GUIDE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

the dpsa
Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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FOREWORD

In 2008 the Public Service Commission (PSC) published a research report entitled "Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service". In the report, the PSC categorically urge government departments to institutionalize the practice of public participation by, *inter alia*, developing their own policies, guidelines and structures such as dedicated public participation units to drive public participation.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has subsequently developed the guide on public participation for the public service. The department will use the same as a starting point for promoting and institutionalizing the application of public participation in policy formulation, implementation and service delivery improvement. It is also intended to help departments understand the public policy context within which they operate, identify the need and develop the desire for citizen and community engagement, and then to design and implement appropriate policies and public participation guidelines of their own.

The DPSA recognises the great diversity of departmental mandates, contexts, and objectives in policy formulation and implementation of programmes. As a result, the guide offers no rigid prescriptions or ready-made solutions. Rather, it seeks to clarify the key issues and decisions faced by government officials when designing and implementing measures to ensure access to information, opportunities for consultation and public participation in policy-making and service delivery.

Finally, we encourage departments to utilize the template recommended by the PSC when designing their specific guidelines. This is in the interest of promoting a common approach on public participation across the public service, while acknowledging the diversity that might necessitate some customization of the template to suit unique circumstances in departments. The template is included as an annexure to this guide, However it can be obtained directly from the website of the PSC.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Good governance is among others, about creating transparency, accountability and building strong relations between government and its citizens. Governments throughout the world are striving towards building strong relations and partnerships with citizens, because it is through these partnerships that developmental challenges and good governance could be addressed. Citizens' participation is a central element of good governance.

1.2 The South African Government has committed itself to the creation of a better life for all its citizens. The basis of the Constitution (1996), and other policies such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), and the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1997), is the development of the potential of each individual citizen for self reliance and sustainability as a priority. Building trust between government and citizens is paramount, and these policies advocate for citizens to be afforded the opportunity to play an active role in decision making and any other policy making process and by so doing, building the so desired trust and strong relationship between government and citizens.

1.3 The National Planning Commission (NPC) has done an analysis of problems that are still facing the Country since obtaining a successful transition into democracy, and all these challenges are detailed in the Diagnostic Report they have developed. In response to the challenges, the National Development Plan has been adopted to achieve among others, a "mobilized, active and responsive citizenry". Government is expected to play a facilitative role to strike a balance in issues of nation building and social cohesion.

1.4 Public participation is important to the principles of democratic government. The 2010-2014 Medium Term Strategic Framework identifies the renewal of citizens' *faith in the democratic system as crucial*". The renewal of systems, values and ethos is seen as critical fundamentals required for driving projects identified in the National Development Plan. Government's focus is generally on realizing the following priorities which are essential for positively changing citizens' living standards through poverty eradication, rural development, and improvement of health services, education and crime prevention.

The 2010 State of the Nation Address re-emphasized Government's commitment to building a state that will be responsive to the people's needs, a caring public service which will promote the acceleration of service delivery in order to address the needs of the people, in line with the Batho Pele/People First Policy[1].

1.5 The Reconstruction and Development Programme supports and endorses participatory democracy, and it urges government departments to play a role and take responsibility to ensure that citizens are empowered, and that developmental programmes are people driven. Citizens must also play a greater and active role in economic development, to deal with the problems of deprivation and eradication of the phenomenon of second economy, characterized by persisting poverty and an increasing unemployment which affect the majority of the previously disadvantaged populations.

1.6 Government has introduced various initiatives in an effort to involve citizens in participatory democracy. To reach out to communities, government has established mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, Open Government Partnership, Community Development Workers, Imbizo and Ward Committees as platforms for engagement. They are mostly designed to facilitate and enhance public participation at local level, as well as assist communities to deal with their own development.

2. Public Participation Guide

2.1 The purpose of this guide is to capacitate government institutions to effectively and efficiently carry out their public participation activities in communities. Government institutions are duty bound by the laws of the country to engage communities on policies, programmes, projects and any decisions which might affect such communities either positively or negatively. Public participation is an essential tool for soliciting the views of communities on all development initiatives in a manner that would minimize or avoid unnecessary conflict.

3. The Need for the Guide

3.1 In December 2008, the Public Service Commission (PSC)[2] published a research report entitled "Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service". In the report, it is stated that, the main aim of the study was to assess public participation practices in selected departments in the Public Service. The specific objectives of the study were to:

i. Assess departments' guidelines or policies for promoting public participation in order to establish what these guidelines provide for;
ii. Assess the types of structured methodologies or processes of public participation used; and
iii. Identify the weaknesses and strengths of public participation practices in relation to service delivery within the Public Service.

3.2 Some of the key findings of the PSC research may be summarized as follows:

i. There is an understanding of the process of public participation in departments, although the understanding is not matched with actual implementation of public participation by departments;
ii. The existence of public participation guidelines/policies is uneven; only 25% of the 16 departments that participated in the study had guidelines/policies on public participation in place, as noted by the PSC, suggests that public participation is not yet institutionalized in many departments;
iii. Approximately 44% of the departments have established public participation units; however the units concerned were not able to clearly explain how they ensure that public participation is adequately undertaken by their respective departments;
iv. No special training on public participation is provided for staff in most of the departments.
v. In the interest of building capacity for effective and efficient public participation practices in all government departments, the DPSA has developed this guide which departments should use as an additional resource in the quest to improve public participation.

3.3 Currently, there is no generic public service guide on public participation even though there are ample pieces of legislation calling for the institutionalization of public participation practices to support the notion of participative governance, to which our democratic dispensation subscribes. As indicated in

[2] The Public Service Commission: Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service, December 2008.

the PSC report, there are a few government departments that do have guides or policies on public participation. However, a snap telephonic survey of 10 national departments conducted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) did not yield better results compared to the findings of PSC. Most departments still do not have coherent and functional guides on public participation.

4. Limitation of the Guide

4.1. This guide is intended to build on the wealth of experience on public participation that already exists in the public service, and to encourage deeper engagement using some of the methods which are outlined in the annexure.

4.2 It is not a panacea for all problems relating to public participation. It is intended to fill the gap that has already been identified and to encourage further capacity building in department on public participation;

4.3. Although a uniform approach in conducting public participation is strongly advocated, we must remember that there will always be variances relating to the context in which public participation is conducted. No two areas will be the same in terms of social, political, economic, cultural factors and the approach should be customized to fit the realities on the ground.

4.4. All government departments and other relevant institutions are encouraged to develop sector-specific public participation guides and systems and may use this guide as a benchmark.

4.5 Effective public participation requires adequately trained practitioners; without public officials with the requisite skills and high levels of commitment, government's goal of empowering communities will flounder, and conflicts between citizens and state organs might also intensify due to lack of information and mutual understanding.

