TOOLKIT
FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

How to engage citizens at the local level

updated and upgraded version 2023

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Introduction

In current times when democracy is exposed to particular vulnerabilities on various fronts, by empowering citizens with a voice in relevant debates around the future of their local communities and Europe as a whole, we have the potential to rebuild trust on public institutions and establish dedicated space for exchange.

A well organized and inclusive participation process in decision-making can bring many benefits for all sides involved - local authorities, citizens, and civil society in general. At the same time, it is a challenging task. There are questions and instances that must be taken care of in order to ensure that the participation is meaningful.

How do we find the resources and time to properly conduct a consultation, an inclusive assembly, a participatory budgeting activity? How do we foster participation of citizens in decision-making? How do we ensure that their voices, also of those who may not be actively involved in their own communities are also heard and accounted for in the public policy making?

This toolkit may offer a starting point for launching and carrying out a participatory process. It includes practical resources for public officials and civil servants on the local level, for designing and implementing civil participation actions and consultations.

The first part of the toolkit presents key contents and elements necessary to keep in mind to launch a participatory process; the second part presents the methodology and the relevant steps on how to involve citizens.

Participatory democracy is a form of power sharing and exercise, based on strengthening the participation of citizens in political decision-making. The term "deliberative democracy" is also used to emphasise the various processes that allow for public participation in the elaboration of decisions during the deliberation phase, whether in the field of urban planning or social policy. In these frameworks, associations play a central role as interlocutors for public authorities

Social accountability or transparency aims at engaging citizens in the management of public affairs. In this perspective, it is fundamental to make reliable administrative information available to citizens. Governments and authorities have an obligation to report regularly on their work to the population so that the latter, as the real holder of power, is aware of what is happening and is able to act as the primary actor in development.

Participation by all groups of civil society in decision-making at all levels of government is one of the prerequisites for a functioning democratic society and for fostering democratic security.

Why?

It is crucial to help sustain the **legitimacy** of the decisions and deliver **accountability.** LAs are not able to act as effective community leaders if they lack a base of popular support.

Governments need to listen and learn in order to design **better policies and services**. How does one know if public services are meeting people's needs unless they have been asked in a coordinated and sustained way?
Participation enables more effective learning and better decisions: **sustainability of the policies**

Participation has an intrinsic value. It is good that people are actively involved in decision making in their communities. Being a full citizen means having a say in decisions that one is affected by. Good governance is not just a matter of delivering good outcomes. The manner in which they are achieved is at least as important: **ownership of the process**

Citizens who feel that they have a say in the general policy debate and in everyday decisions they are concerned about, are more likely to accept the decisions taken and, more generally, to trust their elected representatives.

Key rules for a fruitful civic engagement[1] :

a- **Mutual respect** between all actors as the basis for honest interaction and mutual trust;

b- **Independence of CSOs**: Associations should be recognised as free and independent in their aims, decisions and activities. They have the right to act independently and to defend positions different from those of the authorities with which they may otherwise cooperate;

c- Respect for the position of public authorities with whom **responsibility** and accountability for decision making lies;

d- **Openness, transparency and accountability;**

e- **Equal participation** of all groups including those with particular interests and needs, such as young people, the elderly, people with disabilities or minorities

f- **Responsiveness**, with all actors providing appropriate feedback;

g- **Non-discrimination** and **inclusiveness** so that all voices, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, can be heard and taken into account;

h- Gender equality and **equal participation** of all groups including those with particular interests and needs, such as young people, the elderly, people with disabilities or minorities;

i- **Accessibility** through the use of clear language and appropriate means of participation, offline or online, and on any device.

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[1] https://www.coe.int/en/web/participatory-democracy/guidelines

What are the benefits for all?

Civil participation in decision-making can foster a democracy more inclusive, transparent, and efficient, ultimately benefiting the local authorities, CSOs, citizens and the entire community as a whole.

Benefits for Local Authorities and Elected Officials:

- **Building trust and legitimacy:** When the public authorities regularly involve citizens in making decisions, it shows that they care about what everyone thinks. This makes people trust the public authorities more, and they're more likely to work together to follow the plan and contribute to implementation. When people have a say in decisions, they're more likely to be accepting of the results. Building trust is a long-term process which requires commitment from public institutions.

