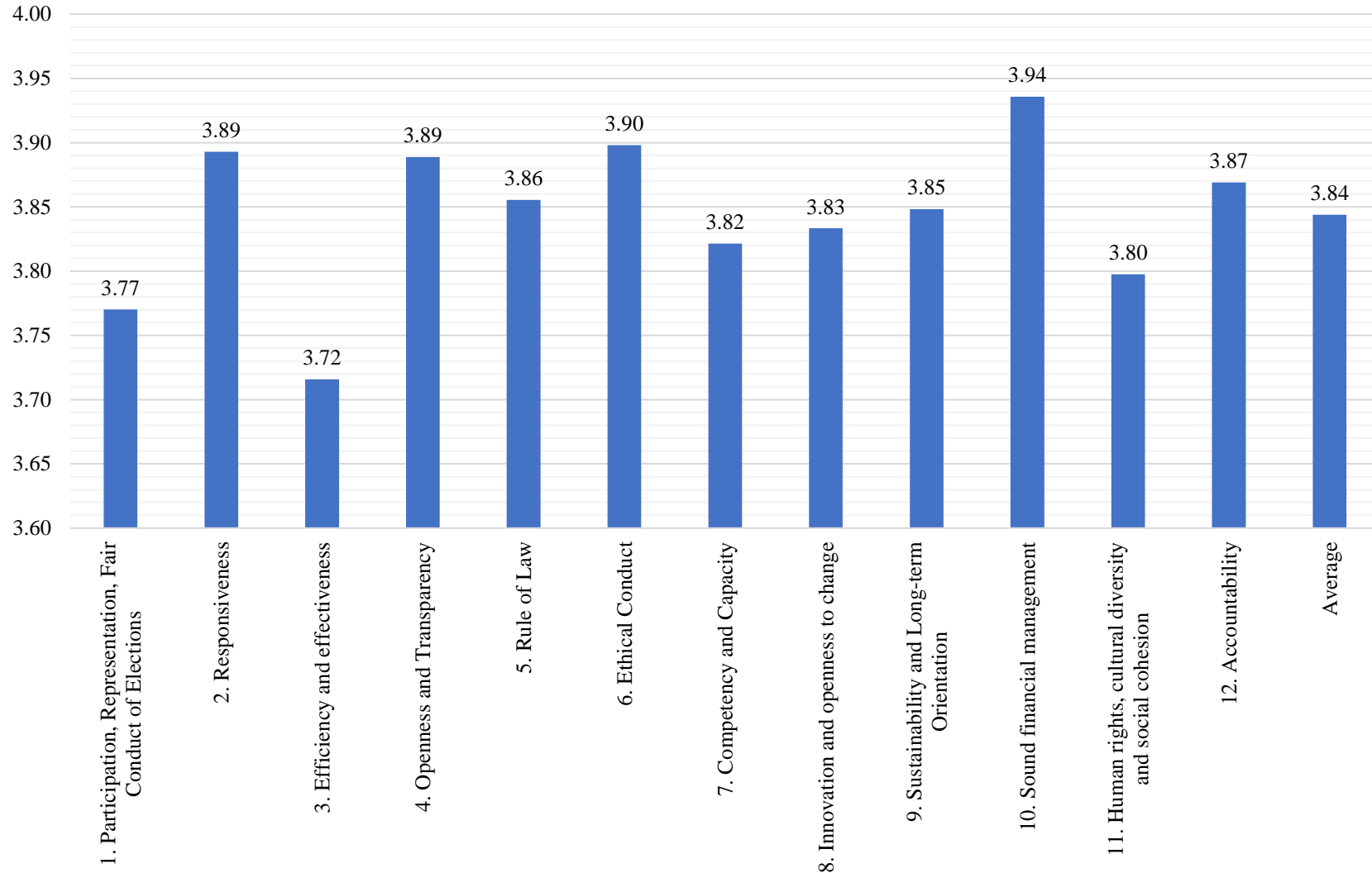
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Self - assessment average score</b>	<b>Citizens' survey average score</b>	<b>Employees and members of councillors' survey average score</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Akmenė district municipality	3,80	2,48	3,07	3,26
Alytus city municipality	3,98	1,96	2,92	3,16
Birštonas municipality	3,94	2,13	2,87	3,18
Biržai district municipality	3,77	2,09	2,94	3,10
Druskininkai municipality	3,98	2,56	3,48	3,46
Elektrėnai municipality	4,00	2,28	3,13	3,31