5. What is Public Participation

5.1 Terms used to explain public participation

5.1.1. There is a vast body of literature dealing with this subject of interacting with members of the public, to share information with them, and to afford them the opportunity to express their views on contemplated policies, programmes and projects. However, there is also a problem of terminology to overcome, because in the literature dealing with this subject several terms are used; in some cases some of the terms are even used interchangeably. The most common of these terms are:

i. Public participation;
ii. Citizen participation;
iii. Political participation;
iv. Public involvement;
v. Citizen engagement;
vi. Community participation; and
vii. Community engagement.

5.2 Definition of Public Participation

5.2.1. In his discussion of citizen participation, Brynard D.J. (undated, p.134)[3] argues that "citizen participation should be distinguished from similar terms such as political participation and public participation", because these terms are "not necessarily synonymous" even though in many respects they may be almost synonymous. In his attempt to distinguish between citizen participation and political participation Brynard further states that citizen participation is:

"Distinctive because it lays emphasis on the person rather than the state in the participatory relationship."

5.2.2 Brynard distinguishes between citizen participation and public participation in the following way:

"Public participation is not synonymous with citizen participation – mainly because the former is a wider concept which may include citizen participation. The reason for this is the fact that the word "public" in public participation refers to all the people, whether or not they possess the rights and obligations of citizenship (cites Langton: 1978:20)".

5.2.3. Likewise, the scope of public participation in the South African context includes citizens and people who are legally within the borders of the country, and may somehow be impacted by decisions and

[3] Brynard, D.J. "Planning: the participatory approach", in Bekker, K. (ed.), (undated), "Citizen Participation in local government", JL Van Schaick Academic.

activities of the state. Consequently, in this guide we adopt the broader and more inclusive term "*Public Participation",* as it also encapsulates the notion of community participation and engagement as well as inferring a specific geographic area.

5.2.4 In this guide we look at some of the definitions of Public Participation, from different various sources, without differentiating between Public Participation and the related terms (**see attached glossary**). Suffice to note that there is little or no difference between the existing definitions except in the matter of emphasis on the context, in which communication and interaction with citizens is taking place.

5.2.5 In general, public participation seeks to "influence and share control over development initiatives and the resources which affects [communities and people]"[4]. In this sense, public participation is underpinned by the right of those affected or interested in a decision, to be involved in the decision-making process. Implicit in the public participation process is the openness influenced decision-making, democratic governance and community empowerment.

5.2.6 According to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)[5] , public participation "involve[s] those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process". It also "promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision".

5.2.7 Creighton (2005 :)[6] defines public participation as "the process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision-making. It is a two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public."

5.2.8 Below is a more practical definition of public participation, which was crafted by the Task Team that was commissioned by the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), European Commission for Europe (ECE) and International Labour Organization (ILO) Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training to develop a guide on "Public Participation in Forestry in Europe and North America"[7]:

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[4] The World Bank participation Sourcebook: Washington, World Bank, 1996. P xi

[5] Source: http://www.iap2.org/

[6] Creighton, J.L.: 2005. "The Public Participation Handbook: making better decisions through citizen involvement". John Wiley & Son, Inc, San Francisco.

[7] International Labour Office: "PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN FORESTRY IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA: *Report of the Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry" (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/docs/publications-other/report-participation.pdf)*

"Public participation is a voluntary process whereby people, individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand."

5.2.9 The Task Team concluded that public participation is a process that;

i. Is inclusive;
ii. Is voluntary;
iii. may be used as a complement to legal requirements;
iv. is fair and transparent;
v. is based on good faith from participants; and
vi. does not guarantee or predetermine what the outcome will be.

5.2.10 When using this guide or developing their own sector-specific guides, public institutions and officials are advised to give special attention to how they define public participation in their own specific contexts, or which of the many definitions in the literature would best suit their circumstances

5.3 Defining the Public

5.3.1 The public may be defined as a "vast and heterogeneous group of people or stakeholders, organizedor not, who are concerned by a specific problem or issue and who should be given the opportunity to take part in discussions, and to influence and/or jointly make decisions regarding the issue at hand."[8]

5.3.2. Understanding the public when designing public involvement is important. There are different categories of interest groups in society and participation is usually determined by particular concerns affecting individual groups. The public is composed of individuals, household, groups, organizations and many other stakeholders that form different sections.

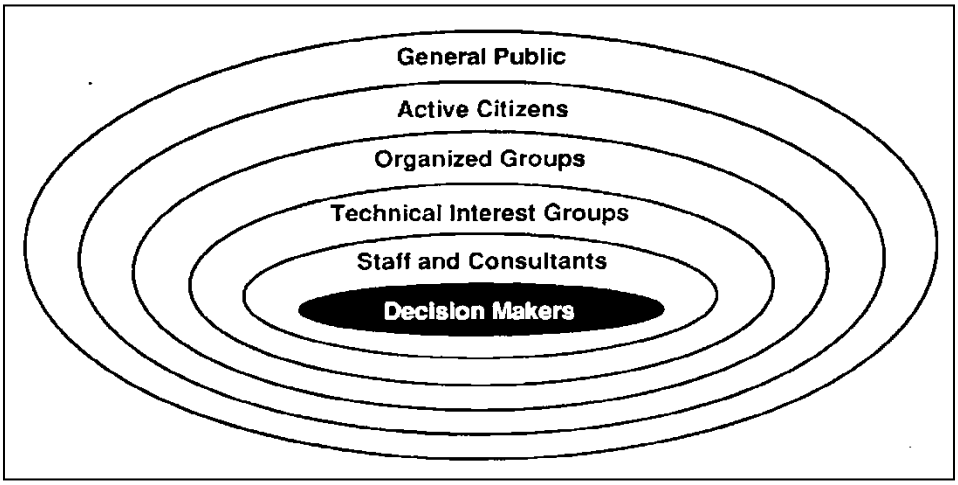
5.3.3. There are categories of sectors that are well organized and are brought together by common interests and examples of such groups include professional associations, social groups (e.g. Burial Societies and Stokvels in South Africa), political parties, sports, ratepayers, civic and many others.

[8] International Labour Office: "PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN FORESTRY IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA: *Report of the Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry" (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/docs/publications-other/report-participation.pdf)*

5.3.4. It is also common to find in society sectors that are not attached to any organisation but can become involved in an action aimed at collectively resolving a problem that is affecting them. Examples in this category include individuals, women, households, youth, men, disabled, commuters or a community that can organise themselves into action to address or highlight a common problem that they experience, with the purpose of seeking for solutions.

