

By Department of Planning and Budget

IOPD Award 2024

1- A

2- "I'm Mayor" (Participatory budgeting)

Tehran

Population: 9,039,000

Iran

Tehran Municipality's Permanent Secretariat of Participatory Budgeting ("I'm Mayor" Initiative)

<https://budget.tehran.ir>

<https://manshahrdaram.tehran.ir>

Social media: Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and native Iranian social networks such as Bale, Eitaa, Soroush, Rubika, and Aparat, as well as live TV programs

Began on November 14, 2023

Ended on December 29, 2023

Approved budget of "I'm Mayor 1": \$63 million

Approved budget of "I'm Mayor 2": \$116 million¹

3- Tehran, the capital city of Iran, is a sprawling metropolis covering an area of 730 square kilometers. As of 2022, it had a population of 9,039,000. According to the United Nations' 2018 estimate, Tehran is the 34th most populous city globally, the most populous in West Asia, and the second most populated metropolis in the Middle East.

The city is divided into 22 districts, 123 regions, and 353 neighborhoods. Given Tehran's significance in the country's urban system, the city's management and the Tehran Municipality, which oversees city administration, need to quickly improve service quality, be accountable to citizens, and enhance urban affairs with optimal quality and minimal expenditure. City managers should align their perspectives with those of the citizens, viewing them as loyal customers and designing services based on their feedback.

This shift in approach will naturally lead to increased citizen participation. Moreover, the budget is an organization's lifeblood, encompassing all financial activities, including income and expenses, to implement various programs. In this context, the Tehran Municipality has prioritized citizen participation in the budgeting process through the "Man ShahrDaram" [literally translated as "I'm Mayor"] initiative.

4- During the sixth term of Tehran's Islamic City Council, the city's management system has committed to implementing four significant super projects to leverage the unique potential of its citizens and effect lasting changes. One key initiative is the super project aimed at organizing citizen participation in city administration, with a focus on building trust and enhancing the social capital of urban management.

Accordingly, communication channels with citizens have been established and strengthened. Citizens are provided with comprehensive information and

¹ Note: The exchange rate used for conversions in this text is based on the rate at the time of drafting on May 9, 2024, which was 610,000 Iranian Rials to one US Dollar.

encouraged to comment on neighborhood-scale urban projects that directly impact their satisfaction and trust.

This process was designed by drawing on the experiences of other global metropolises, using targeted urban studies, taking a close look at policy documents, and receiving the insights of wise and thoughtful individuals, and organizational experts. A local model, in line with Iranian-Islamic culture, was designed and implemented to maximize citizen participation.

5- The “I'm Mayor” initiative was launched in early 2023 with the active participation of Tehran’s citizens to mark the first of such a project in the country. During the first phase of the project, which spanned 20 days (from January 20, 2023, to February 12, 2023), over 350,000 people selected 1,462 projects valued at \$73.6 million from a total of 2,080 projects worth \$81.6 million. To date, the Tehran municipality has completed 1,100 of these citizen-selected projects.

Drawing from the experiences, analyses, and challenges encountered during the first phase, the Permanent Secretariat of Participatory Budgeting redoubled its efforts to realize the project’s vision of planning with the people. They compiled a Gantt chart for the implementation of “I'm Mayor 2”, held management council meetings to discuss the project’s execution, and designed its implementation process. In the next stage, continuous meetings were held with technical and information working groups which led to the design of the “I'm Mayor” website (<https://manshahrdaram.tehran.ir>). The launch ceremony for “I'm Mayor 2” took place on October 8, 2023, attended by the Tehran Mayor and members of the City Council, during which the website was officially unveiled.

The first phase of the project, which ran from November 14 to November 26 (a span of 12 days), involved the registration of citizens’ requests. During this period, citizens submitted 6,500 proposals via the “proposal registration tab” on the website. These requests² were then sorted by the 22 districts of Tehran during the refinement stage. The Municipality’s Department of Planning and Budget reviewed

²In addition to the requests registered on the website, citizen demands were also collected through various channels. These included people's meetings with the Tehran mayor, the 137+ initiative, and the field visits by the City Council members. The needs of the 22 districts and the specialized departments of Tehran Municipality were also taken into account. These inputs were subjected to a technical and specialized analysis, summarized, and then refined.

these requests, and 3,675 projects³ valued at \$144 million advanced to the second stage, the survey stage, which began on December 2 and concluded on December 29. During this stage, citizen suggestions that could be transformed into projects were put on the website, along with neighborhood development projects. The projects chosen by the citizens were then prioritized based on the number of votes they received so as to be included in the budget bill for the following year.