- **Better decisions and getting things done:** When the public authorities listen to what people have to say, they learn about what is important for citizens. This helps them make better decisions. It also makes it more likely that the authorities' plans succeed and help ensure that public money is spent effectively.

- **Finding out about problems at an early stage:** Talking to people early on can help the government find and fix problems in the community before they become big issues. By talking and working together, they can prevent arguments and make everyone agree on what's best.

Benefits for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

- **Speaking up and making a difference:** Through civil participation CSOs that represent people's interests, such as grassroot community groups or organized civil society, can get involved in decision-making as a way to speak up for what's important to the people they represent. This can help people and organisations to have a say in how policies are made.

- **Improving capacity:** Getting involved allows CSOs to work with communities, gather resources, and become better at what they do. It also helps them learn more about specific areas they care about.

- **Teamwork and partnerships:** CSOs often collaborate with other groups, elected officials, and community teams during decision-making. This teamwork can lead to new partnerships and better working relations.

- **Being more visible:** When they take part in decisions, CSOs become more visible and which can help them gain support and recognition from the wider community and funders.

- **Ensuring everyone acts responsibly:** CSOs help make sure that public authorities and officials are acting responsibly and follow the rules. This helps to keep public policy open and fair, as well as provide accountability of actions by the public authorities.

Benefits for Citizens:

- **Being more empowered:** Participation in decision-making can empower citizens by giving them a direct role in shaping policies and initiatives that affect their lives.

- **Having better services:** Citizens provide input to decisions related to public services, such as healthcare, education, or infrastructure, can make these services better suited to their needs and preferences.

- **Learning about policy:** Involvement in participatory processes educates citizens about policy issues, and the democratic process itself, fostering greater civic awareness and engagement and resulting in a stronger democratic society.

- **Building a stronger community:** Through participation citizens interact with their neighbours and fellow community members. This can strengthen social bonds and a sense of community.

1. The actors of the participatory democracy

1.1 Role of civil society, knowledge of citizen pa\rticipation, role of associations and various forms of participation

The participatory approach aims to create a direct and permanent relationship between citizens and local authorities. Dialogue with citizens is possible and fundamental!
It is therefore possible to get to know a specific situation better (e.g. a neighbourhood, a service) and to understand the feeling of the population "live".

THESE INSTRUMENTS CAN BE MONITORED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The possible instruments are :

- Visit/opening of offices to the public
- Meetings open to the general public
- Citizens' online consultation - internet in attendance
- Direct door-to-door survey
- Identification of a specific meeting place (libraries, universities, etc.)

For each of these methodologies, it is necessary to prepare :

a) The best strategies to reach the citizen, and what kind of citizens. For example, if we choose to distribute a survey in the lobby of the university, the responses will not only be from "ordinary citizens" but from "citizens/students or teachers".

b) The feedback we will give to those who have been consulted. For example, reporting in the press or media on the information that has been gathered.

We can think of dedicating special attention to resource persons or local leaders. A consultation process can challenge them for a better outcome of the process.

The **voluntary sector** is often a privileged interlocutor of the consultation since it represents a group and collective interests which are thus "organised" by theme or by place. For education plans, for instance, it will be fundamental to call on local associations such as:

- Parents' Association
- Cultural associations that often know the educational and school context
- Youth and sports associations

The participation tools and the various levels of cooperation can be organised in the following scheme[2] :