5.3.5. The following picture illustrates the levels and intensities of involvement of the different categories of the public (see Figure 2-1)[9]. It is made up of several "orbits" that rotate around the decision makers. The diagram illustrate that in the public the actual decision makers form the (1) nucleus of the orbit and are usually represented by, for example, elected officials, or heads of government departments.

Figure 2.1



5.3.6 At the next level of influence are (2) the staff and technical consultants of all these government departments. Then there are (3) the leaders of organized groups or interests, who often possess considerable technical expertise or influence such as organized trade unions that are also willing to spend the time and energy to attempt to influence the decision.

5.3.7 Further on are active (4), concerned citizens who have a direct or indirect interest in decisions or actions of political office bearers or government institutions. These are ordinary people who are not attached to any organized group, who choose to participate because they are concerned about a particular issue of immediate impact on their neighborhoods. The last orbit (5) represents

[9] Source: www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/sites

the general public which watches with interest but chooses not to get involved or remains totally apathetic about the contentious issues at hand.

6. The Context of Public Participation in South Africa

6.1 Democratic South Africa has identified as a priority, the transformation of society from a divided past to an integrated one that is inclusive, and founded on the principles of human dignity, equality and inclusivity. The Constitution, (1996) states that the priority of the state must be the advancement of human rights and freedoms, within a context of non-racial and non-sexist society, in which the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law prevail.

6.2 Transformation is in pursuit of the creation of a fair and just society, which ensures that its citizens enjoy full and equal rights, free from any form of discrimination.

6.3 Since the achievement of democracy, government has embarked on the restructuring and reorganization of the state machinery to build a new efficient and effective order, poised to achieve the objectives of a developmental state. In the process of the transformation, government is guided by the principle of building a country that belongs to all who live in it and the notion that the will of the people shall be respected.

6.4 In support of transformation, the Constitution urges all organs of states to play a central role including redressing the past imbalances. Again, the Constitution gives each sphere of government a responsibility of conducting activities within the parameters of the Constitution, ensuring that the desired transformation is realized with citizens playing a role and not as passive recipient of services.

7. Legal Framework

7.1 When departments draft their public participation guides, they should examine the overall national legislation, as well as their specific mandates and other sector-specific legislation that obligate them to integrate public participation in their work. The generic legal framework on public participation include among others, the following that are presented below.

7.1.1 Constitution

a. Chapter two of the Constitution[10] outlines the right of all citizens to have their basic human needs met. Section 195 (1) (e) further states that "*people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making*". This far-reaching statement alone puts a huge obligation on the state to ensure that members of the public are not left out of the policy formulation and implementation processes. It is thus essential for all organs of state to comply with this requirement, and desist from treating public involvement as merely "courtesy" on the part of government to the people. Public participation is a duty commanded by the Constitution

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7.2.1 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper) of 1997

a. In its "Introduction", the Batho Pele White Paper[11] states that "A guiding principle of the public service in South Africa will be that of service to the people".
b. The Batho Pele White Paper further puts the centrality of people in service delivery, when it states that "a transformed South African public service will be judged by one criterion above all: its effectiveness in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South African citizens". Needless to say, the public ought to be consulted at all times to ensure that government services are indeed of the type and standards that "meet the basic needs of all South African citizens". It should also be noted, as stated in the White Paper, that "Public services are not a privilege in a civilized and democratic society: they are a legitimate expectation".
c. The citizen must be treated as a "customer", according to the White Paper. And treating citizens as "customers" implies the following:
    i. Listening to and considering their views making decisions about what services should be provided;
    ii. Treating them with consideration and respect;
    iii. Making sure that the commitment level and quality of service is always of the highest standard; and

[10] South Africa: "The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 as amended."
[11] South Africa: White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997. Government Gazette No. 18340, Volume 388, 1 October 1997.

iv. Responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standard.

d. The Batho Pele White Paper outlines eight principles that can objectively guide the public service institutions, not only on service delivery standards, but also on public participation as well. Notably, the very first Batho Pele principle is "Consultation", which emphatically puts forward that "Citizens should be consulted…" about services rendered to them. The following table reflects the principles of Batho Pele and their meaning;

Table 1: The Eight Principles are briefly explained below:

BP PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS
Consultation	Consultation is an important element of public participation and the principle is discussed under section 1, page 2.
Service Standards	It is about telling citizens about the level and quality of services rendered by government, in order to create awareness on the part of citizens about this matter. By so doing, citizens know what to expect from government, by when that service will be delivered, and channels to be taken where there are complaints in relation to the service.
Access	Citizens should have equal access to services rendered by government, and they should be assisted by government to always have swift and equal access
Courtesy	It is about citizens being treated with respect and consideration when they interact with government officials for purpose of accessing services.
Information	The principle is about citizens being given information that is accurate about government services that they are entitled to, as this will in turn enable citizens to make informed choices about services they require.
Openness and Transparency	This principle is about informing citizens on how national and provincial departments are run, how much it costs government to run services and who is given the responsibility of running which government department. This also means that citizens are important stakeholders in this regard, since the resources of government belong to citizens, and government is the structure put in place to use these resources on behalf of people in order to improve their standard of living.

Redress	The principle is very important and encourages government officials to provide an apology to citizens, and explanation where lack or poor service delivery is experienced. It will mean that urgent and effective remedies should be put in place under such circumstances.
Value for Money	It is about delivering services that are economical and efficient, ensuring that there is value for money in expenditure incurred by government. It is also ensuring that there are proper queue management systems in government, proper complaint management and required facilities that will ensure that citizens do not experience unnecessary difficulties and waste of time in accessing government services.

8. Institutionalizing and Planning Public Participation

8.1 The need for, and degree of public participation in government decision-making depends on what we are trying to achieve. The degree of public participation will not be the same for every situation. How best to involve the community and to what extent, will largely be influenced by the project or initiative which a state institution wants to embark upon, or the nature and sensitivity of the decision government needs to make.

a. Less involvement is appropriate when:
    i. Interest in the policy issue is vested in one or a few interest groups;
    ii. Perspectives are generally well understood and can be taken into consideration;
    iii. The policy issue demands consistency with established professional or technical standards;
    iv. Legislative guidelines define and/or limit the level of public involvement.
b. More involvement is appropriate when:
    i. Several groups have an interest in the outcome of the issue;
    ii. Consensus among these groups is weak and uncertain;
    iii. The policy issue is value based and carries a high need for social acceptance.