In this model of city administration, citizens actively participate by submitting their proposals to the system. These proposals are then categorized and forwarded to the appropriate executive unit for review. Proposals can be submitted throughout the year, but any submitted after the deadline will be reviewed the following year, so there's no time limit for submissions. The plan follows six main steps:

Step 1) Submission: Citizens' requests are registered through various channels. These include people's meetings with the Tehran mayor and his office, the 137+ initiative, and the field visits by the City Council members, as well as the needs of the 22 districts and the specialized departments of Tehran Municipality. These demands are then registered on the "I'm Mayor" website.

Step 2) Requests refinement: Requests are put into four categories based on their nature (not related to municipal activity, messages related to the 137 initiative, strategy and policy, convertible into a project) and each is sent to the relevant unit. Those that can be turned into projects move on to the next stage.

Step 3) Project recognition: Requests that can be converted into projects are registered in the "new project request" section of the Tehran Municipality's comprehensive budget formulation and implementation system. After registration, the worksheets and attachments related to studies are completed. Projects that can be surveyed (staged and randomly) then move on to the survey stage.

Step 4) Public project selection: Projects included in the survey in the "I'm Mayor" are made visible to the citizens, who can vote for their preferred projects during a specific period. The result of this stage is a list of projects selected by citizens.

Step 5) Final prioritization of citizen projects: The projects selected by the citizens are prioritized, resulting in a final list of citizen-prioritized projects.

³Out of these refined requests, citizens proposed and approved 234 new projects.

Step 6) Inclusion in the proposed budget bill: The final list of projects selected by citizens is presented to Tehran’s Islamic City Council and included in the budget bill.

It’s worth noting that the city management has decided that this plan will continue indefinitely as it is also planned for future years.

6- During the implementation of the "I'm Mayor" survey, several communication tools were used simultaneously. Our goal was to empower citizens to make decisions that directly impact their and their families' quality of life in their neighborhoods. We aimed to encourage ongoing citizen participation in city administration.

Here's how we implemented our **communication strategies** with citizens in this initiative:

1. Enhancing the “I'm Mayor” website: We planned features in the website to boost citizens' trust and streamline the process of registering their opinions. Here are a few key features:

- ✓ Idea submission: In the new proposal registration section, citizens could share their ideas and concerns with the city administration.
- ✓ Location-centered: Besides choosing projects by region and neighborhood, citizens also had the option to pick projects directly from the map and share their thoughts about them
- ✓ Project sharing: Every citizen had the opportunity to share their preferred project with others through a suggestion link, enabling them to gather more votes.
- ✓ Project monitoring: Citizens could track the progress of the projects in the first edition of “I'm Mayor” initiative through the website and stay updated on their latest status.
- ✓ Proposal follow-up: Citizens could track the outcome of their submitted proposals in the system.

2. Launching “I'm Mayor” campaign: The “I'm Mayor” campaign was launched with the goal of bolstering citizen participation and shaping the city’s development

based on public opinion. Accordingly, various media, promotional, and communication strategies were used to ensure that news and promotional activities were presented in a formal and consistent manner.

It's worth noting that executive committees for the "I'm Mayor" initiative were established at the senior management level in each of the 22 municipal districts. All promotional resources at the city level and within administrative buildings were utilized for information dissemination.

This project was a collaborative effort involving various units of Tehran Municipality, public volunteers, non-governmental groups, and organizational colleagues, also known as executive ambassadors.

A broad network of Tehran Municipality colleagues brought this project to fruition through teamwork. The implementation involved volunteer ambassadors of the project, colleagues of Tehran Municipality, and public volunteers.

The public relations units of Tehran Municipality also played a significant role in attracting citizen participation in this survey plan. They employed creative advertising measures, such as regional and extra-regional media and advertising products (including clips, short films, motion graphics, infographics, etc.). They generated innovative ideas in advertising and produced suitable content for different types of audiences. They made appropriate use of advertising techniques and tools, leveraged available capacities, and were active on various social networks. All these efforts significantly contributed to the success of the campaign in garnering public participation.

3. The "I'm Mayor" campaign utilized various types of advertisements, including:

3-1) Direct interaction with citizens: In the second year, just like the first, volunteers acting as ambassadors for the campaign engaged directly with the public to register their votes.

These ambassadors were prepared through special training courses held at the Bahman Cultural Center. They learned how to interact with people and input information into the system.

The ambassadors were present at various locations such as high-traffic streets, stadiums, parks, subway stations, and even at the Tehran Derby (the football match between Esteghlal and Persepolis teams) at Azadi Stadium.

The ambassadors' influence was significant, and they played a major role in encouraging people to participate in the survey.

3-2) Environmental advertising: This included installing urban billboards in busy areas, conducting street performances in squares and passages, setting up booths and billboards during the Tehran Derby at Azadi Stadium, and advertising the campaign at Friday prayers and religious places. The campaign was also advertised on city televisions and subway cars. Booths were also set up in front of the City Council building, interviews were conducted with council members and votes were collected from Municipality colleagues and public clients.