Jonava district municipality	3,79	2,31	3,48	3,28
Joniškis district municipality	3,95	2,23	2,74	3,19
Kaišiadorys district municipality	3,93	2,31	3,27	3,31
Kalvarija municipality	3,70	2,29	3,22	3,18
Kaunas city municipality	3,77	1,91	3,19	3,10
Kėdainiai district municipality	3,80	1,99	3,04	3,10
Klaipėda district municipality	3,68	1,98	3,12	3,06
Lazdijai district municipality	3,80	2,53	3,26	3,31
Mažeikiai district municipality	3,96	2,14	2,78	3,18
Palanga city municipality	3,98	1,97	2,99	3,18
Panevėžys district municipality	3,98	2,31	3,12	3,31
Panevėžys city municipality	3,99	2,48	3,62	3,46
Prienai district municipality	3,95	2,58	3,31	3,41
Skudodas district municipality	3,87	2,23	3,03	3,21
Šiauliai city municipality	3,86	1,81	2,76	3,02
Šilalė district municipality	3,49	2,45	3,01	3,08
Švenčionys district municipality	3,48	2,26	3,20	3,06
Tauragė district municipality	3,91	2,46	3,29	3,35
Trakai district municipality	3,87	2,25	3,39	3,29
Vilkaviškis district municipality	3,85	2,61	3,18	3,35
Vilnius city municipality	3,78	1,76	2,92	3,00
Vilnius district municipality	3,92	1,92	2,84	3,11
Visaginas municipality	3,88	2,24	3,14	3,24

Comparing the self-assessments of each municipality, it can be observed that the principles Openness and Transparency, Accountability and Sound Financial Management are most successfully implemented in Lithuanian municipalities. On a general level, the municipal adherence to all 12 principles is assessed at a high level and supported by sufficient evidence. This means that the local government is sufficiently transparent, complies with laws and regulations, and acts in the interests of its residents. The performance in relation to the principle of Efficiency and Effectiveness is rated with the lowest score in all municipalities.

Each municipality, considering the results of the self-assessments and surveys of residents, where significant differences between them were observed, considered what needs to improve in order to fully implement the principles of good governance.

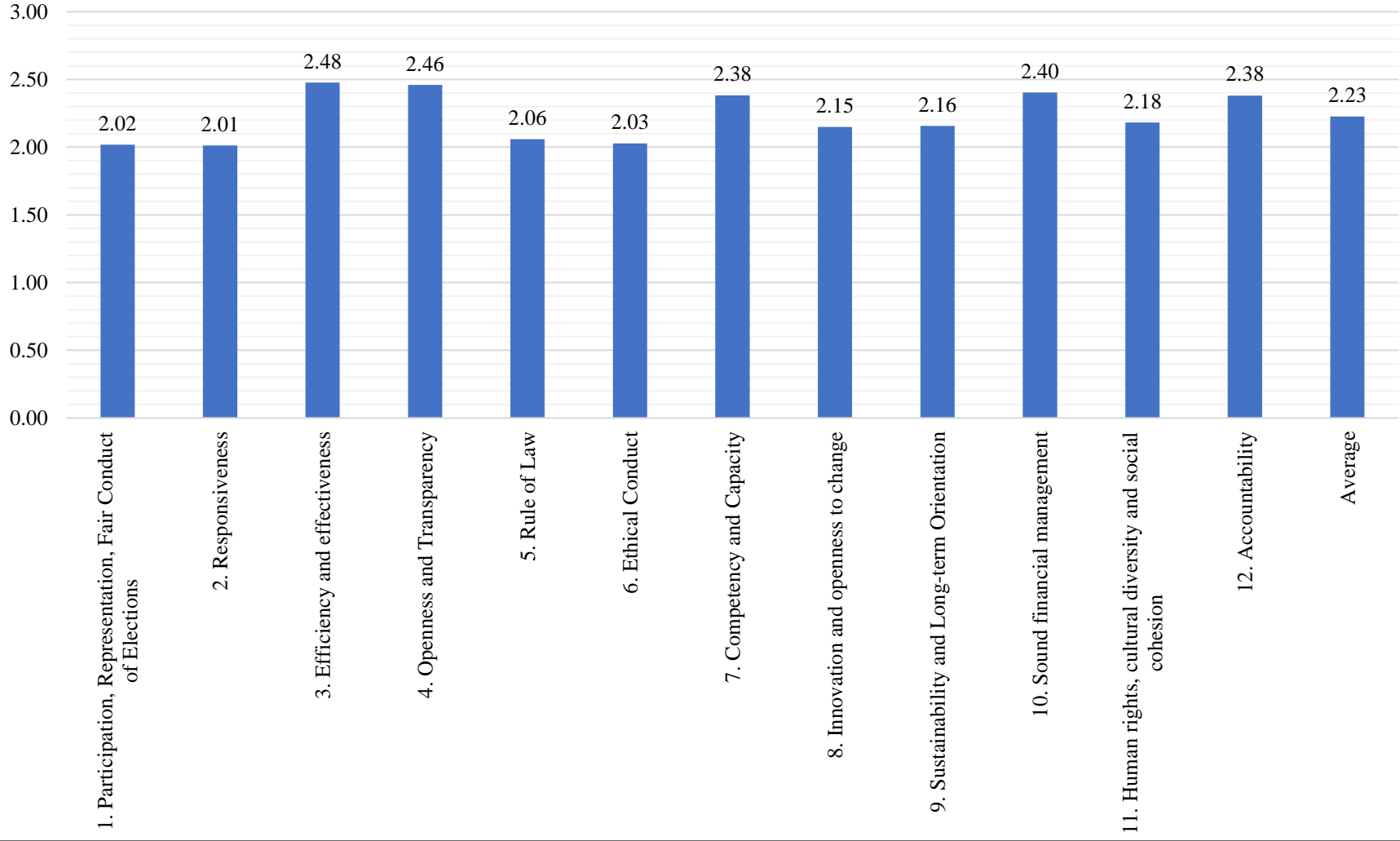
## The average score of self-assessment of Municipalities