- **Information** should be provided to civil society to enable them to react: meeting, website, poster, etc.
- The **consultation** provides for the possibility of feedback with opinions and
- suggestions: meeting, audit, debates
- **Dialogue introduces** a more intense concept of collaboration on public policies: referendum, co-decision
- **Partnership** opens up a path of collaboration at all levels, from the identification of the problem to its solution and implementation: private-public agreement, long-term partnership.
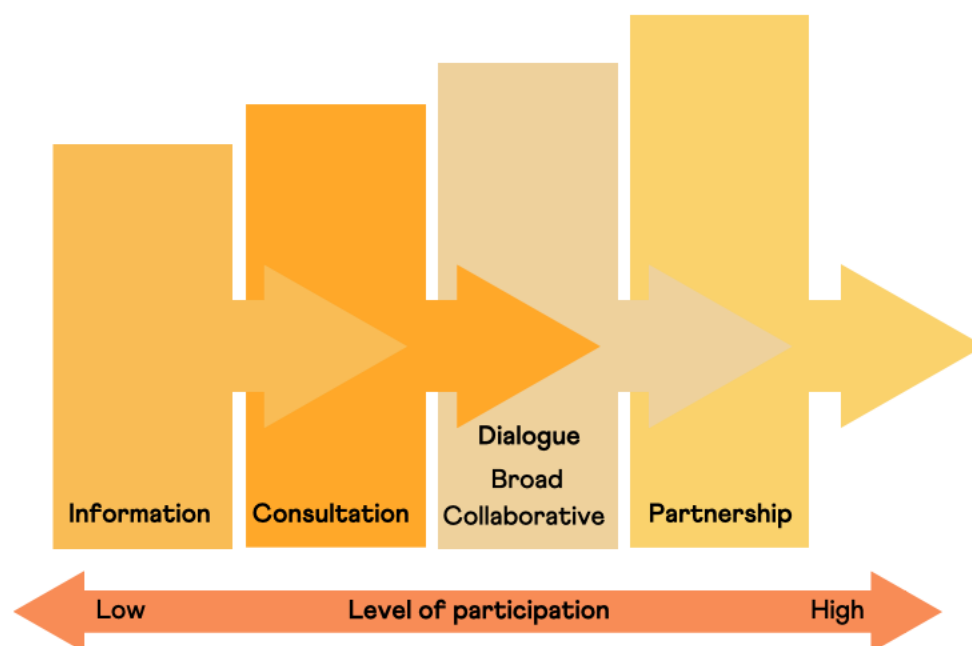
Citizen participation can have several objectives:
- Expressing and identifying citizens' wishes, needs or demands;
- Participate in a diagnosis ;
- Discussing development issues and objectives;
- Look for solutions, make proposals;
- To give an opinion on decisions to be taken or to participate in the decision;
- Participate in the implementation of a project.

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[2] https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2

The dialogue with civil society allows :
- To meet the beneficiaries of the local policies
- To bring up citizens' needs and improve public policies
- Identify resources offered by civil society (e.g. provision of premises, volunteers, time to share with the relevant services)

1.2 Knowledge of local authorities, role of elected representatives and staff, indications of participatory democracy

One of the crucial points of the participatory approach (and often the most difficult) is the **identification of the participants** in the action. Local authorities are the key to local governance.

a- Elected officials (the mayor and councillors)

Elected officials have a **political**, strategic and direct **accountability** role to the citizens who elected them. They also have a leadership role and are sensitive to communication and visibility. Our approach will therefore have to take into account the above elements in order to raise their awareness and ensure that they are involved in the participatory approach. The dialogue with citizens will be more oriented to **strategy** and **policy making**.

The elected members are :
The Mayor: Chief Executive - He/she is elected from among the municipal councillors.

The municipal councillors: they share and decide on the strategy of the municipality, represent the citizens and control the executive

b- Civil servants are the backbone of public policy

Civil servants support decisions and implement the programme approved by the local council and the local executive. They may have some autonomy in the management of local policies

and therefore may also be supported in their orientation. They represent continuity in the administration and have several opportunities to be in direct contact with the population.

1.3 Interaction between local government and civil society

Through the stakeholder analysis matrix, we can build up an exhaustive list of all the actors who have a relationship with the local authority. This matrix allows us to identify all the actors concerned by a specific issue, their capacity to intervene and their motivation to bring about change. And it guides the thinking about what activities the local authority can do to meet the needs of these stakeholders.

Name of the stakeholder and description	How the stakeholder is affected by the issue (describe)	Capacity and motivation of the stakeholder to achieve position change	Possible actions that the cre can develop to meet needs and interests of stakeholder

Mapping of actors:

The importance of stakeholder mapping is to bring together as many actors as possible who can be involved in a citizen mobilisation and consultation process. Stakeholder mapping makes it possible to generate a collective reflection on the role of stakeholders in relation to a local programming issue, especially those whose role was not clearly enough perceived.