3-3) Social media: Content was produced in various formats like posters, clips, short films, motion graphics, and infographics, and shared across social networks like Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and also native Iranian social networks such as Bale, Eitaa, Soroush, Rubika, and Aparat.

3-4) Mass media: The campaign was widely advertised and spread through various media outlets. This included publishing interviews with officials and celebrities in news media as well as radio and live television programs. News, speeches of executive officers, and announcements related to the campaign were continuously published in news agencies, and notes, posters, and advertisements were published in the press.

3-5) Special advertisements: A special pop song titled "Havaye Shahram-o Daram" [*I have my city's back*] was created for this project by popular singer Ali Lohrasbi. The song was played at gatherings and on social and mass media.

7- While participatory budgeting is a novel and significant concept globally, the Tehran municipality had not seen success in this area until the implementation of the "I'm Mayor" project. The project was launched to realize the super project of the mayor of Tehran for involving citizens in the city administration with a focus on participatory budgeting. In its first year, the project adopted a model of budgeting

for the people. This was implemented in a single stage through a field survey conducted by questioners. These questioners included both internal forces (employees) and external forces (volunteers) from the Tehran Municipality. The survey was carried out at the district level.

The municipality only presented projects for public survey that the city management had identified as meeting the city's needs on a small scale and for neighborhood development. The results of this survey saw the participation of 4% of Tehran's total population. Compared to global experiences of participatory budgeting, the mobilization of this number of citizens was a significant achievement.

In the second year of the "I'm Mayor" initiative, the budgeting approach shifted from "for the people" to "by the people". The plan transitioned from a single-stage to a two-stage process, which included application registration and surveys at the district, regional, and neighborhood levels.

In the initial stage, citizens' requests are registered through various channels. These include people's meetings with the Tehran mayor and his office, the 137+ initiative, and the field visits by the City Council members, as well as the needs of the 22 districts and the specialized departments of Tehran Municipality. These demands are then registered on the "I'm Mayor" website. The registration period lasted one month, and any proposals submitted outside this timeframe will be considered for the following year.

Then, submissions were put into four categories based on their nature (not related to municipal activity, messages related to the 137 initiative, strategy and policy, convertible into a project) and each is sent to the relevant unit.

Those requests that could be turned into projects were registered as new projects in the comprehensive budget formulation and implementation system of Tehran Municipality. After completing the worksheets and explanatory study annexes, these projects were included in the survey stage. Citizens were then given the opportunity to vote on any project they wished, using one of three options: "I agree", "I have no opinion", and "I disagree".

This process resulted in a 7% increase in citizen participation (11% of Tehran's total population) compared to the previous year. As in the previous year, questioners served as ambassadors for the project. A combined mechanism was

designed to persuade the public to participate by offering the percentage of project realization and the number of votes, ensuring fairness.

Due to population imbalances in the districts, the regions were tasked to calculate the percentage of the project popularity based on the population. Registering more votes required more effort and mobilization of more people, and the combined number of people and projects was also factored into the calculations.

After the survey was completed, the projects selected by the citizens were prioritized. The final list of these projects was included in the 1403 budget bill for submission to Tehran's Islamic City Council.

8- The "I'm Mayor" project was primarily designed with the citizens of Tehran in mind. The fundamental idea behind this initiative was to encourage citizen participation in urban management and to make them feel like they are the true owners of municipal projects. In essence, "I'm Mayor" signifies that the city's main asset is its citizens, who, regardless of their attire or status, can participate in city administration and consider themselves as the city's proprietors.

To facilitate this, communication channels with citizens were established and strengthened. This allowed citizens to easily express their opinions on neighborhood-scale urban projects, which directly impacted their satisfaction and trust. Comprehensive information was provided for each project to enable informed commentary.

The overarching goal of the "I'm Mayor" project was to democratize city administration and enhance the social service of urban management through relying on "religious democracy" and "fulfilling the true will" of the people, and by implementing governance that is capable, responsive, and rooted in Islamic management. The project was people-centered and knowledge-based, which effectively contributed to the optimal selection of urban management projects, thereby increasing productivity and gauging the acceptability of projects from the citizens' perspective.

One of the transformative strategies in urban management is to move towards public administration of the city. This is because the city's main asset is its people. When citizens feel involved, seen, and heard, the city's social capital thrives. This

engagement ensures that citizens don't feel alienated from city affairs, leading to significant developments in the city and better tracking of city projects.

Encouraging citizen participation in determining urban projects involves monitoring key indicators related to citizens. These include the gender of participants, the diversity of participants in terms of their educational and professional backgrounds, and the level of citizen satisfaction with the project implementation process. The more citizens engage with city issues and view themselves as city owners, the better the city management becomes. This kind of participation fosters hope in society and gradually leads to prosperity.