8.2 What should departments do to institutionalize public participation

a. One of the recommendations of the PSC in the "*Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service"* (2008:34) is on institutionalizing public participation and reads as follows:

"Departments at both national and provincial governments should institutionalise public participation as a service delivery and good governance mechanism. In order to institutionalise public participation, departments should ensure that public participation units are established and have the necessary financial and human resources to support critical citizen engagement."

b. Government has an obligation to ensure that the involvement of the public in matters affecting their lives find fullest expression. This means vigorously promoting public participation by putting in place meaningful and enforceable institutional mechanisms, to ensure that public participation becomes the norm in the public service.

c. In the same Report, the PSC makes some important recommendations which should be taken into account in the planning and institutionalization of public participation across the Public Service. The PSC recommendations are presented in the following table;

Table 2: What departments should do to institutionalize and plan for public participation

Key focus area	Recommendation
Guideline /policies on public participation	Departments should develop guidelines/policies on public participation to inform and manage critical engagement with citizens. The guidelines/policies on public participation should clearly articulate the objectives of public participation and the process to be followed during engagement with citizens. During the development of such guidelines/policies, departments should ensure that the views and inputs of stakeholders are solicited
Institutionalization of public participation	Departments at both national and provincial governments should institutionalise public participation as a service delivery and good governance mechanism. In order to institutionalise

	public participation, departments should ensure that public participation units are established and have the necessary financial and human resources to support critical citizen engagement.
Departments to familiarise themselves with Citizens Forums Toolkit	Departments in both provincial and national governments need to familiarise themselves with the PSC's Citizens Forums Toolkit as a public participation practice. The Citizens Forum Toolkit allows departments and citizens to find solutions to programme specific issues, rather than focusing on department's issues in its entirety. For technical support with application of the Citizens Forums, departments can approach the PSC for assistance.
Use of findings contained in the Satisfaction Citizen Survey	Departments need to make use of findings contained in reports on Citizen Satisfaction Surveys as a measure to gauge the level of citizens' satisfaction or lack thereof on services they provide. Such finding will pro-actively assist departments to engage with citizens and address their concerns. It is during such engagement on the findings of the reports where potential service delivery protests can be averted.
Training of officials involved in public participation	There is a need for departments to ensure that officials involved in public participation are adequately trained to engage with citizens. Departments need to ensure that officials acquire the necessary skills, especially in the areas such as conflict management, negotiations and

	understanding community dynamics. Trained officials in public participation will ensure that public participation initiatives in the respective departments are not only led by the elected officials, but are also initiated and led by officials.

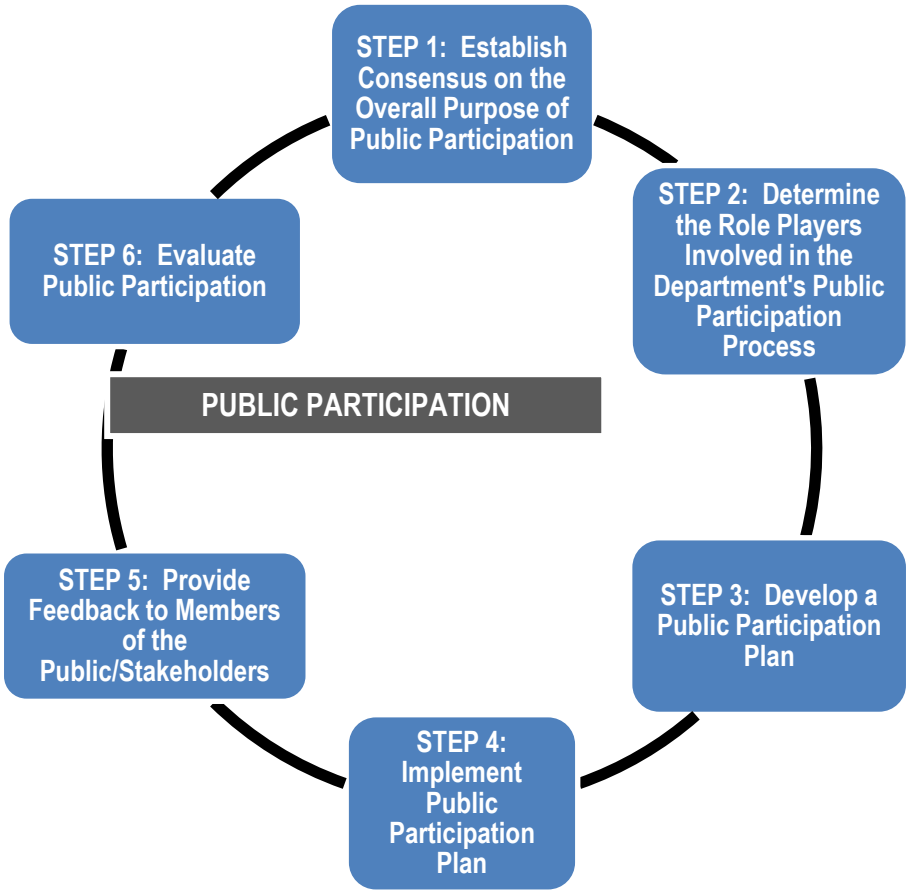
8.3 Planning for Public Participation

a. In addition to ensuring a common approach to public participation, implementation of Public Participation strengthens the inculcation of the culture of The Batho Pele Principles[12], especially those relating to putting people at the centre of service delivery. The Batho Pele principle of "consultation", for example, is meant to make sure that citizens have a say on how services are provided. The other Batho Pele Principles are discussed under section on Legal Framework.

b. In the report, the Public Service Commission (PSC) urged all government departments to take public participation seriously and encouraged the development of sector-specific guides on public participation across the Public Service. Subsequent to the report, the PSC sought to expedite efforts aimed at remedying the dismal state of the implementation of public participation, imperatives in the Public Service by developing a template and process flow to guide departments on this task (see the process flow Figure 1 below and the full template is attached as **Annexure 1** of this generic guide on public participation). The PSC template is an important resource in the development of department-specific public participation guides, which are obligatory across the Public Service.

[12] White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995

FIGURE 1: THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS FLOW PROPOSED BY THE PSC[13]



8.4 Understanding Stakeholders

8.4.1. The question of who you want to engage depends on your project parameters. Consider how and why you will involve stakeholders. Time is valuable and in short supply for many. Ensure stakeholders' time is well spent by giving them the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on your project. Potential stakeholders may include amongst others, the following groups

i. Community associations and organizations
ii. Special interest groups;
iii. Chairs of advisory committees or entire advisory committees (e.g. ward committees, school governing bodies);
iv. Ward Councillors;
v. Civic organizations;
vi. Political leaders;

[13] Public Service Commission: "Template for Developing Guidelines on Public Participation", March 2010. http://www.psc.gov.za/documents/docs/guidelines/Temp%20Develop%20Guide.pdf

vii. Non-government organizations;
viii. Charities;
ix. Sport and recreation groups;
x. Businesses and business associations;
xi. Professional associations;
xii. Landowners and residents;
xiii. Churches and religious groups;
xiv. Local schools/educational institutions;
xv. Internal stakeholders;
xvi. Labour organizations

8.4.2. Stakeholder Analysis

Once you are satisfied who the relevant stakeholders are in any given project, the next thing is to do a stakeholder analysis. A stakeholder analysis is always linked to the policy, project or programme on which public participation is to be conducted, with the view to making decisions that are influenced by inputs made by members of the public. As indicated in the template, the analysis is made in terms of a set of variable which may differ from project to project or from policy to policy.