The next step is to categorise the stakeholders in the Mandelow matrix [3] . Indeed, the objective is to optimise efforts to include the different stakeholders and to define the nature of the relationship with them. According to this matrix, stakeholders are divided into 4 sub-groups according to their interest and degree of influence in relation to the subject. The result makes it possible to **prioritise these stakeholders** as shown in the graph below:

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[3] Mendelow, A. L. (1991) 'Environmental Scanning: The Impact of the Stakeholder Concept'. Proceedings From the Second International Conference on Information Systems 407-418. Cambridge, MA

Mendelow's Matrix
Level of interest
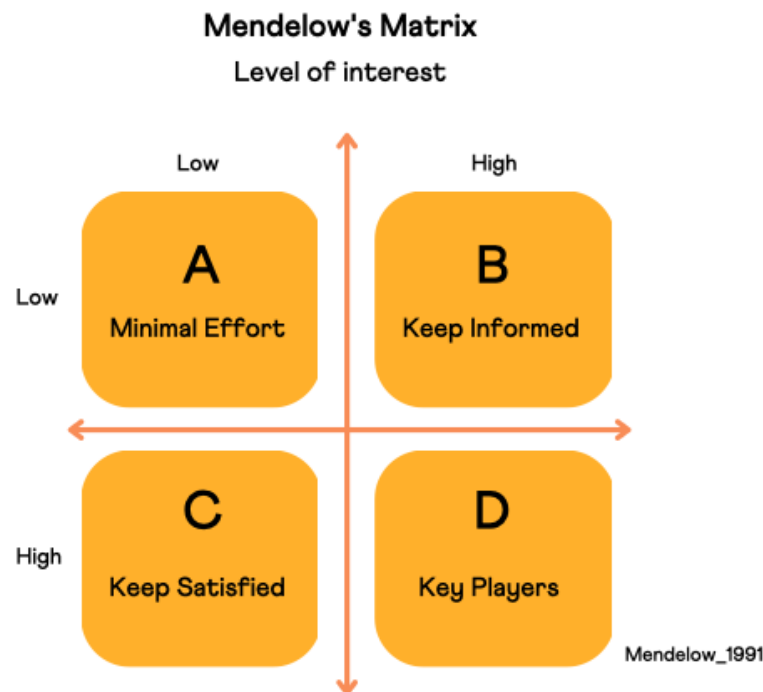
The position that you allocate to a stakeholder on the grid shows you the actions you need to take with them:

High power, highly interested people (Manage Closely): aim to fully engage these people, making the greatest efforts to satisfy them.

High power, less interested people (Keep Satisfied): put enough work in with these people to keep them satisfied, but not so much that they become bored with your message.

Low power, highly interested people (Keep Informed): adequately inform these people, and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. These audiences can also help point out any areas that could be improved or have been overlooked.

Low power, less interested people (Monitor): don't bore these stakeholder groups with excessive communication, keep an eye to check if their levels of interest or power change

2. Forms of participation, instructions

2.1 Added value of participation in the local decision - making

Citizen participation and engagement are effective tools for solving problems and pooling resources, ideas and opportunities. Citizen participation helps to focus the needs and answer the questions of stakeholders, and supports the design and implementation of more effective local policies.

Citizen participation in public policy therefore allows:

A. Achieving the objectives

Local authorities need to know the problems of their territory in order to improve services to citizens, to make them more adapted to their needs and to measure the various actions according to local communities. **Participation and dialogue help to improve public services, thanks to a better knowledge of the needs of beneficiaries, users and all the local community actors involved.**

Objectives to be achieved: Better services to citizens, better social cohesion, distribution of resources and equality between different citizens (equalisation).

B. A cost-effective and efficient decision

Cost-effectiveness: this means choosing the public policies that provide the best cost-benefit ratio. Citizen engagement enables :
a) Valuing all possible options (availability of spaces, human resources, availability of local authorities, listening to the beneficiaries)
b) Also identify new resource opportunities (ideas, provision of premises, etc.) or other services, volunteering, time)
c) Choose the right options for the territory and avoid costs and mistakes.
d) Participation and exchange also allow for the reduction of conflicts in decisions and allow solutions to emerge that also benefit most of the actors

C. Choosing the best option

A choice of service quality: quality is expressed through the positive value of each service, adapted by the means and the way it is offered, towards the beneficiaries and users.

Citizen participation allows for the identification of the most appropriate solutions for the local community but also allows for effective control of the means used to deliver the service.