In terms of citizen participation, there's a focus on aligning citizens' requests with the required urban spaces based on policy documents. The choices of citizens and their participation in surveys are also matched with their economic and social status. By implementing the "I'm Mayor" project, Tehran Municipality has successfully transitioned its image from a mere "service institution" to a "culture-oriented and service-oriented social institution".

9- The "urban planning by the people" policy, which is implemented as a participatory budgeting strategy, has a specific evaluation or monitoring mechanism. This mechanism comes into play after the overall and specific goals have been determined. These goals include transitioning from planning for the people to planning with the people, and ultimately achieving planning by the people. It also involves popularizing city administration and enhancing the social service of city management, all while relying on "religious democracy" and "fulfilling the true will" of the people. Data related to progress tracking is collected and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and make any necessary adjustments to improve the results.

To ensure the maximum goals are achieved, feedback from stakeholders is collected. Accordingly, the key milestones of the project implementation are investigated through the experiences of the project implementation agents.

An empirical analysis of project implementation factors, from the macro level to the micro level, is conducted as another method of evaluating the project implementation. This analysis helps identify areas of improvement and its results

are used in policy making for the project's implementation in the following year. The experiences gained are also shared with other cities in the country.

In addition to the main evaluation mechanism, there are other methods for assessing or monitoring citizen participation in determining urban projects. These include tracking key indicators related to citizens, examining the diversity of participants, and measuring the level of citizen satisfaction with the project implementation process.

Regular evaluations of the project are conducted to ensure its success and to guarantee the achievement of its goals. These evaluations also aim to foster genuine citizen participation in the project in the coming years. This is done by examining factors such as the impact of external influences like advertisements on citizen participation, and the alignment of citizen requests with the city's needs, which are determined based on available documents. The evaluations also consider the correlation between the demographics of the participants (such as gender, age, and education) and the projects they select. Furthermore, they assess the compatibility of the citizens' choices and their participation in the survey with their economic and social status.

The "I'm Mayor" initiative, as a first of its kind in the country, was launched in early 2023. During the initial 20-day implementation phase, over 350,000 people selected 1,462 projects valued at \$73.6 million from a total of 2,080 projects worth \$81.6 million. The Tehran Municipality, committed to realizing the projects chosen by the people, has successfully completed more than 1,100 projects to date. In the second year of implementing the project, a platform was provided for citizens to register project proposals. This resulted in about 6,500 submissions. After ensuring that the municipality's inherent responsibilities were being met and that their execution was feasible, the submitted proposals were carefully reviewed and refined. These, along with the projects suggested by the municipality itself, resulted in a total of 3,675 projects valued at \$144 million. These projects were then put to a vote by the citizens, a process which took place over the course of 28 days.

The second year of the "I'm Mayor" initiative saw widespread participation from about 1,352,000 citizens, quadrupling the number of participants from the previous year. This increased participation indicates the success of the city management in building trust and fostering a sense of city ownership among the citizens. This was achieved through the completion of more than 1,100 projects related to the first edition of the initiative. When citizens feel that their opinions shape the city and

that the municipality values their input, they support city administration despite any criticisms.