8.4.3. General benefits of Public Participation are the following;

i. To improve the quality and legitimacy of decisions made by executive authorities and public officials regarding policy, programmes and projects that affect or might affect communities;
ii. To eliminate or at least drastically reduce polarization between public agencies and citizens, thereby preventing conflicts which sometimes result in violent protests at local government level in our country;
iii. To afford diverse interest groups, including minorities, the opportunity to have a say in crucial matters affecting their lives in the interests of inclusivity;
iv. To build competent, responsible citizens since through public participation, citizens can acquire useful skills such as active listening, problem solving, creative thinking etc, that they can put to good use in other areas of their lives;
v. To enhance transparency and accountability in public institutions by entrenching a culture of openness through public participation, thereby promoting a high quality of democratic governance in the country;

vi. To build broader support, trust and confidence for government decisions, programmes and initiatives.

Table 3: Lessons learnt from Merafong Municipality Experiences

Lessons from Merafong

To emphasise the importance of public participation, Judge Albie Sachs said the following , in the Constitutional Court of South Africa on the matter of Doctors for Life International v the Speaker of National Assembly and Others (Doctors for Life International v Speaker National Assembly and Others) (2006);

> "All parties interested in legislation should feel that they have been given a real opportunity to have their say, that they are taken seriously as citizens and that their views matter and will receive due consideration at the moments when they could possibly influence decisions in a meaningful fashion. The objective is both symbolical and practical: the persons concerned must manifestly shown the respect due to them as concerned citizens, and the legislators must have a benefit of all inputs that will enable them to produce the best possible laws"

These words by Judge Albie Sachs are crucial and apply to all situations of public participation and they relate closely to the essence of Batho Pele Principles of consultation and courtesy.

During the period 2005-2009, Khutsong experienced violent unrests following a decision to incorporate it to North West Province. In 2005, Government introduced the Constitution Twelfth Amendment of Act 2005 as well as the Cross-boundary Municipalities Laws and Repeal Related Matters Act 23 of 2005, to abolish cross-boundary municipalities. The law (Section 74 of the Constitution) states that it is required that before a province change any boundary, the NCOP must approve by passing a bill in this regard.

The Merafong City Local Municipality, within which Khutsong is located, was a cross-boundary municipality and like others such as Moutse and Matatiele were affected by the new Amendment Bill. Merafong like many cross boundary municipalities was incorporated to North West Province in 2005. Residents of the areas within the municipality were not pleased with this decision because majority where in favour of the municipality remaining in Gauteng.

As required by the law, both Gauteng and North West provinces conducted consultations with the Merafong community structures and representatives of residence on the new proposal. The outcome of the proposal and other impact study revealed that majority of structures and residents in the Municipality where not in favour of the incorporation to North West Province.

Gauteng's mandate to the NCOP was not to support the position of incorporating Merafong to North West Province and the position was influenced by the outcome of public participation and other processes conducted to assess the situation, including opinions and views of residents on the matter.

On the basis of the legal opinion received from [14]State Law Advisors, Gauteng Legislature changed their NCOP mandate and voted for the incorporation of Merafong to North West Province. What swayed their position from the NCOP mandate was that, although Gauteng's mandate was to reject the incorporation of Merafong to North West, they did not have the powers to change the Amendment Bill. In the subsequent unfolding process the Gauteng Legislature was even prepared to support the new Bill but to again reject the part that referred to the incorporation of cross-boundary municipalities to ensure that the boundaries of Gauteng remained the same, however the decision was going to affect other municipalities including those within the province to an extend of destabilizing some.

When Gauteng Legislature changed its NCOP mandate and voted in favour of the incorporation, they did not go back to Merafong to inform the stakeholders and other community structures that they have changed their position on the matter and reasons behind the change. This angered the residents of Merafong and they felt that their views were ignored and their opinions were not taken seriously.

There was another concern raised by the Merafong Demarcation Forum, namely that the Minister of Local Government published on a website before the consultation process that Merafong Municipality would be incorporated into North West Province. The residents felt that consultations were mere formality and the outcomes of these consultations were not going to have influence as government has already taken a decision on the demarcation matter.

For the period 2005-2009, during which Merafong was incorporated into North West Province, the area was dominated by continuous violent unrests that hampered development and growth in the municipality. Residents were adamant that they will fight until their voice was heard and their views were respected by decision-makers.

The lessons and experiences from Merafong is that it is important to consider and respect views and opinions of citizens and to provide feedback including when there is change of plan. Otherwise people will turn to violent unrest to make a point and be heard.

Involving citizens is a reminder to the commitment of working together with communities to find lasting solutions to developmental challenges facing the country. Citizens matter and can contribute to solutions.

8.5 Resources required for a successful public participation

8.5.1 The following resources captured in the table below are important for public participation.

Table 4: Key resources required for a successful public participation

Key resource	Purpose
Time	Citizens need time to learn about an issue and how they can influence the decision making

[14] Linda Nyati, Merafong Demarcation Forum and Others v President of Republic of South Africa and Others, 2008.

	process. It takes time to research an issue, set up meetings and organize campaigns. The public has to be patient and not get discouraged if there are no visible and tangible results in a few weeks. Sometimes it takes months to see concrete results.
Stakeholders	Various groups, individuals or institutions in the community that are interested in the issue need to come together and work as a team to influence the decision making process. Numbers are key in citizen participation. People need to gather together in meetings such as public hearings, public meetings and public debates as well as seek the advice of various experts (e.g. advisory groups) in order to get the best results.
Information	In order to have effective citizen participation, valuable information has to be disseminated. This should come from both the general public and the government. Without information, citizen participation is virtually unattainable.
Media	Media plays an important role in citizen participation. Information can be disseminated to the population at large in a very easy and efficient matter. Local media, especially, plays a key role in the process of citizen participation at the local level

9. Obstacles that can impede meaningful public participation

9.1 Internal Obstacles

a. Lack of resources, both financial and human resources;
b. Lack of support from top management in departments, ministers and other political office bearers;
c. Lack of time due to compressed schedules;
d. Lack of aligning with the priorities of elected officials;
e. Lack of public participation training/skills among staff;
f. Difficulty in coordinating between various departments/ agencies;
g. Legislative and regulatory obstacles.