Citizen participation enables public policies to be influenced in the area concerned:
→ To enable them to achieve their objectives: improving learning spaces and environments

→ **To have a better cost/benefit ratio: to be efficient in order to provide a balanced service that can give the maximum for the resources available**
→ **To be of better quality: to provide the best services to citizens**

2.2. Turn-key participation

Citizen consultation is one of the main ways to collect suggestions from citizens and associations on public policies! It is important to know how to do it well in order to take advantage of this precious moment.

Public consultation or hearing belongs to the first level of citizen dialogue: citizens' opinions are taken into consideration but remain 'optional'. Local authorities use it to inform citizens and to get a first feedback on the decision or the process but the process does not commit local authorities to include citizens' demands in public policies. The term "public hearing" is more often used in relation to the presentation of a public policy or project. It implies an evaluation by citizens. They are often composed of experts in the field and allow for an exchange on more specific issues [4].

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[4] *More info: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/public-hearing/main and* http://www.ipu.org/dem-f/guide/guide-4.htm

The consultation should follow the following rules:

a) Developing the message and methods to be shared for consultation.
This is the most complicated part of the exercise.

Questions that can lead us in the right direction are :

What should I communicate?

Be careful, the theme of the consultation must be well targeted! We must not risk promoting a debate and an exchange on a vague theme that may not be useful to our needs. The citizens' response will also depend on the question!

For example: the theme of the consultation is improving local public transport services (it will have a response full of proposals). If the question is: "What are the problems of local public transport? The whole consultation will have a long list of complaints, without solutions.

THE CONSULTATION MUST PROMOTE A CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE DEBATE!

For which part of the public policy should I initiate a consultation?

Be careful! The topic under discussion must also be clear about the possible impact of the consultation. I must intervene on the action of the local authority. Otherwise, there is a great risk that the debate will focus on issues over which the local authority has no competence, for example school curricula and teaching content.

THE CONSULTATION MUST BE CLEAR ABOUT THE LEVEL TO BE REACHED AND SYSTEMATICALLY REMIND EVERYONE OF THEIR PREROGATIVES!

What instruments can I use for consultation?

Please note that citizen consultation can be carried out using various methods
- A public meeting

- A citizens' survey
- A radio debate with online answers
- Via the internet, etc.

The methods used influence the outcome of the consultation.

For example: an online survey can be totally out of place in contexts with a high rate of elderly people. In these cases, an oral or written survey seems more appropriate

CONSULTATION IS THE BEST TOOL TO REACH OUT TO CITIZENS!

b) The modalities of the meeting must follow precise rules to ensure the full effectiveness of the consultation

In the case of meetings with citizens, some of these must be respected:

→ **The list of participants**

Each citizen consultation should have a list of participants (be careful to have the authorisation to keep the information in the database). Indeed, the list of participants values the participation of each person and puts each one in a role of responsibility.
The list of participants is not a control tool but a contact tool. It will also allow the minutes of the meeting to be sent back and the debate to be followed up!

→ **The meeting place** (a place that is useful to all and pleasant)
- *must be accessible to all (beware of traffic and traffic problems)*
- *transport) ;*
- *should be heated or air-conditioned if possible;*
- *must be well signposted and not blocked (e.g. an attendant at the entrance blocking access)*

→ **The time chosen is feasible and well suited to the consultation**

If the meeting is held in the morning, most people may not be able to come if they are working! You need to choose the right time!

→ **The format of the meeting to allow for the exchange of views and participation** (avoid too formal a form)

The choice of meeting format is fundamental, and plenary sessions should be avoided at all costs as they are often a showdown between the audience and the speaker.
It is preferable to do working groups, focus groups, shared meetings.

→ **The agenda of the meeting, which should allow for an exchange with the public and not just a long presentation of the issue** (when and for how long)

The agenda is a fundamental part of the organisation. It should enable participants to know the development of the debate and the speakers so that everyone has a clear view of the process. It should be distributed in advance and also during the meeting. This makes it possible not to rush the discussions but to build an organised meeting.

→ A **facilitator** who can lead the debate and manage dialogue and possible conflicts.
A facilitator of the debate is always very useful. S/he should be a trusted, neutral and credible person who can pass the floor, guide the debate in constructive terms, and refocus it if necessary on the LA's competences. The facilitator allows everyone to speak and limits those who are aggressive or unproductive.