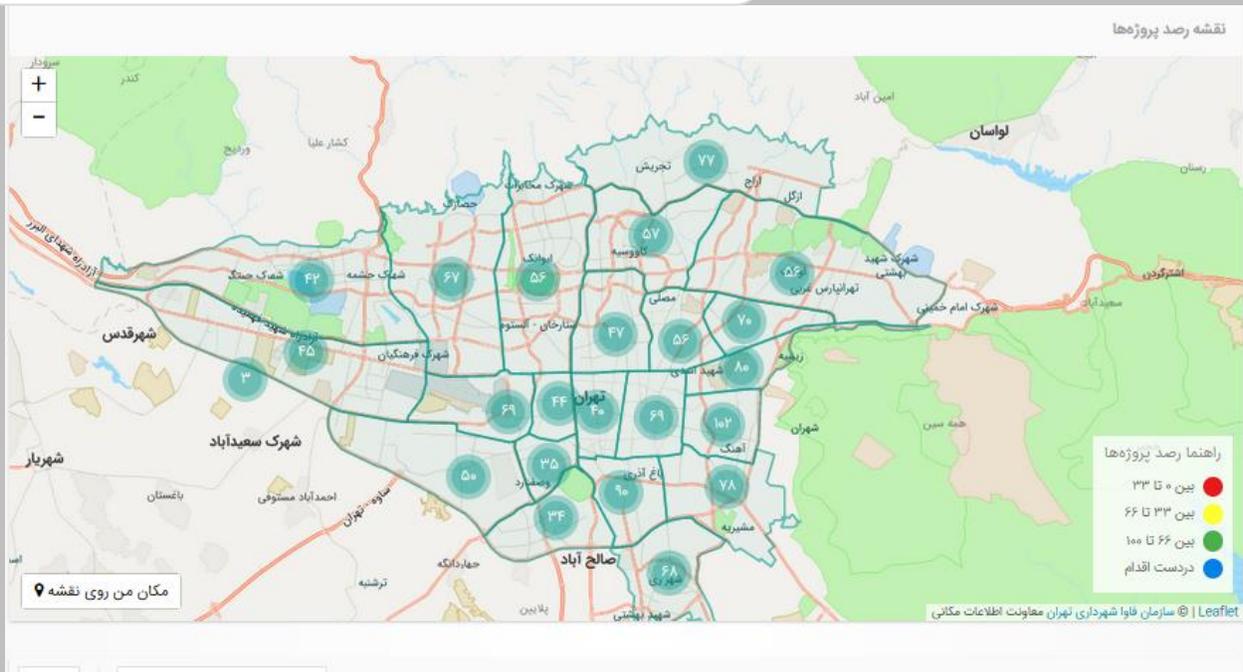
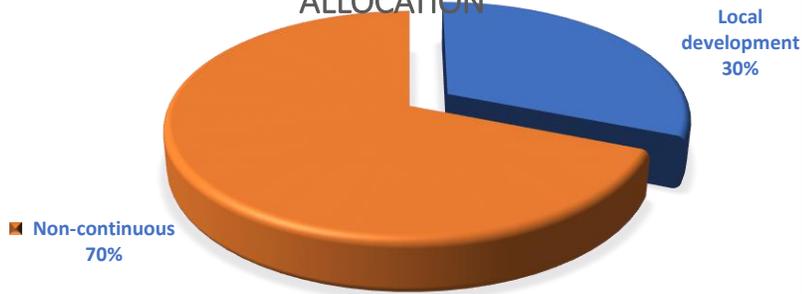
The initial goal for the second edition of the initiative was to survey one million people regarding approximately 3,675 projects across 22 municipal districts. This goal was achieved in the first three weeks. The plan was extended for an additional week, during which about 352,000 people participated, surpassing the previous year's participation.

Even though the number of projects increased from 2,080 in the first year to 3,675 in the next, the number of comments registered for each project doubled. More than 50% of the participants commented on an average of 7 projects and two regions, further demonstrating the increased citizen participation.

10- During the first edition of “I'm Mayor” initiative, 2,080 projects were presented for public voting. The outcome was the selection of 1,462 projects, backed by a budget of \$69.5 million. Following the selection, the municipality prioritized the implementation of these projects and consistently reported their latest status to the citizens. With 100% funding allocation, appropriate liquidity payments, and continuous monitoring, the project implementation process was streamlined. As the voting process for the second year of the “I'm Mayor” initiative started to outline the projects for 2024, the Tehran Municipality made sure to provide citizens with the most recent updates on the progress of the first year's projects. This information was made accessible online and was location-specific, which significantly contributed to the high level of citizen participation in the second edition.