9.2 External Obstacles

a. The public may be cynical and/or distrustful of the planning process.
b. Cynicism and distrust may arise from a feeling that authorities have already made decisions, and the granting of the opportunity for public input is merely to give the decision a semblance of credibility and respectability.
c. Language and cultural barriers may deter participation in some communities. Some may have limited English proficiency, thus necessitating the translation of materials into other languages, running meetings and other public participation events in the language widely used by relevant people.
d. The public may be uninterested in the planning process. Lack of interest may emanate from poor understanding of the issues, including processes and how and where to participate.
e. Location of meetings may not be accessible enough for, especially, disadvantaged communities.
f. Work, household or other personal obligations may deter participation.
g. The public may not be aware or does not understand the planning process.
h. When the public does not have sufficient ways (methods, places, and times) to provide inputs.
i. The mass media which may in some cases be partisan.

10. Methods of public participation

10.1 In the **Annexures** section of this guide we provide an analysis of some of the most common methods that are used globally for public participation in public sectors. Departments are encouraged to determine what works best for them at any given time.

10.2 As soon as departments are clear that the project requires public involvement they have to decide how much involvement is required. How much involvement is required depends on the issue and the desired outcomes. It's important to remember the methods do not always work independently – combined approaches will often yield better results.

10.3 The following factors can help public participation practitioners to decide on the degree of involvement that is required and what the appropriate public participation method could be employed:

a. Policy/statutory requirements;
b. Nature, complexity and risk associated with issues;
c. Timelines;
d. Financial implications;
e. In-house expertise;
f. Level of support/consensus from stakeholders/partners;
g. Level of influence the participants expect to have; and
h. Level of support from departmental and political decision-makers.

10.4 Commonly used methods in the public service include the following;

10.4.1 Imbizo

a. *Imbizo* has been by far the most popular method which politicians in the country have utilized over the years to communicate with the public on policy issues and government programmes. The word "*imbizo*" is an African word which refers to a special meeting, usually convened by someone in authority such as a traditional leader. Over the years, especially since the advent of democracy in 1994, it has become synonymous with interaction with communities to advance democratic principles.

b. As stated on one of the government websites[15] *the concept "Imbizo"* gives further effect and concrete expression to participatory democracy, so that communities can exercise their rights to be heard, and assist with the national effort to build a better life for all.

c. Government launched the *Imbizo* programme in 2001 as a period of intensified activity where all spheres of government - national, provincial and local - interact with the people across the country. The *Imbizo* initiative plays an important role as an interactive style of governance, which creates more space for public participation and involvement around interactive implementation of government's Programme of Action.

d. *Imbizo* is about unmediated communication between government and its people. It is a forum for enhancing dialogue and interaction between senior government executives and ordinary people. *Imbizo* provide an opportunity for government to communicate its action programme and progress directly to the people. *Imbizo* also promote participation of the public in the programmes to improve their lives. Interaction through *Imbizo* highlights particular problems needing attention, blockages in implementation of policy, or policy areas that may need review. It draws public input into how best to tackle challenges. It gives the President and others direct access to what people say and feel about government and service delivery, to listen to their concerns, their grievances and advice about the pace and direction of government's work.

e. The use of *Imbizo* is now fairly entrenched in the South African political scene and can thus be regarded as a legitimate method or technique of public participation, especially where the intention is to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of citizens in an area at one sitting on one or more crucial policy or service delivery issues.

10.4.2 Public Hearings

a. Apart from *Imbizo*, some government departments have been conducting public hearings under specific legislation that prescribe that public hearing should be conducted before major policies, or infrastructure projects can be started. The most recent example that was very much in the news was the environment impact assessment hearings before the building of the Gautrain project.

[15] http://www.info.gov.za/issues/imbizo/index.html#background

10.4.3 Ward Committees and Community Development Workers

a. At present, ward committees also serve as forums to facilitate public participation at ward level in all municipalities. Community Development Workers (CDWs) work very closely with the ward committees to convey important information between the public and government institutions.

10.4.4 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

a. The African Peer Mechanism is defined by the APRM Website[16] as a *mutually agreed instrument voluntary acceded to by the Member State of the AU as an African self monitoring mechanism.*

b. The South African Government is a member of the African Peer Review Mechanism and government departments and the civil society are encouraged to participate in the Country APRM processes that usually lead to the development of the self assessment report.

c. The African Peer Review Mechanism is in many respects similar to the Open Government Partnership in the sense that through these instruments, countries subject themselves to voluntary peer review.

d. The African Peer Review Mechanism encourages citizens to participate in decision- making process and fosters a strong interface between citizen and government during the collection of input and development of self assessment reports.

e. The departmental plans and strategies on public participation must encourage departments to involve their stakeholders and citizens in the APRM processes related to their interest of participating department.

[16] http://aprm-au-org/

10.4.5 Open Government Partnership (OGP)

a. The OGP is an international initiative of the President of the United States of America and it is aimed at encouraging and seeking commitments from governments to promote transparency, increase public participation, fight corruption and improve new information technology to make government more open, effective and accountable government.
b. In order for countries to qualify, they must meet the following criteria (i) fiscal transparency, access to information (iii) disclosure related to elected or Senior Public Officials and citizen engagement.
c. For countries to participate, they must first (i) embrace a high level open government Declaration(ii) deliver a concrete action plan, developed with public consultation and (iii) commit to independent reporting on their progress going forward.
d. Like the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Open Government Partnership is an instrument through which countries voluntarily subject themselves to peer evaluation.
e. South African Government is a member of the Open Government Partnership and it has in line with the requirement of OGP participation, involved civil society and other partners through consultations in the development of a plan with concrete commitments on open government to address the challenge of service delivery.
f. South African commitments included among others, the following;
    - Establishment of Service Delivery Improvement Forums
    - Public Participation
    - Implementation of Know Your Service Rights
    - Capacitate National Anti-Corruption forums and hotline
    - Strengthen participatory budget process
    - Implementation of Public Service guidelines for corruption related cases
    - Development of a portal for environmental management system
g. The key message for the OGP is citizen engagement where communities are afforded an opportunity to have a say in decision making and other development processes of the country and departments must play a more active role in encouraging their stakeholders and citizens to play active role in this process and strategies on mobilization of citizens in this regard should be included in the departmental public participation plans.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The methods of public participation included in this guide serve as an example of how public participation may be conducted in the public service. The list is by no means exhaustive; departments are encouraged to consult other sources should their needs exceed what has been included in the guide. However, if rigorously utilized these methods can enable departments to achieve their objectives regarding public participation in whatever area of need in their departments, be it policy and implementation, programmes or projects. Needless to say, the successful implementation of this guide will depend mainly on availability of capacity in the respective departments, as well political and top management commitment and support.