The results of citizen surveys can serve as an indicator for municipalities to improve in the development of good democratic governance. There is significant scope to address issues such as how to improve local regulations and practical measures related to citizen participation in local public life, involve citizens in the decision-making process, and find the most effective way to consult stakeholder groups, including NGOs, businesses, local media, citizens, and others. The average score of the residents' survey is 2.23, an increase from 2.11 in 2020. The number of replies to the citizens' survey during the first round of ELoGE in 2020 was 8,378. In 2023, the number of replies to the citizens' survey increased to 10,060.



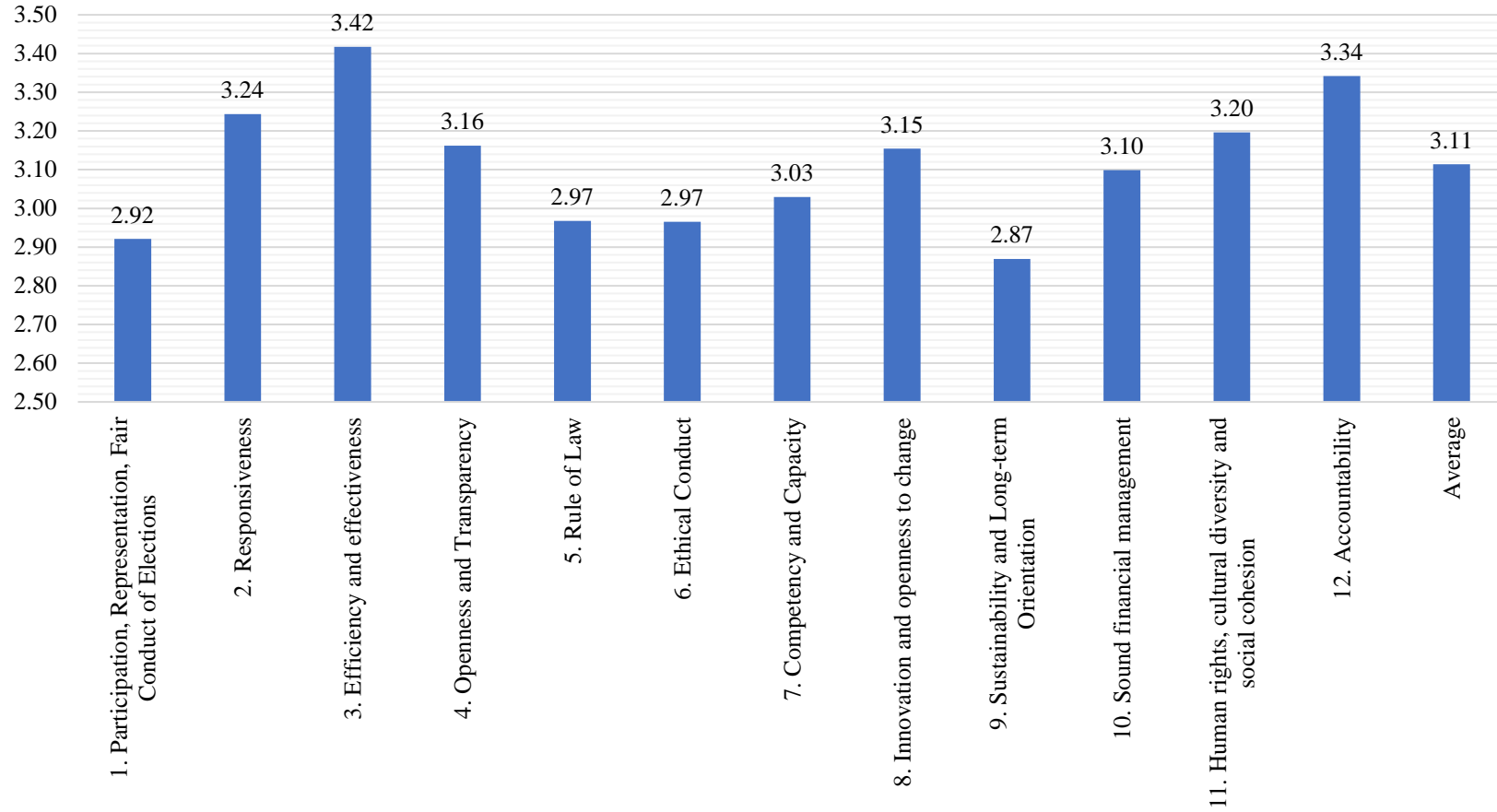
## The average score of citizens survey



The questionnaires for the employees and members of councillors' survey were filled-in by 627 councillors and 2942 municipal employees. The evaluation is high and demonstrates an average score of 3,11.

The members of the National ELoGE Stakeholders' Platform met on 7 November to discuss the results of the municipal evaluation. It was noted that out of the 39 municipalities that started the ELoGE self-evaluation process, 31 have completed it and submitted all the necessary documentation. After assessing the submitted material and the experts' conclusions, a decision was made to approve the final results and award the Label to 29 municipalities that, according to the ELoGE benchmark, have achieved the required score of 3 or more points to be eligible for the award.

## The average score of employees and members of councilors survey of all Municipalities



#### 4. ELoGE awards ceremony

To mark the completion of the second ELoGE process in Lithuania, an International Conference on democratic governance and deliberative democracy and an ELoGE awards ceremony were held at the Vilnius City Hall on November 16, 2023.

The aim of the Conference was to present and promote the Council of Europe's latest standards on democratic governance, specifically the Recommendation (CM/Rec(2023)5) on the Principles of Good Democratic Governance, with its Explanatory Memorandum, and the Recommendation (CM/Rec(2023)6) on Deliberative Democracy. International and national experts discussed the key objectives of these legal instruments, and the importance of their implementation in Lithuania and across Europe.

*Moment from the opening of the conference*



The conference was opened by Sigita Ščajevienė, Deputy Minister of the Interior, and Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality, and Governance of the Council of Europe.