"I'M MAYOR" PROJECTS FUNDING ALLOCATION

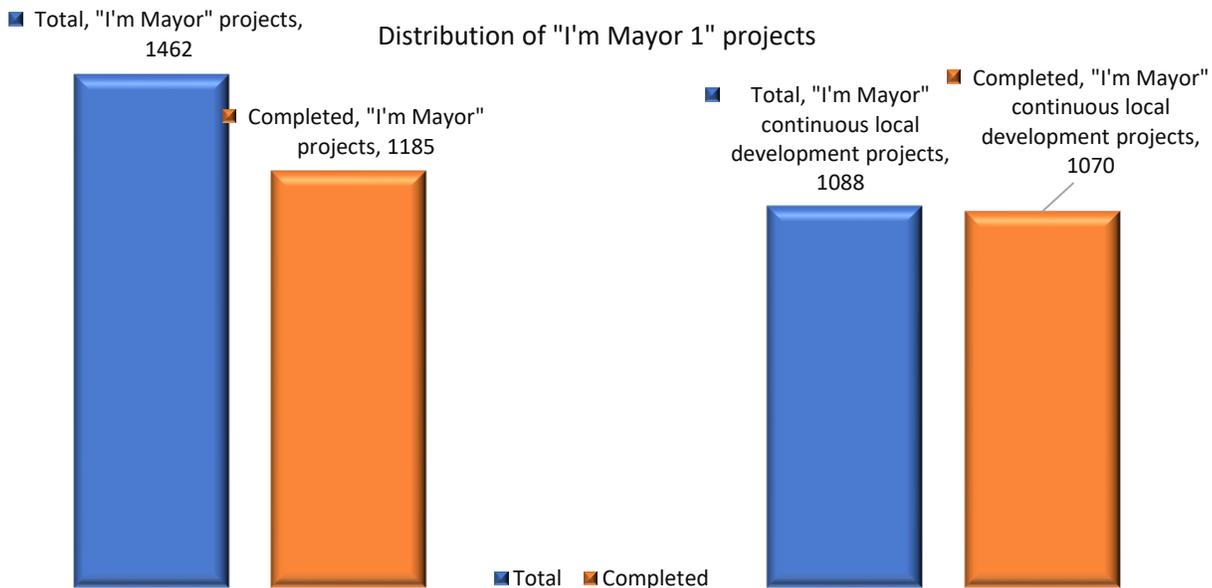


In line with global standards, around 11% of the total budget for capital asset acquisition of Tehran Municipality in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 2023 – March 2024) was dedicated to “I’m Mayor” initiative. This funding was distributed across 1,462 projects, which were divided into two categories. The first category consisted of ongoing local development projects, which received a budget of \$22.8 million, accounting for 30% of the total budget. The second category comprised of non-continuous projects, which were allocated a budget of \$50.7 million, making up the remaining 70% of the budget.