→ The **instruments to be used** (technology, video, materials, etc.)
The consultation can use various instruments and the material should be animated and clarified with visual, understandable elements. A drawing or a video is often much clearer than a long speech!

→ **Preliminary study of the scenario of the meeting**
In some of the more conflictual cases, it is useful to consider possible scenarios in order to be prepared to answer various questions.

→ **Reporting and follow-up**
Debriefing and follow-up are fundamental to the success of the consultation. The minutes should be accurate, not long but accurate! It should be sent to the participants, if possible, for approval with an indication of the next step (decisions, debates, a further consultation, etc.)

c) Development of the list of resource persons to be invited to the consultation

One of the main problems of consultation is WHO will answer the questions. This choice is often a source of debate and conflict and is at the root of the major issues in social surveys, in general...

The list of invitees to the consultation is fundamental as is the way to contact citizens!
For example, if we invite on the internet, we will have a younger audience. If we use a written invitation, this might reach out to an older segment of the population, etc.!

Some principles are nevertheless easy to understand:

I. Whoever will be involved in the policy should be consulted (a neighbourhood, a community, a group of citizens)
II. Consultation must be able to integrate stakeholders (languages, means of consultation, technologies)

Checklist for a good citizens consultation!

The theme of the consultation is clear and stated in constructive terms	OK
The theme of the consultation is proportionate to the context (e.g. intervention on. the school, on the urban green spaces, etc.)	OK
The location of the consultation is pleasant and accessible	OK
An agenda for the meeting is available and sent out in advance and distributed during the meeting	OK
The timing of the consultation is good and adapted to the consultation group	OK

The format of the meeting is adapted (groups of work, etc.)	OK
The choice of the consultation instrument isadapted (a meeting, an online survey, etc.)	OK
A list of participants is drawn up with all details and permission to use personal data is obtained	OK
A discussion facilitator was selected	OK
Invitations were well sent to the target group or the choice of means of contacting citizens is appropriate and effective	OK
A report is drawn up with an indication of the successive stages	OK
Presentation tools are provided (powerpoint, tables, flip charts)	OK

3. Local participatory process

The present chapter presents the experience of the project SHAPE - SHaring Actions for Participation and Empowerment of migrant communities and Las, which allowed the creation of a pilot experience of citizen participation with the involvement of people with a migratory background.

The project aims to promote migrants' participation in the design and implementation of integration and related policies at local, national and EU level, promoting cooperation among countries with different levels of experience in this subject. The action encompasses 3 EU MS so-called "EU border countries" (IT, HU, HR) where public opinion seems particularly negative toward migrants, and two leading countries in the EU for migrants' participation in the democratic process, PT and DE (Migrant Integration Policy Index).

1. The framework of the pilot action

The pilot projects are meant to initiate a **participatory process** on a local level.
Indeed, once the training phase is completed (phase 2 and 3), participating local authorities, collaborators, civil society organizations and migrant citizens are brought together to design and pilot a local participatory process. Knowledge and skills acquired during the capacity building sessions are put in place by migrant citizens to present feasible ideas and proposals responding to problems identified locally and contribute to migrants' empowerment and long-term participation in the decision-making process with referral to Health care, Education, Housing, Employment, Gender Equality. However, it is possible to present project proposals in other areas that migrants feel are relevant in their communities to foster migrants' integration.

Objective:
The pilot project aims to create **structured and formalized ways** to regularly consult migrants on policies. This mechanism should aim to improve the quality of life in local communities and increase the transparency of the activities of public and private organizations, thereby improving the quality of democracy.

Potential actions:

- Creation of neighborhood committees of immigrant citizens, where they can discuss and make decisions to take to local authorities/decision-makers.
- Implementation of regular meetings and a participative process
- Creation of digital or physical space for dialogue and communication between citizens and local authorities
- Institutional actions to improve the participation of new citizens at the economic and political level (e.g. promotion of statutory changes of economic and political bodies, multiservice agencies, etc.)
- Creation of cross-sectoral working groups constituted by citizens with a migrant background and representatives of institutional areas related to housing, reception, employment, health and education to define local priorities and policies

2 The process of design and implement a pilot action

The call for ideas: preparation

Timeline: at least 1 month

Description:

A **call for ideas** targeting citizens offers them a challenging and proactive opportunity to present project ideas targeting their needs at the local level.