11.2 Finally, the guide must be regarded as a living document. Suggestions and inputs on how to improve future editions of the guide should be submitted to the DPSA on a continuous basis during its implementation, especially the tools that could be included to assist departments.

12. Annexures

Public Participation Methods & Other Tools

ANNEXURE 1: TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES

Template for Developing Guidelines

On Public Participation

Generic steps to consider in the development of guidelines on public participation

Step 1: Establish consensus on the overall purpose of public participation

This step is important because unless there is a shared understanding in a department regarding the purpose of public participation, it becomes difficult to sustain momentum for such participation.

- **Determine the legislative framework on public participation.**

  - Consider what the Constitution says about involving the public in policy making and implementation.
  - Consider among others the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, and legislation specific to your department.

- **Clarify the aim of public participation.**

  - What is the aim of public participation in your department? Is it to -
    - Inform the community about proposed policies and/or actions?
    - Allow public inputs on proposed policies and administrative actions?
    - Cooperate with the community to shape policies and priorities?
    - Share decision-making with the community?
  - Please note that the need for public participation may arise out of a combination of the above or other factors

- **Identify the benefits the department expects from public participation**

- What does your department expect to achieve through public participation ?
  - countering undue expectations about policy decisions?
  - getting buy-in from stakeholders?
  - providing opportunities to stakeholders to voice their opinions?
  - lending credibility to the department because of its openness to opinions?

Step 2: PLANNING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Step 2: Determine the role players which should be involved in the Department's public participation process

Knowing the stakeholders to be involved in public participation assists the Department to choose the most appropriate approach to ensure maximum impact - e.g. knowing what language to use and the level of information that should be provided to stakeholders on the issues under discussion. A proper stakeholder analysis makes it easier to divide the stakeholders into groups to ensure more focused discussions where stakeholders attending a specific intervention are on the same level in terms of background on the issue. Providing all appropriate information beforehand will ensure that stakeholders can participate meaningfully in the session.

- **Identify stakeholders and their roles**

- What is the projected interest in the work of the department?
- Which stakeholders should be involved?
- What contribution is expected of the different stakeholders (groups or individuals)?

- **Identify appropriate methods to inform stakeholders about your public participation process(es)**

- What methods (briefing meetings, printed communication) will be most effective in making stakeholders aware of the public participation process(es)?

Step 3:Develop a public participation action plan

This step provides baseline information for monitoring and evaluating the Department's efforts in practicing public participation. It will assist the Department in deciding on which officials to use for the process, or where the officials do not have the necessary skills, how such skills can be acquired. The costing of activities will assist in developing a comprehensive budget for the planned process.

- **Identify the most appropriate public participation approach(es) to be used.**

- What public participation approach(es) (*Izimbizo,* public meeting, workshop) would be most appropriate under the specific circumstances?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant approach(es)?
  - What is the choice of an approach based on (cost effectiveness, reach, stakeholder expectations)?

- **Identify capacity required to facilitate public participation.**

- What are the capacity needs of the Department to facilitate public participation? (needs in terms of, but not limited to facilitation skills, research skills, mediation skills, and interviewing skills).
- What are the capacity needs of stakeholders to participate in public participation?
- Ensure that there is a capacity building strategy in place to fulfil the capacity needs of the Department.
- Ensure that stakeholders are empowered to meaningfully participate in the process.

- **Develop a detailed action plan**

(It should be noted that sound public participation guidelines/policy is key to effective public participation)

- Assess if the Department has public participation guidelines/policy in place?
- Based on the assessment, which activities will have to be carried out to effect public participation?
- Which resources (in terms of human resources, cost, time and logistics) will be needed for each of the activities in the action plan?
  - Which resources are available for implementing the action plan?
  - What are the gaps between available and needed resources?
  - What sources can be explored to address gaps?
- Has a detailed action plan with timeframes, milestones and responsibilities been developed?

Step 4: Implement public participation process

This step attempts to provide direction on conducting the actual public participation session to ensure that the action plan is properly carried out for accountability reasons. Activities are also proposed that will ensure that possible conflict is mediated and misunderstandings addressed. Credibility of the process is further ensured by providing stakeholders with the necessary information throughout the process.

- **Conduct the planned public participation session (meeting, hearing, forum,**

- Ensure proper logistical arrangements such as
  - Who will liaise/engage with the public?
  - Who will record the inputs of the public?
  - How risks would be managed, including
    - Stakeholders overpowering others;
    - Not keeping to agenda and issues to be discussed;
    - Disrupting behaviour of stakeholders.
- Has the purpose of the session been clearly explained to stakeholders?

Step 5: Provide feedback to members of the public/stakeholders.

Providing stakeholders with feedback on the incorporation of their inputs in policy decisions ensures openness and transparency of the public participation process and ensures credibility of the process. It will ensure that stakeholders are more committed in future to become involved in the Department's public participation processes. Stakeholders will feel that their opinions are taken into account and it is therefore unlikely that they will enter into disrupting behavior to ensure that their voices are heard.

- Provide all stakeholders with feedback about the outcome of the public participation process as well as the incorporation of their input into the work of the department

- Have stakeholders been informed on how their inputs influenced decisions?
- Has the appropriate form and language in which to provide feedback been identified?
  - Media releases where a larger component of the public has to be reached for instance in announcing a specific policy;
  - Published reports for distribution to stakeholders or posting on departmental websites.
- Have stakeholders also been allowed to provide feedback on
  - Their satisfaction with the public participation process?
  - Challenges they have identified in the process?

Step 6: Evaluate public participation

- Review the Department's public participation processes and initiatives

- Has the Department used effective instruments (e.g. surveys, reviews) and indicators to evaluate whether the public participation process and or initiatives have accomplished its objectives?
- Have the constraints and challenges in the public participation process been identified?
- Has the Department devised ways to improve public participation?
- Have lessons from the process been used in planning future public participation initiatives?

ANNEXURE 2: GOALS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION[17]

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goals				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that the public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solution.	To Place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public				
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Examples of Techniques				
Fact Sheets Websites Open Houses	Public Comment Focus Group Survey Public Meetings	Workshops Deliberative Polling	Citizen advisory committees Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision

[17] Source: International Association for Public Participation: www.iap2.org

Increasing Level of Public Impact

ANNEXURE 3: EXAMPLES OF SOME PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODS

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Public Meetings	• Vary in size and may consist of hundreds if measures are not taken to limit numbers. • A formal meeting with a specific agenda which may or may not have been made public before the meeting depending on the matter and/or sensitivities around it. • The CDW and/or relevant public officials make presentations or address the meeting; • A scribe takes minutes noting key points, proposals, suggestions and action points.	• Provides opportunity for the public to air their views without fear of victimization or rebuttal; • Popular and can be organised quickly with minimum costs; • Put comments on record for future reference.	• Do not foster dialogue and a thorough thrashing out of issues; • Might create the "us vs. them" feeling and behaviour – potential of degenerating into conflict; • Big meetings are intimidating to some people which may result in good views not coming to the fore.	• Use only after good groundwork in the community; • Limit the agenda to one or two items of importance the community; • Avoid making extravagant promises not based on fact assurance.