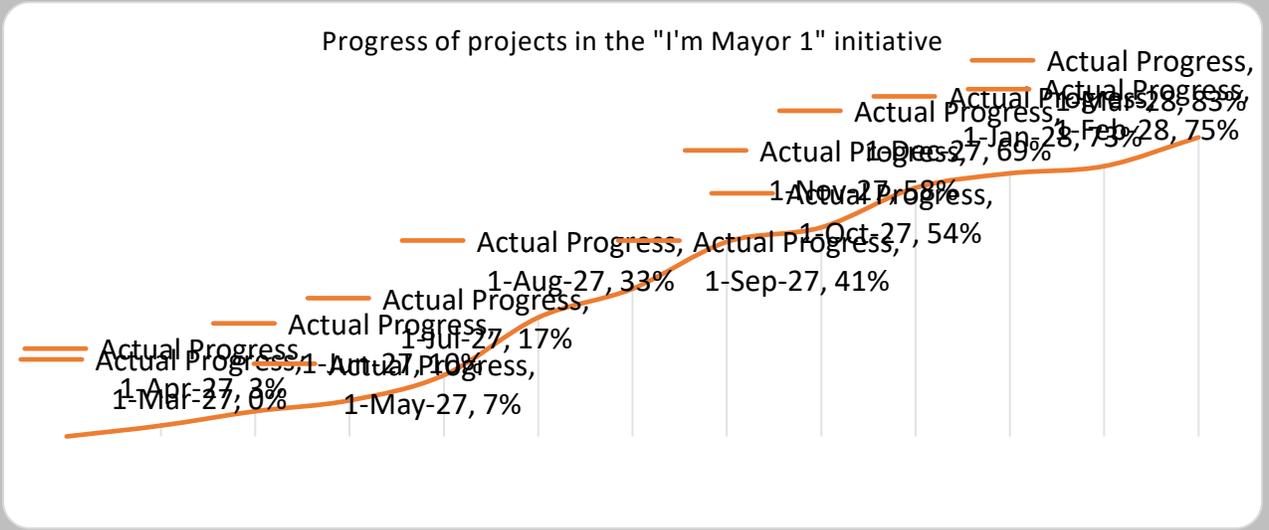
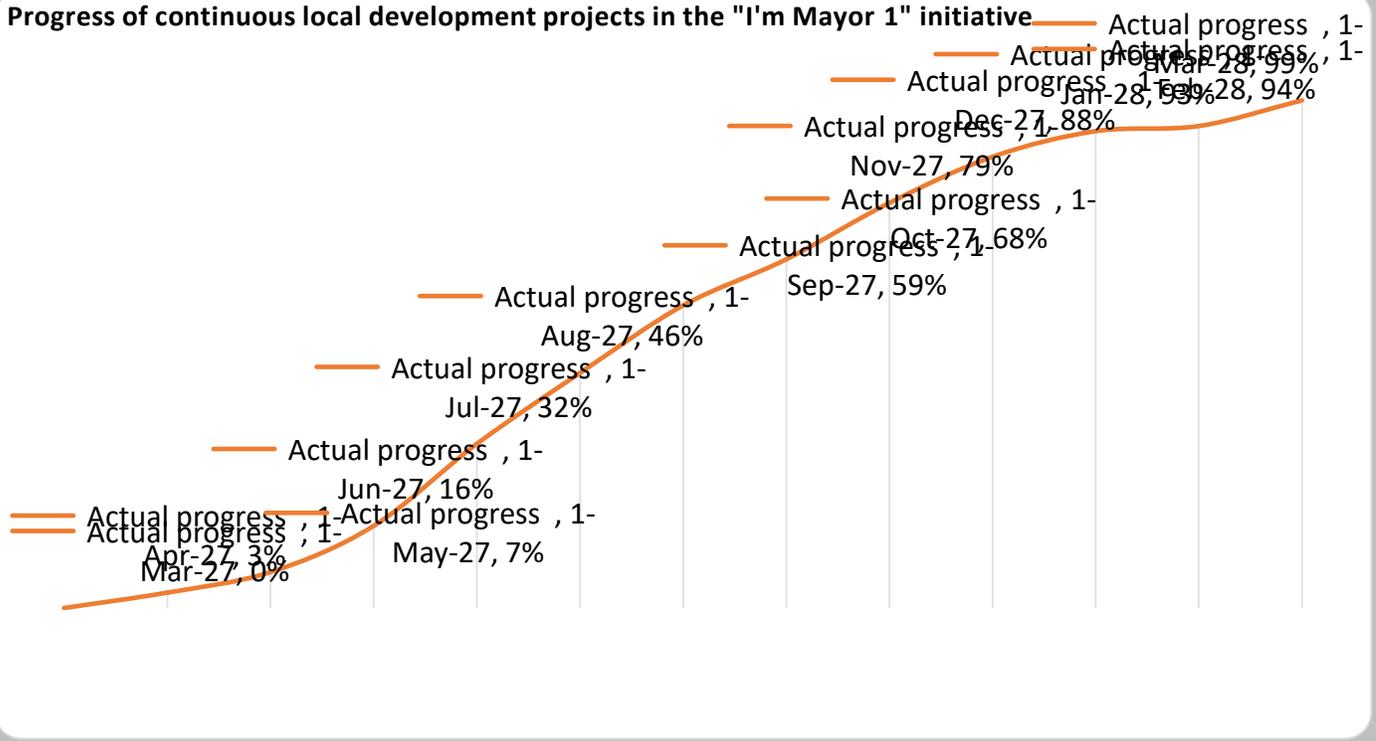
As we review the progress of the projects in early January, we find that the first year of the “I’m Mayor” initiative has shown promising and satisfactory results. Out of the 1,462 projects that were determined, which included 1,088 local development projects, 195 non-continuous projects across 22 districts, and 179 non-continuous projects within various organizations and companies, a total of 1,185 projects have been successfully completed. This accounts for 83% of all the projects and they are now ready for the esteemed citizens of Tehran to utilize.