The promoter of the call of ideas could be both the local authorities willing to activate a participatory process and inviting citizens and community representatives to submit proposals; as well as citizens as individuals and\or represented by civil society organizations collecting ideas to be then reviewed and selected together with the local authorities.

Key section of the call:

- *The call for ideas:*

Brief introduction of who is inviting to submitting proposal and why the call is launched and expected results

- *Who can apply*

Definition of the eligible targets and requirements for participation

- *How to apply*

Description of how to prepare the application form, the main contact, how to submit the proposal, deadline etc.

- *Examples of eligible proposals*
- *Selection procedure*

List of the selection criteria and how the points will be assigned

- *Timeline for pilot action implementation*
- *Financial*

The estimated budget for the implementation of proposal

- *Results communication*
- *Contacts*

Do not forget:

- ❖ To include a template for proposals' application, budget presentation along with the call, as well as instructions (eg. regulations for budget's development, monitoring and reporting).
- ❖ The templates should be produced in local language, but be **careful to provide the needed translations** in order to make the call accessible to all the people with migrant background present in the territory.
- ❖ To use a catchy graphic layout supporting an easy understanding of the application

The launch and dissemination of the call

Timeline: at least 2 months

Description:

Citizens with a migrant background and local civil society organizations are invited to present their project ideas targeting needs identified at the local level.

Potential **promotion and communication activities** to spread the call for ideas:

- social media and web channels of the promoter and its affiliates
- newsletters of of the promoter and its affiliates
- events in which migrants and associations can participate
- emails for all participants
- emails for Focus groups participants and representatives of local authorities inviting them to collaborate in the dissemination of the call for ideas
- emails to migrant associations and TCN's CSO and other NGOs
- Local press release with QR code linked to the call documents and template

Submission and collection of proposals:

Timeline: at least 1 month

Description:

A working group of **10-15 people** is created to support the concrete development of the proposal. They act as volunteers working to build up an action aimed to have a constructive dialogue with decision-makers. This means that people can participate in the implementation of the selected project even if they were not involved in its development.

The average number of proposals to be received is around 15\20 proposals in total.

Do not forget:
- ❖ To set a specific mailbox for collecting proposals and requests of information
- ❖ Appoint a responsible person for the call monitoring
- ❖ Appoint an help desk to monitor and reply to eventual request of clarifications

Selection of proposals and communication of results:

Timeline: at least 1.5 months

Description:

The final outcome is to select 1 proposal among those received. It is recommended:

- A **Selection Committee**, composed by local authorities representative and external evaluators in order to select the most relevant one, thus achieving a more holistic and participatory process and avoiding any misunderstandings between the parties
- Identification of **selection criteria** and procedures (see Annex 3)
- In case of reception of **incomplete proposals,** the most relevant one is selected. The Selection Committee reserves the right to ask for supplementary information (with regard to the project's development and budget if necessary).
- The selection procedure has to be finalized at least a week before the official communication of results.
- **Result communication:** the organization launching the call are asked to communicate to the selected proposal representatives the positive result and next steps for the development of the proposals
- **Reward**: A reward for the winner makes the application more challenging and motivates people to apply , it could be based on a financial compensation, as well as foreseeing the participation of the specific municipal committee and board.

Co-design and finalization

Timeline: 2 weeks

Description:

A plan for the pilot project is defined, including objectives, activities and expected results; as well as logistics, and communication. Indicators of results will be also developed, and the budget will be detailed.

Local authorities engaged in the local academy, as well as other stakeholders relevant for the implementation of the activity, and, above all, having a role in the different decision-making process, are suggested to be contacted for the co-creation moment. At least 2 meetings with them are suggested to be engaged in the final design and preparing the logistic aspect for the implementation of the pilot action (eg. aims, results, impact + logistics, communication + relevant stakeholders mapping and involvement)

The SelectionCommittee oversees the project plans presented and will guarantee their good quality.

Project implementation

Timeline: minimum 6 months

Description: implementation of the pilot action meant to be a structured and formalized way to regularly consult migrants on policies.