The presentations of Sigrid Stokstad, Associate Professor of the Department of Public and International Law, University of Oslo and Yves Dejaeghere, Executive Director of the Federation for Innovation in Democracy Europe were followed by a panel discussion, to share insight into relevant experiences and alert on possible challenges with a view to facilitate future implementation of the Recommendations. The conference was attended by more than 120 participants – government officials, representatives of the Lithuanian and Polish local authorities, the academic and expert community, and foreign guests, which helped raise awareness of the Council of Europe standards on democratic governance.

*Moments from the panel discussion*



At the end of the conference, an Award Ceremony for the second cycle of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) was held. Agnė Bilotaitė, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, stressed the importance of ensuring democratic governance at all levels of government while thanking all municipalities that have taken part in ELOGE. The minister, together with director Claudia Luciani, congratulated the mayors of awarded municipalities and presented them with the ELOGE and certificates.

*Moments from the ELOGE awards ceremony*



## 5. Conclusions

Summarising the implementation of the ELoGE program in 2023, the benefits created by this programme both for the participating municipalities and at the state level, can be recognised.

The employees of the municipalities who prepared the self-evaluations noted that the process empowered them to look at their own and their colleagues' activities from a different perspective, to re-understand the work they do, to see the contribution of each job to the general well-being of the municipality. Thus, participation in the ELoGE programme made it possible to increase the motivation of employees, strengthen the municipal identity with the residents and its administration.

In parallel, thanks to the ELoGE programme, the employees' knowledge on good democratic governance was improved, helping them to evaluate their activities and share good practice between municipalities. During the preparation of the self-evaluation, some of the participants pointed out the planned areas for improvement (mentionable: improving communication with residents, looking for more ways to involve residents in decision-making, searching for new operational methods, etc.). Thus, the ELoGE programme contributed to improving the quality of municipal employees' performance.

The uniqueness of the ELoGE programme should be emphasised, as small municipalities can participate equally with large ones, since neither the size of the municipality, nor the geographical location are limiting and do not directly affect the results of the self-analysis.

It can be concluded that the ELoGE programme in Lithuania contributed to the country-wide dissemination of the Principles of Good Governance, created more favourable conditions for the development of an organisational culture based on cooperation in the municipalities, brought self-government institutions closer to the needs of their local community, and at the same time strengthened the trust of the population in the institutions of the local self-government.