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Ward Committee Meetings	• They are representatives bodies elected by ward citizens and that also bring citizen needs and concerns to the attention of authorities; • They are a legal requirement that must be set up by local authorities for public participation and engagement.	• Has direct influence in planning, decision making and implementation with regards to activities that have an impact in the ward. • Increases participation of citizens in municipal processes.	• Political intolerance may hamper cooperation.	• CDWs should serve as ex-officio members of ward committees and regularly attend meetings.
Conferences	• A large-scale meeting taking place over one or more days with a key issue or theme	• Conferences allow the public to interact in a neutral setting with experts and opinion leaders; • Provides a useful forum to showcase programmes, challenges and issues of the day.	• Organising conferences can be cumbersome due to their size and participation of experts; • Ordinary citizen are sometimes reluctant to speak at such open forums.	**CAUTION** • Not recommended for engagement at ward level. • Ward level citizen engagement events should be as close and intimate as possible. • May be adopted as information-sharing on a large scale. CDW should seek help with planning and logistics.
Focus Groups	• Involves 6 – 20 individuals	• Remain largely informal, so	• Selection criteria may create bias in	• The CDW must seek help to structure

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	RECOMMENDATIONS
	discussing a particular topic e.g. how to deal with drugs problem in a ward. • It is a semi-structured interview conducted with a small group of people rather than on an individual basis. • The CDW, facilitator, or researcher guides the discussion by following a set of questions, while a recorder takes notes. • Common themes which emerge from the conversation are analyzed and summarized.	participants can discuss issues in relaxed atmosphere; • It is a good way of gauging the opinions of the public. • If well facilitated a focus group discussion can yield consensus and feelings of enrichment among participants.	eliciting opinions; • Limited number of participants limits representativeness of opinions unless several focus groups are formed; • Danger of forceful participants dominating and skewing opinions; • Requires good listening, analysis and writing skills; • Potential of revealing and reinforcing deep-seated cleavages in the community;	questions clearly and logically; • Good planning needed for taking accurate notes during the session and analysing deliberations according to themes.
Surveys	• Surveys may be used to solicit information from representative	• Can reach large numbers of people; • If same questions are retained, the	• CDWs would have to be trained intensively on use of surveys and analysis	**CAUTION** • Useful when scientific approach is needed; but CDW can use it only if

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	RECOMMENDATIONS
	samples of citizens in a ward; • A survey questionnaire is designed and same questions are asked of every citizen surveyed; • Types of surveys: postal surveys where questionnaires are posted to people, telephone surveys and interviewer surveys which require visits to sampled individuals.	survey can be used for longitudinal studies e.g. monitoring change over time	of data; • Might require expert assistance which would be costly; • Samples may not always be representative or comprehensive which could affect validity of results.	expert assistance is available. • Not a good method if quick answers are required since the method tends to be time-consuming. • Useful at the beginning of a programme to detect issues that need to be addressed.

ANNEXURE 4: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS MATRIX[18]

In order to get a clear overview of the stakeholders and their interests, influence and importance it is useful to use a so-called stakeholder analysis matrix. The matrix gives an overview of the different stakeholders, their interests and their importance and influence.

In this matrix the stakeholders you have identified are entered in the left column. In the **second column** the interests of the stakeholders in the project or policy are identified. In the **third column** the effect that the project will have on the interests of the stakeholders is identified. For this identification a three-point scale can be utilized: negative, neutral or positive. The **fourth column** provides information about the importance of the stakeholders for the success of the project or policy. The importance can be indicated by using a six-point scale: unknown, little/no importance, some importance, moderate importance, very important, critical player. The **last column** concerns information about the influence of the stakeholder over the project. A six-point scale may be used in this case too: unknown, little/no influence, moderate influence, significant influence, very influential.

Stakeholder	Interests	Effect of project on interests	Importance of stakeholder for success of project	Degree of influence of stakeholder

[18] Source: www.pacificwater.org/.../STAKEHOLDER%20Engagement/...

APPENDIX 5: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION
Focus Group	This is a structured process where specifically selected individuals are brought together to provide reactions to a specific topic, policy, project or issue.
Public Meetings	These are gatherings open to stakeholders and the public, where the government makes a formal presentation on a policy, project or issue and the public is given the opportunity to react with questions and comments.
Public hearings	A public hearing is a forum at which stakeholders can make formal statements about the issue at hand. Oral statements are often accompanied by written briefs. A panel representing the sponsoring agency may ask questions of the presenter. The panel generally submits a final report with findings and recommendations.
Public Involvement	A variety of interactions between the public and government institutions that range from surveys, focus groups, feedback on discussion documents, public consultation, dialogue, workshops, advisory boards to partnerships.
Stakeholders	A stakeholder is an individual, group, or organization having a 'stake' in an issue and its outcome. Stakeholders, interested parties and affected parties are considered to be segments of the public.
Surveys	A survey, also called questionnaires, is a method of primary data collection based on communication with a representative sample of individuals. Surveys are usually descriptive in nature, yet can also be used to provide casual explanations or explore ideas. A survey can be conducted using different information-gathering techniques such as

TERM	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION
	mail-out questionnaires, in-person interviews and telephone surveys. There is also an increasing use of technology-driven fax, email and Internet-based surveys.
Workshop	Workshops are meetings where participants are involved in-group discussions and are normally organized around one or more theme areas. Workshops allow participants with differing values and priorities to build a common understanding of the problems and opportunities confronting them. The intent of most workshops is to either identify problems and expectations, or to recommend solutions.
Bilateral Meetings	These are formal meetings usually between government and a stakeholder organization often used to identify, define or clarify issues and increase knowledge base on the issues. This category is part of a public involvement plan or strategy and excludes intermittent business meetings with stakeholders.
Public	Broad definition that covers all the individuals or groups who may be interested in or affected by government decisions and actions. The definition does not require the certainty that any individual or group has such an interest; just that they may have. The public includes consumers, patients, professionals, academia, industry and the groups that represent them.
Sustainable development	The widely-used definition of sustainable development is taken as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

APPENDIX 6: ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACCRONYM	FULL NAME
CDW	Community Development Worker
DG	Director General
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
ECE (or UN-ECE)	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HOD	Head of Department
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
ILO	International Labour Organization
PSC	Public Service Commission