The working group initially appointed to submit the proposal should now act as coordinator of the action, overseeing the implementation of the pilot together with the local authorities. Indeed, **regular monitoring meetings** with the local authority are suggested to catch up on the progress of the action, address potential issues and plan the future steps.

It is also important appointing sub groups with the group of participants and stakeholders involved in the implementation stage, giving **specific roles and responsibilities** to participants of the pilot action, in order to make them **more responsible and motivated** toward the scope of the action and the successful result achievement. As an example: defining sa sub group organizing logistic aspects (eg. venues, catering, services etc.); sub group for communication and visibility; etc.

3 Evaluation and follow up

Evaluation of the pilot project could be done at two level:

- internally with the appointed working group, local authorities and possibly an external evaluation
- Externally with the participants of the pilot action

In the first case, evaluation can go through a questionnaire and\or a meeting at the end of the pilot, both based on a grid and criteria commonly defined. While, in the second case, depending on the integration initiative on which the pilot is focused, the evaluation will assess various factors through closed-answer surveys (e.g., user-friendly mechanism, possibility for all to access it, level of consultation, quality of implementation, and impact on the local migrant population).

In both cases, the general scope is to define impacts, improvements and gaps to be addressed in the future.

Moreover, the evaluation is also a chance to discuss and\or collect potential follow up ideas. In our SHAPE Academy, we proposed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), an agreement between the municipality and local associations that coordinated the pilot action. The agreement is not legally and financially binding, but it is fundamental in an engagement process as it shows that the parties are willing to cooperate after the conclusion of the pilot. Indeed, it serves to ensure the sustainability of the action's impact, as well as set the basis for future initiatives and replications.

4 Communication

Communicating and giving visibility to the action during its implementation is crucial to build consensus around the topic by the whole community, as well as engage with more citizens beyond the initial group. In this sense, social media and web channels work best to reach a wide number of people.

It is also important to communicate the results of the action after it is concluded, and in particular the evaluation and impact analysis outcomes. In this regard, producing and publishing a **short report** including good practices and lessons learnt, suggestions for improvement, and potential follow up, etc. is advisable, to keep the participants informed about the results and potential future progress, and motivated toward the challenge.

Checklist before starting a participation process

Before starting a participation process it can be very useful to take a step back and assess the situation. This checklist has a series of questions that can be asked in advance of a civil participation process. The answers can help to identify areas in need of further development:

Purpose

- Is there a clear purpose for the participation process?
    - Can you clearly articulate to yourself and others what difference you want the process to make?
    - Is this purpose understandable to the intended participants?
- Have you identified what (if anything) can change as the result of the process?
    - Do you know at what level of participation your process takes place at?

Ø If the answer to the questions is "No" it might be best to do additional work to define the process.

Buy in and ownership

- Are the relevant decision makers aware of the proposed participation process?
    - Are they supportive of the process?
    - Are they going to be involved in the process?

Ø If the answer to the questions is "No" it might be best to do additional work to bring decision makers onboard.

Identification of the stakeholders and strategies of engagement

- Have you clearly mapped your stakeholders, meaning the CSOs, the private sector, the citizens that need to be engaged in this process?
- Have you identified the specific strategies that you intend to employ to engage these different stakeholders, based on their interest and relevance to the policy/topic at stake?

Ø If the answer to the questions is "No", it might be best to make an accurate analysis of your stakeholders and plan carefully your strategies to engage them, so as to be mostly effective

Resources, budget and capacity

- Is there a realistic budget for the process, including start up and follow up activities?
- Is there staff time to carry out all stages of the work?

·   Do the proposed staff members have the required skills and experience to carry out the work?
·   Are experts with experience of the proposed method involved?
Ø If the answer to the questions is "No" it might be best to do some additional work to identify additional resources or to undertake training.

Timing and links to decision-making

·   Are there any dates when key decisions on the topic need to be made?
·   Does the timeline allow the participation process to influence key decisions?
Ø If the answer to the questions is "No" it might be useful to see if the process outputs can be delivered at a stage where they can influence decisions.

Communications and outreach

·   Are the key stakeholders involved in the process, for example, in a steering group?
·   Is there a communications plan aimed at key groups?
Ø If the answer to the questions is "No" it might be good to develop a plan to engage with key stakeholders and to communicate about the process and its results.

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