Organizational unit	Non-Continuous		Local Development		Overall			
	Funding	Progress	Funding	Progress	Number of Projects	Funding	Progress	Ratio of project status report
Tehran Urban & Suburban Railway Co (Tehran Metro)	\$18.3 m	%97	-	-	5	\$18.3 m	%97	%82
22 district municipalities	\$22.2 m	%67	\$22.9 m	%99	1,283	\$45 m	%83	%85
Tehran Fruit and Vegetable Markets Organization	\$3.4 m	%76	-	-	28	\$3.4 m	%76	%30

Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization	\$1.6 m	%51	-	-	7	\$1.6 m	%51	%59
Tehran City Renovation Organization	\$1.4 m	%47	-	-	10	\$1.4 m	%47	%24
Tehran Parks and Green Space Organization	\$3.1 m	%44	-	-	118	\$3.1 m	%44	%70
Shahrvand Chainstore Co.	\$0.12 m	%12	-	-	9	\$0.12m	%12	%0
Tehran Fire Department	\$0.15 m	%0	-	-	2	\$0.15m	%0	%2
Total	\$50 m	76%	\$22.9 m	99%	1462	\$73.6m	83%	79%

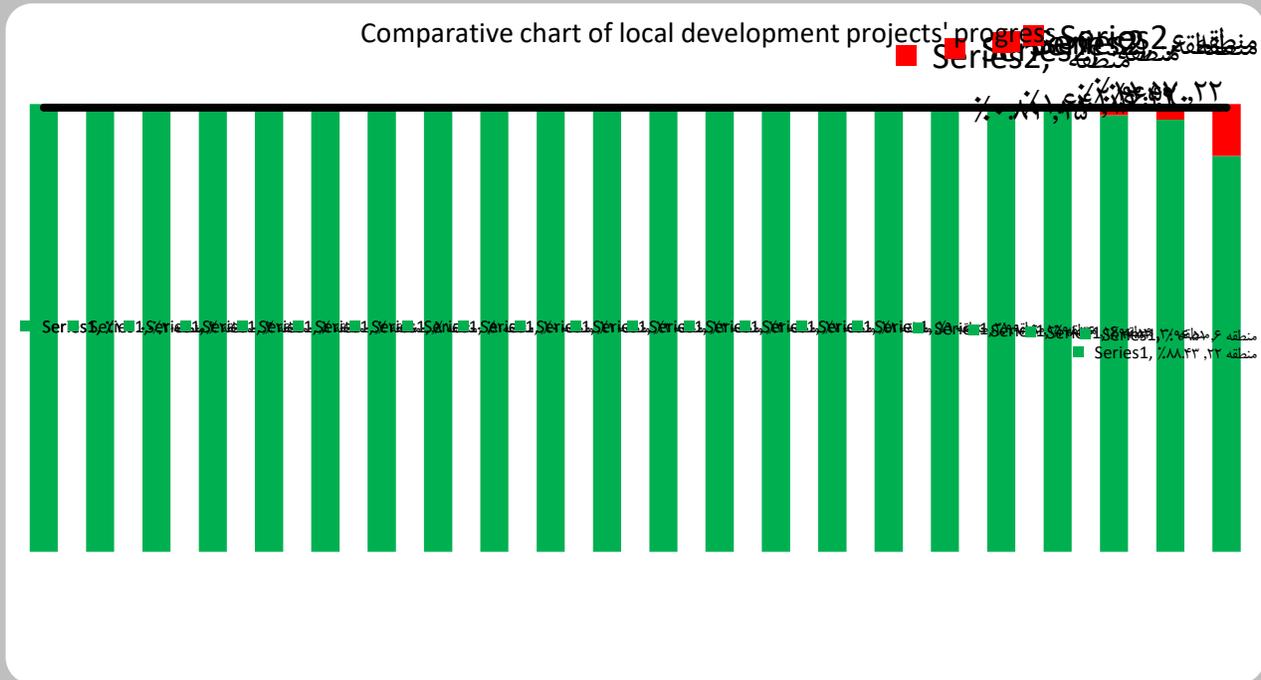


In line with our urban management strategy, which emphasizes local focus and doorstep service delivery to citizens, we have prioritized the completion of local development projects across 22 regions. We are currently making impressive progress, with a completion rate of 99% for 1,070 local development projects. Overall, we've achieved 83% of our goals in this area.



At present, in certain regions of the Tehran municipality, all the continuous projects under the first edition of "I'm Mayor" initiative have been successfully completed. There are virtually no projects left that have not been started at the district level. Additionally, there are 117 projects that are currently active and underway, which

are expected to be operational in the near future. (Please refer to the chart below for more details)



The shared data demonstrate the commitment of Tehran Municipality's executive units to bring the citizens' votes to fruition. It is hoped that this dedication will enable the Tehran Municipality to acknowledge and appreciate the citizens' valuable contributions, thereby enhancing public trust in all aspects of city management.

11- Tehran, the capital city and the major metropolis of Iran, spans an area of 730 square kilometers and had an estimated population of 9,039,000 in 2022. According to a 2018 United Nations estimate, it ranks as the 34th most populous city globally, the most populous city in West Asia, and the second most populous metropolis in the Middle East. Tehran is divided into 22 districts, 123 regions, and 353 neighborhoods. The city’s management and Tehran Municipality, responsible for city administration, believes in treating its citizens as loyal customers and has thus designed its services based on their feedback.

During the sixth term of Tehran’s Islamic City Council, the city’s management system has committed to implementing four significant super projects to leverage

the unique potential of its citizens and effect lasting changes. One key initiative is the super project aimed at organizing citizen participation in city administration, with a focus on building trust and enhancing the social capital of urban management. Accordingly, communication channels with citizens have been established and strengthened. Citizens are provided with comprehensive information and encouraged to comment on neighborhood-scale urban projects that directly impacted their satisfaction and trust.

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The plan follows six main steps:

- 1) Requests submission
- 2) Requests refinement
- 3) Project recognition
- 4) Public project selection
- 5) Final prioritization of citizen projects
- 6) Inclusion in the proposed budget bill

It's worth noting that the city management has decided that this plan will continue indefinitely and is also planned for future years.

What follows are communication strategies to interact with citizens in "I'm Mayor" initiative:

1. Enhancing the "I'm Mayor" website
2. Launching "I'm Mayor" campaign

Various types of advertisements were used, including

- Direct interaction with citizens
- Environmental advertising
- Social media
- Mass media
- Special advertisements

In terms of citizen participation, there's a focus on aligning citizens' requests with the required urban spaces based on policy documents. The choices of citizens and their participation in surveys are also matched with their economic and social status. By implementing the "I'm Mayor" project, Tehran Municipality has successfully transitioned its image from a mere "service institution" to a "culture-oriented and service-oriented social institution".

The evaluation or monitoring mechanism for the "urban planning by the people" policy is carried out with the aim of identifying areas for improvement and utilizing the findings in policy-making, future project implementation, and sharing

experiences with other cities across the country. Following the selection of projects in the first year of the initiative, the municipality prioritized the implementation of these projects and consistently reported their latest status to the citizens. With 100% funding allocation, appropriate liquidity payments, and continuous monitoring, the project implementation process was streamlined. As the voting process for the second year of the “I’m Mayor” initiative started to outline the projects for 2024, the Tehran Municipality made sure to provide citizens with the most recent updates on the progress of the first year’s projects. This information was made accessible online and was location-specific, which significantly contributed to the high level of citizen participation in the second edition.